The Impact of the Western conceptualization of the Christian Gospel on its communication in a non-Western Environment, with particular reference to the amaXhosa.

by

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DECLARATION IN TERMS OF 17.6.4

I hereby solemnly declare that this thesis is my own work, and that it has not previously been submitted to another university.

..............................................................

The following translations / versions of the Bible have been used in the production of this thesis:

1967, Izibhalo Ezingcwele, (Bible Society of South Africa)
1986, New International Version, (International Bible Society)
1996, Ibhayibhile, (Bible Society of South Africa)

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SOLI DEO GLORIA

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the extent and nature of the impact of the contextualization of Christianity upon the amaXhosa from the missionary irruption in the nineteenth century to the present day, and proceeds to examine the implications of this impact for the presentation of the Christian gospel in the contemporary Eastern Cape.

Chapter One describes the problem, offers definitions of key concepts and outlines the procedural method for the rest of the thesis.

Chapter Two deals with the question of the cross-cultural communication of the Christian gospel in theory. Doctrinal questions such as the nature of the gospel are examined. The basic hermeneutical issue of the categorization of doctrinal tenets according to whether they are required or simply permitted is discussed in terms of Osborne's categories: 'cardinal', 'non-cardinal'. Tenets which are found to be 'anti-scriptural' would be rejected. Specific hermeneutical topics such as language and meaning, symbolics, textuality and orality are then discussed. This is followed by a survey of secular influences which affect a conceptualization. This chapter is preparatory to, and definitive for, the discourse which follows.

Chapter Three outlines the cultural heritage from which the Western missionary contextualization of Christianity developed. It shows the extent to which this presentation of the gospel was dependent upon the philosophy which Britain and Europe inherited from the classical Greek culture. More modern developments such as the Enlightenment, Empiricism and Historicism bring the discourse up to the point at which the missionaries arrived.

Chapter Four deals with the initial encounter between the missionaries and the amaXhosa. A brief account is given of the nature of the religious and spiritual aspects of the Xhosa culture which first encountered Christianity. The doctrinal section of this chapter deals with those doctrines in the missionary message which became issues for the amaXhosa. The hermeneutical section shows how the cultural setting of the West
affected both the contextualization by the missionaries and the conceptualization by the amaXhosa. To a large extent, the missionaries made the double mistake of imposing their culture on the amaXhosa and failing to accord respect, even recognition, to the Xhosa culture. This amounted to imperialism, which, together with the political imperialism of Britain as the colonizing power, evoked responses from the Xhosa community which are outlined in section 4.4, including those of Nxele and Ntsikana.

Because the impact of the Western contextualization is an on-going phenomenon, the thesis continues to trace its development up to the present time. Apartheid is briefly mentioned in Chapter Five. The point is made that all white people were perceived by the amaXhosa to be Christians, and the architects and practitioners of apartheid claimed to be Christians. This ideology therefore had a direct effect on the Xhosa conceptualization of the gospel. The architects of apartheid actually believed that they were accepting God's gift and mandate. This chapter includes Black theological reaction to apartheid in terms of the South African version of Liberation theology.

Chapter Six returns to Western Theology in order to bring the sphere of discourse from the point at which it left off at the end of Chapter Three up to the present time. The schools of thought in this period are: Secularism and Existentialism, together with their theological extension, Demythologization. The main religious movements are the Charismatic Movement and Neo-Pentecostalism. Postmodernism came as a later philosophical school, to be followed by Globality.

Chapter Seven deals with black South African reactive and proactive responses. The predominant theologies are those of Dwane, Buthelezi, Boesak and Mtuze. Although Dwane, Buthelezi and Boesak came on the scene at the same time as the black theologians reviewed in Chapter Five, their work is placed here because it differs significantly from the more radical responses of the latter. Mtuze is post-apartheid, and responds to the developments outlined in Chapter Six.

Chapter Eight draws the findings of the thesis together, by considering how the Christian Gospel ought to be presented to the various contemporary sub-cultures of the amaXhosa.

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The last Chapter applies the findings of the thesis to the task in hand. The desired outcomes are listed and briefly discussed. The task ahead is enunciated in terms of manpower and other resources for the effective communication of the Christian gospel in the twenty-first century. The past, present and projected programmes of the Bible Institute Eastern Cape [the target institution] are described and assessed. Finally, topics which presented themselves in the course of the preparation of this thesis are suggested for future research.

**KEY WORDS:** Apartheid; Cardinal; Colonialism; Conceptualization; Contextualization; Culture; Resonance; Western; Xhosa [amaXhosa, isiXhosa].
CHAPTER ONE

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM, DEFINITIONS AND PROPOSED MODUS OPERANDI

1.1 The Problem

A number of terms used in 1.1 will be formally defined for the purposes of this thesis only in 1.2. All the terms used in 1.1 are to be understood in their conventional meanings.

The aim of this thesis is to attempt to clarify the principles involved in formulating a presentation which most effectively communicates the Christian gospel by and for the amaXhosa of the Eastern Cape, in the general context of non-Western environments. The thesis will be found to be selective in at least two ways. Firstly, because it would be impossible to do justice to all the diverse influences upon the Western culture in its development, the material in Chapter Three has been selected in proportion to its perceived bearing on the topic of the thesis. Secondly, to do justice to all, or even some other non-Western environments within the length constraints of one thesis would endanger the depth at which the topic should be dealt with, and inevitably lead to superficiality. The term 'a non Western environment' [in the thesis title] is wide-ranging; but it is intended only as a grounding or orientation for the Xhosa experience on which the thesis majors. The amaXhosa are by far the majority group in the Eastern Province, and Xhosa-speaking students form the majority student constituency of the Bible Institute Eastern Cape (B.I.E.C.), which is the chosen focus of the research.

The stated purpose of B.I.E.C. is:

‘... to prepare learners for Christian ministry and leadership in the new South Africa through equipping with the knowledge, understanding, skills and godly character needed to accomplish their God-given calling.’ (Light, V. E. et al., 2008a: 3)

In order to achieve this objective, the needs of the community and the capacity of the Institute need to be surveyed. These issues will receive attention in Chapters Eight and Nine respectively.

The problem addressed in this thesis is well described in terms of the problem Jeremy Hovil encountered in Uganda. Hovil has carried out research into the need for transformation in theological
education in Uganda, particularly in respect of the Anglican Church. His assessment is that:

'(t)he patterns of education [the Ugandan Church] has inherited appear to be inadequate when it comes to coping with the contemporary realities and challenges it faces. Not only do they seem insufficient for maintenance, but also, more importantly, for mission.’ (2005:3)

Students for the Christian ministry amongst the AmaXhosa of the Eastern Cape are faced with this same multiple problem. Hovil found that in Uganda '[a] range of cultures and influences has shaped the inherited forms of theological education' (ibid). This applies to the amaXhosa as well. Xhosa theological students have to learn by means of a "foreign" language, and also, largely, in terms of Western thought-forms. These problems are compounded by the fact that denominational particularities have arisen historically within Western Christendom, under the influence of the distinctive [and changing] European world-view. These particularities serve to confuse students, preachers and congregations in South Africa.

Equally alarming is the fact that the Western understanding of the gospel has been presented as though it were the only acceptable one. Progress has been made in producing a presentation of the Christian gospel which will be totally meaningful to Xhosa people; but initially such efforts were rejected or ignored by theologians of Western origin who had the dominant influence in Christian theology in South Africa. Happily, there are signs that this is changing.

Sanneh makes a useful distinction between “diffusion” and “translation” (1989:29). Diffusion is the approach which makes 'the missionary culture the inseparable carrier of the message'. Translation makes 'the recipient culture the true and final focus of the proclamation'.

It has become evident that the content of the presentation offered by the nineteenth century missionaries from England and Europe was diffusion rather than translation, and has proved to be inadequate in several respects. Western cultural accretions have sometimes been presented as though
they were articles of faith, despite the fact that Scripture does not actually require them. The stance of this thesis on the authority of Scripture will be explained and defended in 1.2.7, below.

The work done by black African theologians in the area of the understanding of the gospel is welcomed and appreciated. Although their work is intended to achieve in Africa an effect parallel to that which Western theologians produced in Europe, Britain and America over a number of centuries, it does not follow that the methods will be the same. The indigenization of the gospel could conceivably be achieved by taking Western systematic theology and contextualizing it to an African culture article by article. This would produce incidental changes which would leave the Western structure basically intact. African theologians of a conservative-evangelical persuasion have, to a large extent, adopted this approach. On the other hand, some believe that a more radical approach is required, in terms of which a completely new schema would have to be constructed. This would produce a systemic change which would involve renouncing the Western structure completely. Inculturation is thus seem to be a matter not only of content but also of method.

Even if the less radical approach were found to suffice, other problems are discernible in Christian theological circles in the West which would make a direct transference from contemporary Western thought to Xhosa thought difficult.

(i) Denominations differ from one another in their doctrinal stances and emphases.

(ii) Individual theologians and pastors differ among themselves within a denomination

(iii) A general shift is to be noted in Western theology as a whole.

The discoveries of Copernicus (1473-1543) caused a revolution in astronomy, which extended into scientific thinking generally, and gave rise to a paradigm shift in the Western understanding of the universe. In this thesis the word “paradigm” is used to refer not only to examples indicating how structures work in specific areas of experience, but also in respect of the structuring of a world-view as a whole. A more precise term for the latter would be “frame of reference”. The “Copernican revolution” was accelerated by the advance of knowledge in the physical and natural sciences from the seventeenth century onwards. Descartes [in philosophy] and Newton [in science] shifted the “goalposts” a considerable distance, which resulted in a
parallel shift in Christian theology and secular philosophy. This response is usually called “modernism”.

The problems encountered by nineteenth century Xhosas were compounded by the fact that the missionaries were wavering in their theology between “premodern” and “modern” beliefs. The amaXhosa held a totally “premodern” worldview, which was neither Western nor self-consciously Christian. Hayes, however, quotes a less tentative assessment.

'Comaroff & Comaroff (1991) have shown that most of the missionaries who came to sub-Saharan Africa from Europe in the nineteenth century were thoroughly imbued with the Enlightenment world view. These Western missionaries brought the Christian faith to pre-Enlightenment cultures. They soon became aware of the cultural gap, and the typical way of dealing with it was to say that before the Christian faith could take root, the preEnlightenment culture must make way for the Enlightenment culture, or, as they put it, civilisation must precede Christianisation.' (1995: 4f. internet format)

Some researchers have noted that in certain African traditional lore there are traces of teaching comparable with that of the Old Testament, and even hints of Christian teaching. These were either not recognised by the missionaries or completely ignored by them. This will be examined at various points later in the thesis.

The thesis attempts to review and evaluate the process by which the Christian gospel has been presented to the amaXhosa from the days of the first engagement between Western Christianity and the indigenous people of South Africa to the present day, in order to discover guide-lines for Xhosa theologians attempting to contextualize the gospel into the Xhosa world-view at the present time. Its task is to enumerate and assess the problems encountered at each stage in the history, in such a way as to make possible the formulation of an understanding and presentation of the Christian gospel appropriate to the amaXhosa of the twenty-first century. After a brief diachronic overview of the period covered by the thesis, (1.1.1), a prognosis is offered in terms of the most significant issues in contemporary hermeneutics (1.1.2).

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1.1.1 Diachronic overview

The period of history involved in this thesis began in the middle of the seventeenth century, when Europeans first came to live at the Cape for any length of time. Jan van Riebeeck's settlement, which started in 1652, did not achieve a great deal in terms of missionary activity towards the amaXhosa. Moravian missionaries established Genadendal in the eighteenth century, and work began at Bethelsdorp under Johannes van der Kemp in 1799. However, the impact of the missionaries in the Eastern Cape is usually dated from the arrival of the British Settlers in 1820.

It is acknowledged that this period of history is quite long, and the range of influences on the missionary contextualization and the Xhosa conceptualization processes is very wide. Within the compass on one thesis, it is impossible to do justice to them all. The approved title of this thesis necessarily requires a great deal of material to be covered in a relatively limited document. For this reason, such items as the wars of resistance, denominationalism on the mission field, the discovery of gold and diamonds, the establishment of the Union of South Africa and the two world wars cannot be dealt with, and the founding of black educational institutes, the 'cattle-killing' episode and the Anglo-Boer war are dealt with only in relation to other matters. The rise and influence of African Initiated Churches is dealt with a little more fully (7.2.1.5).

Although the initial Western encounter with the AmaXhosa is definitive for the thesis, the scope of the thesis is much wider, in that in terms of the thesis title, '(t)he Western conceptualization of the Christian gospel' is not confined to a specific period of time. The process has therefore been traced from those earliest times to the present.

1.1.1.1 British hegemony: 1820 to 1948

The selection of these dates does not imply that British hegemony was constant in the sense that there were no changes or developments during that long period. Some of the changes and developments will be traced in the course of the thesis. The period was selected as being in general terms the period during which the British were the predominant missionary and colonial power.
The missionaries who had the profoundest effect upon the amaXhosa in the nineteenth century were the Wesleyans [Methodists], Anglicans and Baptists. For this reason they will feature prominently in the discourse. To a large extent the Methodists were “Church of England” in their theology, although a number of distinctive doctrines are to be found, on account of Wesley's emphases. The presentation they brought was the product of centuries of theological and philosophical development which can be traced to the hellenization of Judaism from the fourth century B.C.

The missionary presentation gives the impression that the missionaries believed that their understanding of the gospel would be readily assimilable by the amaXhosa, and that if a separate Xhosa world-view existed, if would be inferior to that of the West. Whereas Europe had historically been granted [or had taken] a measure of licence in their indigenization of Christianity; the attitude of many of the missionaries towards elements in the African culture and traditions could in certain respects be described as iconoclastic, although this would be too harsh as a general evaluation. The missionaries' stance was an implied answer to the question as to what, if anything, in the indigenous world-view could be used in the presentation of the Christian gospel - in some cases a total negative, and in others a limitation so extensive that it effectively amounted to a negative.

Hiebert (1994:76) supports this conclusion as far as the general principle is concerned. His contribution to the debate will be assessed in 1.2.4, when the concept of contextualization is examined and defined.

The first task of this thesis is to identify and describe the Christian gospel as it was communicated to the amaXhosa in the nineteenth century and its reception by the amaXhosa, given the complex nature of the theological and cultural situations on both sides. This will be attempted in Chapter Four.

1.1.1.2 The period from 1948 to 1994

During the second half of the twentieth century life in South Africa was determined by the policy of apartheid which had a devastating impact on the lives of the amaXhosa and other people of colour. Since this policy was developed and implemented by men and women who were recognised as Christians, and was
bolstered to a large extent by theologians of the Afrikaans churches, it can arguably be regarded as an element in the Western presentation of Christianity in South Africa at that time, albeit a lamentably negative one. Opposition to apartheid by the English-speaking churches in South Africa was largely a matter of resolutions adopted by assemblies, synods and conferences, with little practical effect. This has implications for their understanding of Christianity as well. For this reason, all aspects of apartheid and all the stances adopted in respect of it need to be addressed in this thesis, since they impinge upon the Western presentation of Christianity to the amaXhosa.

The response of black South African Christians to apartheid took the form of Black Theology, which emphasised the truth that God is on the side of the powerless and oppressed; and relied heavily on Old Testament passages such as the liberation of the Israelites from Egypt. In order to do justice to its proactive aspects, however, and to remove the danger of regarding it merely as a reaction to apartheid, the various forms of Black Theology in South Africa will be examined as theologies in their own right as well as responses to the Western contextualization.

The second task of this thesis is to evaluate apartheid, its implications for the Afrikaner understanding and presentation of the gospel and its effects upon the amaXhosa.

1.1.1.3 The period from 1994 to the present

The year 1994 has been chosen because it marked the end of official apartheid in South Africa. Some of the movements and schools of thought included in this subsection came upon the scene much earlier than 1994, but are subsumed here for the sake of logical clarity. This is particularly the case with the work of African theologians, especially of black South African theologians, whose work was not available in this country prior to 1994, owing to Government censorship.

This has been a period during which the centre of gravity in the presentation of the Christian gospel has shifted from the stated or implied position of the white settlers in South Africa to the reactive and proactive positions adopted by the indigenous peoples.
The question will now be whether the post-apartheid situation in South Africa makes it possible for the proponents of Black Theology to modify their quasi-political stance in the non-racist direction indicated by, inter alia, Manas Buthelezi, Frank Chikane and Desmond Tutu; and if so, whether the resultant South African brand of African Theology can dialogue with that of its neighbours in Africa as well as with Western Theology so as to attempt to develop a Christian theology for the “New” South Africa and for post-Renaissance Africa.

The paradigm shift from the “premodern” to the “modern” way of interpreting reality found a sequel in the late twentieth century with the arrival of what has come to be known as “postmodernism”. Although postmodernism tends to defy concise description, it can be understood as basically a reaction against the over-confident prescriptions of modernity, especially with regard to scientific laws which are claimed to control the operation of the universe. Many postmodernists deny that modernism and postmodernism can be identified in terms of sharply demarcated epochs. While many Xhosas [and Westerners] are still only gradually becoming accustomed to the playing field of “modern”, as distinct from “premodern” thinking, postmodernist theologians and philosophers have proposed a stance which almost suggests that the goalposts, which Copernicus, Newton and Descartes

had shifted, should be removed completely. Postmodernism will receive a fuller treatment in 6.3.

'The third task of this thesis is to examine the major contemporary theological stances in South African Christianity and to consider inter alia the extent to which postmodernism aids or hinders the understanding of the Christian gospel by the amaXhosa.

1.1.2 Diagnosis and proleptic considerations

In order to perform all the tasks enunciated above, a distinction has to be drawn in the content of Scripture between the elements of the original context which are universal and elements which are culture-specific. Culture-specific elements of the presenter's world-view and of the receptor's world-view need similarly to be recognized. The culture-specificity of such elements need not necessarily debar them from use in a contextualization or conceptualization; but they should be clearly recognised as culture-specific by both the
presenting culture and the host culture so as to remove confusion on both sides as to their status in the presentation and reception of the gospel. [The writer prefers the word “host” to the more customary “receptor” culture, context or language].

Further, the way in which gospel-universals and culture-specific elements relate to one another needs to be determined. This is a crucial basic principle for the discourse of this thesis, and will be discussed in Sections 1.2.1, 1.2.3 and 1.2.8, where “Culture”, “World-view” and “Gospel” respectively are defined.

The Western conceptualization of Christianity as it has developed, is closely bound to its developing worldview. It is a major contention of this thesis that this is significant. It appears that the culture-specific elements in the Western contextualization of the gospel have constituted major obstacles to a genuine Xhosa conceptualization because their culture-specificity has not been recognised and taken into account. The hypothesis which arises at this point and will be pursued throughout the thesis is:

Specific cultural elements need not, in practice, be bracketed out of any context, [either of the presenting world-view or the receptor world-view], and they need not be a problem for the communication of the gospel, as long as they are identified and understood to be secondary to it.

Formulated in the negative, the hypothesis becomes:

Specific cultural elements in either the presenting world-view, culture or context, or the receptor world-view, culture or context can present a problem for the communication of the gospel if they are not identified as such and understood to be secondary to it.

In terms of this thesis, this hypothesis has multiple significance. It implies that the major problem in the missionary activity in the Eastern Cape in the nineteenth century was that the cultural elements in the Western presentation of the gospel were not recognised as such and therefore not identified as secondary to the gospel. The retained culture had no place for Xhosa cultural elements, and they were consequently rejected. It implies also that as Western and Xhosa theologians construct their contemporary conceptualizations of the gospel they must be aware of their own culture-specific elements and identify them as secondary to the gospel. Further, it implies that since the cultural elements of each ethnic group are
distinctive, a common contextualization is not desirable, because it would not be authentic for any group. Diversity enriches the Christian Church in any multicultural nation, and the beauty of a rainbow is displayed in the close proximity of its distinctive colours.

The final chapter of this thesis includes a section having special reference to the Bible Institute of Eastern Cape [BIEC]. The writer is conscious of both the need for academic detachment and the possibility that an exclusive stance such as that of BIEC, as presently constituted, may well be part of the problem. It is thus his aim to seek to identify the most appropriate means of presenting the gospel to the AmaXhosa in the twenty-first century, holding together a respect for the Xhosa culture and a desire to be faithful to the gospel.

1.2. Definition of key terms

The following definitions are offered not only in an attempt to clarify the elements of discourse, but more pragmatically, to indicate the means by which the desired object, the communication of the Christian gospel can be achieved. Following his distinction between diffusion and translation (above, p. 2), Sanneh uses as his key word the term 'translatability'. Of this he says:

"Translatability is the source of the success of Christianity across cultures. The religion is the willing adoption of any culture that would receive it, equally at home in all languages and cultures, and among all races and conditions of people. ... Christianity has been a transcultural phenomenon, and indeed its doctrinal system remained plausible at all because of the rich variety of cultures that sustain the church." (1989:51)

The title of this thesis contains three terms whose meaning requires to be specified in respect of their use in the thesis. They are: “contextualization” (1.2.4), “conceptualization” (1.2.5), “gospel” (1.2.8) and “communication” (1.2.10). Other technical terms will be used in the course of this thesis, together with certain more common terms which will acquire specialized meanings. The definitions produced in this section are not offered as authoritative or exclusive; but are simply indications of how the words are understood and used in this thesis. Wherever needed, the definition will be accompanied by a short indication of some of the principles involved in the use of these terms in the discourse of the thesis.

1.2.1 Culture

Mugambi defines culture as 'the total manifestation of a people's self-understanding and self-expression,
through politics, economics, ethics, aesthetics, kinship and religion' (2001:17).

Kevin J. Vanhoozer adds another factor when he introduces the value element into the nature of cultural expression. He says: 'A culture expresses the totality of what a group of humans value' (1993:7). He also makes the significant point that 'culture is not an impersonal cosmos but a meaningful world' (ibid.).

In the case of both of these definitions, a framework is indicated in terms of which groups of human beings can relate to the reality of their life-world, express their feelings towards it and identify what they perceive to be of value in it.

Clifford Geertz makes the important point that as a 'pattern of meanings', culture is 'historically transmitted' and is 'embodied in symbols' (1973:89). He refers to culture as 'a system of inherited conceptions' which serves to 'communicate, perpetuate and develop knowledge about and attitudes towards life'. It needs to be pointed out at this stage that one should not understand Geertz to be implying that a culture is static and 'historically transmitted' in an unchanged form, but that the transmission is itself a dynamic process.

Baruch Maoz has pastored a Grace and Truth Christian congregation in Israel for thirty years. The influx of Russian Christians in the 1980's necessitated the formulation of a suitable strategy for the development and maintenance of Christian community life and witness in a unique situation. He defines culture simply as: 'the why and the way that a group of people do things', and adds that '(t)he “why” of Christian people's action is a composite of theological convictions and accumulated historical experience' (2007:2). This practical approach serves as a balance to the more theoretical approaches of Mugambi, Van Hoozer and Geertz. Maoz's experience of multiculturalism in practice will be examined in 9.1.1., when the practical details of the contextualizing agency [church or parachurch organization] will be considered.

A pragmatic definition of culture is provided by Pieter van der Westhuisen: 'a byproduct of the attempt to survive' (1989:8). This definition contains an element of passive-existential capriciousness, in that it gives the impression that a culture is produced fortuitously when people set about the task of surviving. It is
important to recognise that cultures develop when human beings progress in the course of history.

Further, the gospel relates dynamically and progressively to these active, developing cultures. When describing the nature and implications of Christian faith, Van der Westhuisen says:

'Christian faith ... reveals a dimension of environment and reality beyond the experience of non-Christians. Having said this, it now becomes necessary to recognise that this also elicits a response from man which precipitates in the culture as religion, in particular as Christian religion.' (1989:9).

The word 'precipitates' reinforces the impression of capriciousness, and it is to be noted that, by implication, Van der Westhuizen appears to regard Christianity [Christian religion] either as a religious system alongside all non-Christian religions within a common categorization, or merely as a particular manifestation of the general, rather nebulous, phenomenon of religion.

In an attempt to bring the insights of Mugambi, Vanhoozer, Geertz, Maoz and Van der Westhuizen together, the following definition of culture is offered for the purposes of this thesis:

**Culture is the meaningful response to the world-view according to which a group of people seek to express and live out their own historically transmitted collective self-understanding, and formulate their value-system by means of symbols, as they attempt to come to terms with their experience of life, including their experience of what they perceive as supernatural. The word is also sometimes used to indicate a group of people who own this particular world-view.**

1.2.1 Culture in relation to Christ

An apparent excursus is required at this point, in order to relate “culture” to the discourse of this thesis. The way in which culture is related to Christianity needs to be established.

Although Byang Kato was not a Xhosa, his observations about culture and religion in general, and African culture in particular are relevant for the amaXhosa as well as any other African ethnic group. He compares the situation in Africa with Druidism in England, centring on Stonehenge (1975:175). He quotes Matthew
12:46-50 to support his claim concerning the pre-eminence of Christ (ibid).

Richard Niebuhr postulated five possible positions in which a culture is understood to stand in relation to Christ. They are: 'Christ against culture', 'Christ of culture', 'Christ above culture', 'Christ and culture in a relationship of paradox' and 'Christ as transformer of culture'. Daniel Jenkins (1969:84ff) analyses them.

The first position [Christ against culture], 'emphasizes the opposition between the claims of Christ and those of all forms of human culture (Jenkins, 1969:84). Charles Sherlock (1996:138) categorizes it as “fundamental opposition”. Those who have adopted this position have typically secluded themselves in religious enclaves of their own, which they imagined were culturally neutral, and ignored the cultures of the world. Although the English, European and American missionaries who came to the Eastern Cape in the nineteenth century did not literally seclude themselves, the cavalier attitude of some of them towards elements in the indigenous cultures they found here demonstrates an attitude which is closely akin to this first position. They failed, however, to recognise that Western Christianity is itself not culturally neutral and that if Christ and culture are totally alienated from each other, this would apply equally to the culture of the West, in which their understanding of the gospel was couched.

The second position [Christ of culture] is diametrically opposed to the first. Jenkins says that this position regards Christ as 'the supreme example of universal human goodness' (1969:84). Here all cultures are regarded as good, and to a lesser or greater extent expressions of God's kingdom in the world. The ideal for all cultures is conceived to be the recognition and expression of the Christ Who is said to be within all of them. Sherlock calls it “fundamental agreement” (1996:138).

Jenkins believes that the third position [Christ above culture] could better be described as 'Christ and culture in synthesis' (:84). Here, Christ is seen to be distinct from culture as such, but not in opposition to any particular culture. Cultures which fulfil their proper roles can claim synthesis with Christ. This concept inspired the notion of "Christian civilization", and has been largely responsible for the misconception under which the missionaries brought their Westernised communication of the gospel to Africa. It appears that the
missionaries failed to recognise the implication of this proposition, just as they did the proposition expressed as 'Christ against culture'. The implication here is that if Christ is in synthesis with any “worthy” culture, this would apply to the “worthy” aspects of traditional African culture as much as to those of the West. A further implication is that traditional African culture is to be respected and that when all cultures are synthesized to Christ, they can be synthesized to one another “in Him”.

Fourthly, Christianity and culture are seen to be related in terms of paradox. Jenkins points out that this was basically the position of the Apostle Paul (:84). Sherlock (:138) uses the word “tension”. Those who hold this position evaluate the relationship between Christ and culture in a way similar to that of the first position [Christ against culture], except that they do not see seclusion as the appropriate response. Further, whereas the third position [Christ above culture / Christ and culture in synthesis] recognizes that there are elements of relativity in the relationship between Christianity and the various cultures of the world, but believes that synthesis is possible; the fourth position claims that the distance is too great for synthesis to take place. The logical implication of this cultural relativism as applied to the relationship between Christianity and particular cultures is that the former can be truly meaningful only within the culture of Judaism. If this implication is valid, and taken to be absolute, the supposed understandings of Christianity found in Europe, India, China and Africa (as examples) are not genuine. Conversely, if such understandings are valid, this radical interpretation of Niebuhr's fourth position is proved untenable, ipso facto.

The fifth position states that Christ does not stand to culture as an enemy [first position], nor as a model [second position]; nor as an equal partner [third position] nor as a total stranger [fourth position]. A relationship between Christ and Culture can take place only when Christ transforms the culture. Sherlock's term is “conversion” (ibid).

It is clear that this is a fundamental issue for this thesis. Are Christianity and African Traditional Religions (A.T.R's) sworn enemies [position 1]? Can Christianity be owned by and expressed within an African culture, and other cultures, according to their own thought forms and world-view, as was the case in the Western culture [position 2]? Are they equal partners [position 3]? Is there an irresolvable paradox [position 4]? Or, what would it mean for Christ to transform the cultures of the world, including contemporary
Western culture and traditional African culture [position 5]?

Sherlock points out that although Niebuhr believed that the fifth position was the most promising, he did not explicitly reject the other four (:139). Sherlock himself allows Christianity to confront his own [Anglo-Celtic - Australian] culture and suggests that each of the five positions applies in various situations.

He finds fundamental opposition [position 1] between Christianity and 'the widespread assumption of white supremacy' (:139). There is fundamental agreement [position 2] when egalitarian values are espoused by the culture. Synthesis [position 3] directs a culture beyond a neutral egalitarianism to a positive appreciation of aspects of another culture. Tension [position 4] is caused by nationalism, which has a divisive effect on Christians; and conversion [position 5] is needed to recognize that the sovereignty of Christ makes fatalism totally inappropriate.

The clear conclusion to be drawn from this is that the missionaries should have allowed Christianity to confront their own cultural assumptions before they brought their culture, undiluted, to the amaXhosa. Instead, many of them appear to have assumed that the Western culture is the only fitting culture in which to present Christianity, and to have proceeded, on that assumption, to condemn all that was “different” in the Xhosa culture. In their presentation of the gospel to the AmaXhosa, they showed, in respect of the host culture, characteristics of the first and third of the positions Niebuhr was later to describe. Also, because they tended to equate Christianity with Western culture [failing to recognise the cultural elements as secondary to the gospel], they tended to transfer the role of Christ in Niebuhr's categories to Western culture. This meant that Western culture, instead of Christ, was the standard in the comparison. Albert Nolan describes this very well, when he says:

'In South Africa the gospel came to us in the garb of Western culture. Moreover, the missionaries rejected African culture as pagan and as opposed to the gospel. They imposed many Western cultural practices like language, dress, food, manners and so forth, as if they were part of the gospel of Jesus Christ' (1995:76)

If the differences are only relative, as distinct from relativistic, [i.e., if communication is possible between cultures by means of the “translation” of culture-specific elements] ought the answer to lie in
accommodation, in such a way that culture-specific elements of the host culture [in respect of this thesis the
Xhosa culture] are assimilated into the presentation of the gospel? If this is the case, which elements could
be accepted for this purpose? The question then becomes: 'On what basis, and according to what criteria,
should such elements be admitted?'

Allan Torrance makes a significant contribution to the resolution of this problem when he indicates two
variants of a doctrine in which, because it is rather prescriptive, the relative importance of a culture can be
misjudged. He refers to, and criticises "a fundamentalism of culture" and its derivative "cultural
foundationalism", which tend to place culture in the definitive position. He says:

'There is a need, first, to avoid what one might call
“fundamentalism of culture”. This is where the demands
of a culture, defined in terms of its own prior self-understanding,
are accepted uncritically as finding theological conclusions ...
Second, we need to be aware of a more sophisticated form of this,
which one might call "cultural foundationalism", where it is
believed (explicitly or implicitly) that culture defines
the necessary form of theological questioning...' (1993:2)

The question needs to be asked: To what extent has the communication of the gospel to the AmaXhosa been
shaped by the assumption that the Western culture was fundamental? Perhaps more significantly: "To what
extent have the AmaXhosa been taught and persuaded to receive the Christian gospel in terms of the form of
theological questioning which finds its foundation in the Western culture? It could possibly be argued that
scholasticism and Western philosophy in general corrupted the Biblical message before it even came to
Africa. The question raised by the warning concerning "cultural foundationalism" would be: To what extent
were the AmaXhosa discouraged from establishing their own hermeneutical rules, and their own
understanding of the gospel? This will be looked at in Chapter Four below.

The opposite tendency to cultural foundationalism would be the assumption that Christianity, for example, is
culturally neutral. Such a perception fails to recognise two important factors:
(i) that Christianity originated within a specific culture,
(ii) the extent to which Christianity has inevitably become "interwoven" with one's own culture (both a
presenting culture which contextualizes and a host culture which conceptualizes).

Furthermore, it fails to recognise the extent to which the Christian gospel will become interwoven with subsequent host cultures in the process of coming to understand and interpret reality – the fallacy of the *tabula rasa* (1.2.10). Here again, one detects characteristics of the Western missionaries' position. In many respects, some of them adopted a negative approach to the Xhosa culture, as will be demonstrated in 4.2. It is gratefully conceded, nevertheless, that some showed a positive interest in the culture to which their contextualization was directed, particularly in respect of language. This will be outlined in 4.1.1.1. The latter suggests exciting possibilities of a positive approach in the present, and this aspect will be examined in Chapters Seven and Eight.

In the light of the foregoing discussion, this thesis hypothesizes that the fifth of Niebuhr's positions most closely fits the requirements of an acceptable communication of the gospel to the AmaXhosa (or any other host culture). The virtue of this proposition, and to a certain extent the third (“Christ above culture” or “Christ and culture in synthesis”), is that it sets all cultures, as cultures, on an equal footing. To assert that each culture needs to be transformed by Christ is simply to state the basic Christian conviction regarding God's relationship with humankind. As Lesslie Newbigin puts it:

>'To affirm the unique decisiveness of God's action in Jesus Christ is not arrogance; it is the enduring bulwark against the arrogance of every culture to be itself the criterion by which others are judged' (1986:166)

Besides addressing Niebuhr's fifth proposition, Newbigin's stance addresses also the issue of cultural foundationalism outlined above. The question then remains:

**What is involved in Christ's transforming of a culture?**

The inculturation of Christianity in the West did not replace the Western culture, as host culture, although it significantly modified the Western world-view, by transforming the paradigm. It follows, then, that the Xhosa understanding which the Western missionaries sought to produce ought not to have involved the replacement of the Xhosa culture by the Western culture, but only a modification of their own world-view
and a transformation of their paradigm. The communication of the Christian gospel to the amaXhosa should not have been viewed as a Westernisation of the Xhosa culture, but as a means of facilitating the process whereby the amaXhosa could embrace Christianity within the Xhosa world-view. This pivotal question will be revisited in Sections 1.2.4 and 1.2.5, when definitions of contextualization and conceptualization will be developed.

It is important to recognise that, ultimately, the essence of the Christian gospel involves a personal relationship between the believer and the Lord Jesus Christ. This principle might at first sight appear to make this thesis superfluous; by arguing that if Christ transforms individuals their cultures are irrelevant and that cultures per se cannot be transformed. Against this, it must be argued that an individual's world-view is produced and nurtured within his culture, and that this to a certain extent shapes his understanding of Christianity. Furthermore, the Christian life, in its fullest expression, is lived in community, and therefore in a certain cultural milieu. In fact, it could be argued that, historically, the transformation of a culture comes about by way of the personal conversion of its members.

The facilitation of the process by which an individual comes to faith and becomes part of the Christian community is presupposed in the expression "communication of the Christian gospel" in the title of this thesis. It leads logically to the influence which individual believers bring to their cultures. At the deepest level, African believers and Western believers share a common faith and common values, but in matters of ethnic identity, such as, for example, language and customs, differences will and should remain. Christianity is transcultural, or at best inter-cultural, rather than non-cultural.

1.2.2 Context

Mugambi defines "context" as 'the specific setting in which culture is lived by individuals, groups and communities at a particular time and place' (2001:17). Moltmann brings home the specificity of context very vividly when he refers to "Christ after Chernobyl". He says:

'My context is the ecological crisis of the Earth-system, in which we live and move and have our being. This is not the particular context of certain self-interests, but the global context of life. If there is not a living, life-giving
Earth-system anymore, there will be no humankind either, and
where there is no humankind anymore there is no Christ, no "God
incarnate" either.' (1993: 7)

As the title which Moltmann gave to it indicates, the paper from which this extract has been quoted refers to
a catastrophe at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant in Russia. Here Moltmann shows that a context is a
particular episode in the life of a culture, shaped by history - by events into which the culture has been
thrown [in Heideggerian terms "geworfen"] - in a particular period of history. Such an event will have a
corresponding effect upon the world-view of those who experience it.

De Gruchy refers to the *Kairos Document*, and describes the situation which that document addressed as
follows:

'When the Kairos Document was drafted in 1986 South Africa was in turmoil.
Since the Soweto uprising ten years previously, which had been ruthlessly
suppressed by the state, resistance and dissent had been kept in check by a
national state security system of considerable power and influence' (1993:133)

It is evident that contexts are shaped by historical events, but that they can also be shaped by the clash of
competing cultures in historical situations. The Kairos Document was addressed to such a *geworfen* context.
The following is offered as a working definition of context for the purposes of this thesis:

**Context is the specific setting in which a culture is lived, having been shaped, and being continuously
shaped by events within the society and by forces exerted on it by external influences.**

The Western missionaries came to a people who differed radically from them not only in respect of world-
view and culture, but also in respect of context. As a result of subsequent history, each contemporary context
is also different from its historical counterparts. It follows, then, that the respective contexts in the
nineteenth century interaction in the Eastern Cape cannot directly serve to inform the inter-communication of
Western and Xhosa cultures in the twenty-first century. The Xhosa/missionary interaction will, however,
serve to illustrate the principles involved, and provide a benchmark according to which guide-lines for
present and future transactions can be formulated.
1.2.3 World-view
The definitive element in any culture is the way in which it perceives reality and accordingly formulates its value-system. An adequate understanding of how a world-view functions is essential for formulating definite principles and paradigms in terms of which contextualizations and related conceptualizations can be evaluated. These definitions and paradigms will be formulated in Section 2.4.

Gailyn Van Rheenen lists and briefly defines four types of worldview: secular, animistic, pantheistic and theistic (2003:2 internet format). The definition which Van Rheenen gives of the theistic worldview strongly suggests monotheism. Van Rheenen indicates the use to which the categorization can be put, pointing out that '(b)ased on these typologies, missionaries and ministers can diagram the intertwining influences of secularism, animism, pantheism, and theism within their host culture' (ibid).

The Hebrew Bible (“Old Testament”), particularly the Wisdom Literature, reveals the world-view of ancient Israel. The Graeco-Roman world-view, interacting with the Judaistic, comes to dominate the New Testament, especially in Paul's letters to Gentile believers. This by no means implies that the Judaistic world-view completely disappeared; but historically it has been the Hellenistic world-view, itself Western, which most profoundly shaped the Church in the West. The Judaistic world-view and Hellenism happen to be the world-views into which God's revelation in Scripture has been placed, and they need to be taken into account when modern attempts to understand and present the gospel are made. It should be noted that both world-views have been modified through the centuries. Perhaps the best-known example is the influence of the Copernican revolution on a modern evaluation of the cosmology of the Old Testament. It is also to be noted that Christ does not meekly adapt to each world-view and culture. The conviction of this thesis is that Christ enters each world-view and culture to transform it. In view of the perceived resonance between elements in the Old Testament culture and elements in traditional Xhosa culture, it is interesting to speculate whether Christianity might have fared better in the Eastern Cape if it had been presented in its Judaistic form rather than in its Western form. This thesis, however, is grounded in the Western presentation
and as such cannot extend into another area. The suggestion is listed in 9.3 as a recommended topic for future researchers.

Bernhardt develops a contingent approach to the question of the place of Christianity in a world-view, and of the appropriate attitude of Christians towards other religions (1994:115ff). After contrasting the 1910 World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh [which advocated a unidirectional approach for Christian missions] with the 1991 General Assembly of the World Council of Churches (W.C.C.) in Canberra, [which called for multidirectional dialogue between Christianity and other living religions], he identifies 1967 as the date of the paradigm shift which accounts for the different approaches.

'In that year delegates of the WCC met at Kandy in Sri Lanka, and there declared: “It is being recognized throughout the world that people of different religions should encounter one another not in dispute, but in friendship.”‘ (Bernhardt 1994:116-7) 

Bernhardt adds that the 'world has become a global village' (:118) in that modern travel has enabled people of different cultures and religions to encounter one another more frequently and more fully. This will be applied in 4.2 to the rejection of the Xhosa heritage by many of the Western missionaries, when the possibility will be considered that a Bernhardtian approach would be fruitful for a contextualization of the Christian gospel by and for the amaXhosa.

A world-view is the totality of reality as it is perceived in a particular culture. In each context of the culture it receives or rejects philosophical and theological presentations made to it. This material is interpreted and systematized within a framework usually referred to as a paradigm.

From the viewpoint of this thesis, the whole debate needs also to be informed by the conviction that the Holy Spirit interprets the content of the Christian religion to attentive and submissive seekers. This important hermeneutical principle should not be lost sight of.

1.2.4 Contextualization

It is implied by Mugambi's definition of culture, and the inputs of Moltmann and De Gruchy, as put together to produce the thesis-specific definitions of “culture”, “context” and “world-view” offered above, that a

2 The quotation within this quotation has been translated from Gensichen, H-W., 1967, Christen im Dialog mit Menschen anderen Glaubens., EMZ 24, Kandy: Okumenische Studienkonferenzen, EMZ 24, p. 83.
world-view is of such a nature that a process can be adopted whereby the gospel can be presented by a
sending culture to a host culture, with the intention of persuading the host culture to adopt it as its own,
within its own world-view and to use the sending presentation as a model for an indigenous presentation.
This process is most clearly described as 'contextualization'.

Hesselgrave and Rommen define contextualization in broad, practical terms as 'any action that puts the
gospel into a more understandable, culturally relevant form by including elements from a target culture's
customs, language and traditions' (1989:1-2). Kato suggests that 'contextualization can take place in liturgy,
dress, language, church service' (1985:24). These are valued elements in any culture. Here the crucial
double question would be: “Which elements are consonant with the gospel?” and “By means of what
criteria is such a judgment made?”

Schreiter draws attention to the fact that aspects of contextualization can appear to be syncretistic:

’If contextualization is about getting to the very heart of the culture, and
Christianity is taking its place there, will not the Christianity that emerges
look very much like a product of that culture? ... are we going to continue
giving cultures the equivalent of an artificial heart - an organ that can do
the job the culture needs, but one that will remain forever foreign?

(1985: 150; Anderson 1995: 6 internet format)

This thesis will consider the contextualizations of some of the Xhosa contemporaries of the nineteenth
century missionaries (4.4) and Xhosa theologians of the present (7.2) with the aim of producing a
satisfactory response to Schreiter's concern.

In order to present the Christian gospel in a form acceptable to and assimilable by the amaXhosa, a process
of transculturation from the Western form needs to be undertaken. It needs to be stressed that this is far more
than a linguistic process. The supra-linguistic nature of contextualization will be expanded upon in Chapter
Two where the role and nature of linguistics in the hermeneutical process will be examined.

An example of what is involved in contextualization is provided by Frances Adeney, who has introduced a
model for ‘a method for Christian mission' (2007:33). She describes the process as '(u)nderstanding
different cultures and translating the gospel into forms that are indigenous to or compatible with those settings' (ibid). She explains that the work involves encouraging the fostering of ‘a Universal Value in a particular context' (ibid). The value she chose was “gender equality”. This principle will be considered in 2.2.8, when an attempt is made to discover a hermeneutical model. A preliminary general definition of contextualization might be:

Contextualization is the form in which, or the process whereby, material [in terms of this thesis, the Christian gospel] is presented to a host culture in its context, in order both to enable the members of the host community to understand it, and also to persuade them to accept it into their world-view, either as it is presented or in an adapted (conceptualized) form.

Two things need to be noted in this definition. Firstly, the verb “presented” is employed to refer to what is traditionally regarded as the work of “missionaries”. This thesis will adopt the practice of using the word “presenter” rather than “missionary” in all cases except those which refer to the nineteenth century missionaries themselves, or involve verbatim quotations. Secondly, the phrase 'in its context' presupposes a link or series of links between the world-view of the presenter and that of the receptor. The relationship between presenter and receptor is thus of crucial importance. Another way to describe the basic inadequacy of the nineteenth century missionary contextualization would be to say that it was homiletical, whereas it should have been hermeneutical as well.

1.2.5 Conceptualization

This is a useful word in this area of study, and one which is included in the thesis title. Its meaning has already been hinted at in outlining the problem, particularly in connection with Christ as transformer of culture, (pp.13ff). As contextualization is the process by which a culture expresses the gospel to other cultures, conceptualization is the process by which a culture receives and understands the gospel and appropriates it as its own. This is a hermeneutical process.

For the purposes of this thesis conceptualization is understood as the process by which people of a certain culture come to understand, in their own context, the message communicated to them, and incorporate it into their world-view.
The distinction between contextualization (presentation) and conceptualization (understanding) is made in order to point out:

(i) that the former should be prepared by the presenter with knowledge of, and sensitivity to the host culture;
(ii) that the latter cannot be done by the presenter at all, but only by members of the host culture;
(iii) that in conceptualization the receptor often picks up more than the presenter is aware of.

With regard to this third point, aesthetic and social attitudes are sometimes conveyed unconsciously by the presenter to the receptor. It has already been noted that Mugambi includes aesthetics as a component of a culture (p.10). An example of this will be given in 4.2.2.3 in the case of William Shaw.

It is the conviction of this thesis that many white missionaries, by rejecting or misunderstanding the Xhosa culture failed to recognize these important principles. This lamentable situation has been a major factor in the rise of the African Independent Churches (A.I.C.'s). In a sense, the A.I.C’s are the product of a complicated set of circumstances parallel to that which took place in Europe over many centuries, [notably the rise of Protestantism], having political and social facets as well as the religious one. This will receive further attention in 4.4.4.

Gregory Baum describes the developing conceptualization within the Roman Church as 'the Spirit-guided unfolding over the centuries' (1994:101). Although in theological terms this refers to revelation, the fact that the revelation is suited to, and received by disparate cultures in various contexts, implies that the development of differing forms of doctrinal emphasis, worship and church order is of an inescapably existential nature. It is one of the implications of the idiosyncratic nature of conceptualization. The word “existential” in this paragraph serves only to describe the nature of the process and does not imply any philosophical school of thought.

The following definition of the conceptualization of the Christian gospel should be understood in light of the definitions of culture given by Mugambi, Vanhoozer and Van der Westhuizen (p.12ff) and Niebuhr's fifth category (pp.14f).
The conceptualization of the Christian gospel is the process by which Christ reveals himself, through the Holy Spirit, in the personal experience of members of the host culture in context, transforming their own self-understanding and value-system.

This means that Christ transforms a culture by revealing Himself in such a way as to modify the self-understanding of the individuals in the group, with consequent changes to the group self-understanding, self-expression and value-system.

To summarize this group of associated definitions: "culture" refers to the basic identity of a community; "context" refers to the specific situation of a culture; "conceptualization" refers to the way in which material is appropriated by a culture; "contextualization” refers to the process whereby material is adapted for and presented to a culture. The process is thus dialectical.

Figure (1)

conceptualization by culture #1          contextualization by culture #1 to culture #2

conceptualization by culture #2          contextualization by culture #2 to culture #3.

conceptualization by culture #3 ....................

1.2.6 Religion

The word “religion” means vastly different things to different people. Some use the term as though it were synonymous with “Christianity”. Others use it to refer to an archaic system of worship and prayer somehow associated with heroic figures [factual or fictional] from the distant past. Still others regard it suspiciously or derisively as a collection of superstitious beliefs and practices having little regard for modern scientific knowledge. For yet others it is no more than a psychological prop for those who are unable to face life alone.

The term “a religion” signifies a concrete system as distinct from an abstract concept. Religions are specific existential manifestations of the essence of religion. Significant for this thesis is the fact that the word is applied both to the Christian gospel and to African tradition. This implies that in order for a
conceptualization of the Christian gospel to take place, religion itself must be suitably conceptualized and its process understood.

Theodore Robinson says that religions are living entities, which may be compared and classified 'without ultimate definition' (1959: 1). In default of a formal definition, Robinson enunciates and describes three features which religions have in common. These are: (i) 'Theology' (: 2), (ii) 'the relationship between the worshipper and the object worshipped' (: 4) and (iii) 'Ethics' (:16).

These three categories will be helpful in evaluating both the Western contextualization of the gospel, and the corresponding conceptualization by the AmaXhosa. The basic questions are: What do I believe? How do I relate to [or inter-relate with] the God/gods in whom I believe? How does my faith influence my moral standards and choices?

Kato says '(i)t is extremely difficult to differentiate religion from culture' but that 'a careful discernment is imperative' (1975:174). He quotes Idowu's helpful definition 'that while culture covers the whole of a person's scheme of life, religion gives direction and complexion to the scheme' (Kato, :174-175). At this stage, it can simply be said that "religion" is a mentor to culture, and each culture is dependent upon some or other religious or quasi-religious system for its self-understanding, and its understanding of its total experience, whether elements of it are viewed as supernatural or not. In short, religion informs the world-view of the culture. This will be fleshed out in 2.2.8, when a hermeneutical model will be sought, and in 4.3 when comparative models of contextualization are discussed.

Putting these attempts at description/definition together produces the following working definition:

A religion purports to contain truth about God (gods), and leads its devotees to worship. It guides the formation of the moral structure of the way of life of the devotees' community and provides a framework within which perceived reality (world-view) can be interpreted.

Such a definition, however, begs the question as to the nature of “truth about God”. It would not be appropriate to define this for theological purposes in terms of scientific verifiability, [as logical positivism would prescribe] nor, at the opposite extreme to define it in terms of such criteria as meaningfulness-to-me or significance-for-me [as extreme subjectivism would expect].

It is the writer's conviction that belief is categorically distinct from knowledge. Beyond the “objective/subjective” dichotomy lies a completely separate category of statements, referring to an area of belief rather than an area of knowledge. Facts and opinions both operate in the realm of the natural. Thus the distinction between “knowledge/opinion statements” and “belief statements” sounds as though it could be explicated in terms of such distinctions as “natural/supernatural” and “physical/metaphysical”. These dichotomies, however, carry philosophical connotations that would prove to be confusing and misleading in the context of this thesis. This issue will be revisited in 1.2.10 when the communication of the gospel is discussed.

1.2.7 Scripture

The Bible is the designated literary basis of the Christian gospel. Kato rightly claims that 'in the African evangelical effort to express Christianity in the context of Africa, the Bible must remain the absolute source' (1985:43). Basic to an adequate contextualization and conceptualization of the Christian gospel is the recognition that the Bible [referred to in this thesis as “Scripture”] is “the Word of God” but also the writing of human beings, produced in and into their specific cultural context and world-view.

It is the stance of this thesis that, as “Word of God”, God's written revelation is to be relied upon and to be ranked above Church tradition and human understanding, though all are effective agents in conceptualization. Because God is truth, God's Word [as originally given] cannot contain untruth. Because God is omniscient, God's Word [as originally given] cannot contain error. The expression “as originally given” acknowledges that errors have crept into the text of Scripture in transmission. The Bible is a product of its world-view, and inadequacies in the biblical world-view as such have been discovered. Therefore the biblical world-view is not to be “imported” into a modern world-view uncritically, any more than the
world-view of the nineteenth century missionaries.

It is possible to give a short and accurate definition of Scripture as the term is used in this thesis. As generally understood in Protestant circles:

the Holy Scriptures consist of the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament [Hebrew Bible] and the twenty-seven books of the New Testament.

They have been generally recognized as canonical since towards the end of the fourth century, and in various denominational Statements of Faith through the centuries there is general agreement as to which they are.

The writer has chosen to proceed on the conservative-evangelical assumption that Scripture is his basic authority for a number of reasons:

( i) Scripture was the basis on which the original missionary contextualizations were made;
( ii) Scripture is regarded as authoritative by all the Christian churches known to the writer who are operating amongst the amaXhosa, and these churches appeal to it in respect of doctrinal issues;
( iii) Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would lead believers into all the truth (Jn 16:13) and since 'all Scripture' is understood to be 'God-breathed' by the Holy Spirit (2 Tim. 3:16), it is reasonable to hold that the Scriptures have been God's specified means of revealing that truth since the apostolic period;
( iv) It is the contention of this thesis that Scripture provides the only objective standard which can serve as benchmark for evaluating various presentations of the gospel. All sorts of worthy ideologies can be produced and evaluated; but those which claim to be Christian must be assessed according to the standards of Scripture;
( v) Scripture comprises virtually the only source of knowledge of Christ available for the purposes of evaluating the Western contextualization of the gospel [post eventum]. It can likewise be the yardstick by which the Xhosa culture, as a vehicle for the conceptualization of the gospel, can be examined;
( vi) The writer believes that there is no other adequate means of identifying errors in what passes for Christian theology in modern and postmodern scholarship, as well as in the nineteenth century missionary presentation, on which Xhosa Christian theology was originally conceptualized.

This is a confessional position and cannot carry the logical justification which would be demanded by
science or philosophy. Equally, it is not an illogical or irrational position.

A major problem in discussing the role of Scripture is that the contents of these sixty-six books are variously regarded in various Christian traditions. The main disagreement can be stated in terms of two rival formulae: "The Bible is the Word of God" and "The Bible contains the Word of God". The first formula explicitly asserts, and the second implicitly denies, that the Word of God comprises the canonical Scriptures in their entirety, "as originally given", comprehensively and in respect of each book. This has clear implications for one's understanding of the authority of the Scriptures and one's assessment as to whether they are inerrant and infallible.

Crucial to an understanding of scripturality is the issue of the authority of Scripture. The position of this thesis is that the contents of the Bible are ipso facto authoritative. This becomes crucial when the various origins of the text are considered. Theologians sometimes critique a doctrine on the basis of its historical origin. For example, hellenisms in Christian theology are rejected as being contrary to Old Testament thought.

While the ontological nexus which produced Judaeo-Christianity is affirmed and emphasized, this thesis argues that the Scriptures were recognised as canonical under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and that this canonicity, rather than Judaism, constitutes Scripture as the standard for Christian doctrine. The acid test of a Hellenistic contextualization is not whether or not it conforms to Judaism, but whether it conforms to what God has permitted to stand in the canonical Scriptures which the Christian Church recognizes.

By inductive reasoning, the authority of Scripture is seen to reside in itself. Specifically, the thrust of this thesis is that Scripture, not the particular Western contextualization of it, must be the judge of contextualized Christian doctrine. Scripture should inform the Western conceptualization and judge its contextualization, and this principle should apply equally to the Xhosa conceptualization and the resultant contextualization. The acid test of a Xhosa conceptualization is thus not whether or not it conforms to the Western contextualization, or whether it conforms to Xhosa tradition, but whether or not it conforms to the scriptural standard. The ramifications of this principle will be further discussed as a hermeneutical issue in 2.1.2.1 and in later sections as specific issues [for example Liberation Theology, Black Theology and
1.2.8 Gospel

B.I.E.C. has espoused the conservative-evangelical position as its theological basis. Within this "camp" there are areas in which individual believers agree to differ. It is, however, important to attempt to set out the basic (agreed) doctrinal core in terms of which conservative-evangelicalism is defined. In this thesis, the word "gospel" refers specifically to the content of Christianity. This means that the expressions "conceptualization of Christianity" and "conceptualization of the gospel" mean the same thing. Alan Richardson makes a number of valuable points when he says: 'To speak of "the Christian religion" does not suggest that Christianity is only one religion among many or that it is not the ultimate truth about God and man, the fulfilment of the religious aspirations of the whole world' (1969:288). The effect of the double negative is to imply that Christianity is or could be 'the ultimate truth about God' and 'the fulfilment of the religious aspirations of the whole world.'

Although the 'knowledge/belief' principle per se (pp.27f) may possibly apply to religions other than Christianity, the words of Jesus in John 16:13-14, in which He proclaims exclusive title to the scriptural revelation are taken as definitive by conservative-evangelical believers. The significant phrases are: 'εις την αληθειαν πασαν [= into all the truth]; 'εµε δοξασει [= glorify me] and 'εκ του έµου ληµψεται [= take from what is mine.] These together imply that the content of the revelation given by the Holy Spirit is the only source of all the truth, and is specifically Christian. It follows that the faith engendered by the Holy Spirit is likewise specifically Christian. In other words, anyone who seeks the whole truth will find it only, and completely, in the Lord Jesus Christ. This will be examined more closely in 2.1.2.3.

In this thesis, the expression "Christian gospel" involves God's dealings with humankind through the eternal Son of God, throughout Biblical history and for the whole of time.

The basic gospel consists of the facts of the life, death, resurrection and ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ as recorded in the gospels, together with accepted beliefs concerning them. It is the stance of this thesis that
although the doctrines are expressed in culture-specific terms, they themselves, together with the facts of the case, convey truth which is universal. In order to present that universal truth in a particular culture, whether the presenter culture or the host culture, terms specific to the culture need to be identified and understood to be secondary to the universal truth. Whenever the universal truth [gospel] is presented in acceptable culture-specific terms, it can be said to be a “contextualized gospel”.

The Gospels form a contextualization, because they are written within a cultural context. It cannot be otherwise. Nevertheless, it is contextualized in the culture God chose for His incarnation, and, as such, must be categorized as ‘original contextualization’. The Acts and the Letters in the New Testament comprise the first contextualization into a foreign culture. There is a danger here of falling into the Marcionite error of setting the Gospels against the Letters (particularly those of Paul). However, the unity of Scripture requires that no such distinction be made. The place of these books in canonised, [and therefore authoritative] Scripture gives both contextualizations a status distinct from that of subsequent contextualizations. They contain the κηρυγµα of the Primitive [New Testament] Church, the required basic content of any contextual form in which the gospel is presented. Any conceptualized form cannot be accepted if it is inconsistent with the scriptural teaching. The writer has elsewhere used the expression "kerygmatic corpus" to refer to this bench-mark contextualization (1983:72-75).

Throughout the rest of this thesis, in order to express the difference in status between the “contextualized gospel” in Scripture and all subsequent presentations, the New Testament content will be termed “scriptural contextualization” and the subsequent presentations will be referred to as “derived contextualizations”.

A conceptualization which meets the criteria of scripturality [nothing anti-scriptural included, nothing scriptural denied and everything a-scriptural recognized as secondary], qualifies as an authentic example of the gospel, that is, a derived contextualization. The task of the hermeneut is to establish guide-lines according to which a conceptualization is judged acceptable, and to supervise the substitution of one form (e.g. the Western) for another (e.g that of the AmaXhosa).
A derived contextualization presents what are perceived to be the facts, together with authoritative interpretation, [consonant with the scriptural contextualization]. A hermeneut seeks to discover the significance of those facts in a contemporary and indigenous interpretation [conceptualization]. This is then presented to the host culture in terms which are not inconsonant with the scriptural interpretation [derived contextualization]. This would need to be presented in a form which can be correctly conceptualized by a host culture.

It is possible to identify the elements of an acceptable derived contextualization, even if there are still areas of controversy. The following summary of a derived contextualization offered by C.W. Parnell could, except in certain areas [denominational distinctives] serve as an approach to a bench-mark for the content of a derived contextualization.

'........ the Lordship of Christ; the sufficiency of the Scriptures as the one rule of faith and conduct; regenerate church membership; the autonomy of the local church; soul liberty; the priesthood of all believers; separation of church and state; the ordinances as symbols of spiritual realities; and world mission.' (1980:6)

These articles would apply in most Protestant traditions. Certain traditions would, however, take issue with some of the phrases, either to dispute them or to place prescriptive definitions on them.

Hiebert points out that the Jerusalem Council, in attempting to define the original contextualized gospel did so by identifying non-essential elements in the Jewish-Christian [Judaistic] conceptualization: circumcision, diet and the Mosaic Laws, which needed not to be imposed upon Gentile converts, [Acts 15] (1994:94-95). He explains that this does not reflect a lack of interest in a positive theological formulation of the gospel, but rather 'a willingness to accept a range of theological interpretations (1 Cor. 1:11-12) centred around the key affirmations of the lordship of Christ (1 Cor. 12: 3; 1 John 2:22-23), his death and resurrection (1 Corinthians 15), and the historicity of God's acts in human history.' (1994:95). This serves to indicate an early flexibility towards the original gospel which should be the model for all derived contextualizations.

Drawing the considerations of this section together, a thesis-specific definition of the gospel would be:
The Christian gospel is the content of God's saving revelation to humankind through Bible history, culminating in the life, death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. This gospel is wholly contained in the Bible, which, as culture-specific to Israel and Asia-Minor, is presented as the “scriptural contextualization”. A conceptualization which results from this, if found to be true to the gospel, becomes a “derived contextualization”

1.2.9 Salvation

The Christian gospel is often defined or described as a message of salvation, comprising Biblical revelation which calls for a faith-response.

The doctrine of salvation involves not only revelation history per se, but also its interpretation. God's revelation in the covenantal history of Israel, is recorded in the Old Testament [The Hebrew Bible]. The salvation-event, which is the theme of the New Testament, comprises the life, death, resurrection and ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Gospels and The Acts complete the history. The Acts also contains stories which record the contextualization of this salvation-event in apostolic times. The rest of the New Testament [the Letters and the Revelation] provide the New Testament interpretation of the gospel - the content of the first contextualization. Post-biblical Church History continues the record given in The Acts, providing information as to the way in which the gospel has come to be understood in various cultures and historic periods.

Salvation, which is the heart of the Christian gospel, has been understood in two quite different senses. This issue will be addressed in Chapter Four [when the missionary contextualization is considered], and in Chapter Seven [when an attempt is made to survey contemporary contextualizations] and finally in Chapters Eight and Nine [when a way forward is sought]. It is needful, however, at this stage to describe the two different understandings in basic terms. This is attempted in the following scheme:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Narrow sense</th>
<th>Broad sense</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“other-worldly”</td>
<td>does not separate secular from sacred</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>future</td>
<td>present and future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>individualistic</td>
<td>affecting the whole of reality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spiritual</td>
<td>all dimensions of life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>salvation of “the soul”</td>
<td>redemption and renewal of the whole creation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Greek verb σωζω, and noun σωτηρια (= “soteria”) in their various grammatical forms are used in the New Testament to refer to physical healing and wholeness as well as to personal “spiritual” salvation. For this reason, the broader understanding of salvation will be indicated in the rest of this thesis by the Greek word *soteria*. The narrow sense will be indicated by the term “personal eternal life”

1.2.10 Communication of the Christian gospel
When religion was being defined (p.26) a distinction was made between empirical statements and so-called “credal statements”. Empirical statements can be true or false; but credal statements cannot be categorized in those terms. The content of credal statements is *given in revelation* and *received by faith*. In terms of contextualization, the presenter hands on what s/he has been given, and in terms of conceptualization, the receptor appropriates it. A presenter culture presents content in “revelation-statements”; and a host culture responds by means of “faith-statements”. In thesis-specific terms, “revelation-statements” are credal statements at the stage of contextualization, and “faith-statements” are those same credal statements at the stage of conceptualization.

The definition could be reformulated as follows:

*When a contextualization/conceptualization transaction takes place, religious content is offered by members of one culture to another culture, comprising credal statements about God (the gods) which guide the formation of the moral structure of the way of life of the community and provide a framework within which perceived reality (world-view) can be interpreted.*

It is the stance of this thesis that Christianity comprises a unique revelation of God, historically inculturated in the people of Israel, culminating in Jesus of Nazareth [Who is also the eternal Son of God], and made available in the New Testament to Jews, Greeks and Romans, and in later centuries to many other cultures. The Western understanding of Christianity is one of the forms in which that revelation has been made available, and that of the amaXhosa is another.
Hinchliffe asks two pertinent questions which go to the heart of this thesis:

'Is it possible to detach religion from society and bring a pure essence of Christianity, as it were, out of the context of Western culture and into an African culture in place of traditional religion? Can one preach Christianity to a people with another culture and hope that they will receive it without destroying their culture on the one hand or producing a syncretistic Christianity on the other?' (1972:402)

The first question concerns the “basic gospel” and the response of this thesis would be negative. The term “basic gospel” is used only for the purposes of academic distinction. It can never exist in practical reality.

The second question concerns the nature and methodology of “contextualized gospels”. The burden of this thesis is that such preaching of Christianity is possible and the task of this thesis is to indicate the practical considerations involved. This issue was discussed in 1.2.1.1, where Niebuhr’s fifth proposition was accepted - that Christ transforms a culture (p.15f). Two principles need to be established in response to Hinchliffe’s question. (i) The basic identity of a culture is not lost in the transformation, but (ii) the culture nevertheless becomes distinctive. The first of these principles seeks to save the culture from destruction, and the second seeks to guard Christianity from syncretism. The way in which religious factors and cultural factors affect the communication of the gospel will be revisited in 4.3.1.

The writer finds Van Rheenen's stance on syncretism strange and disappointing:

'Syncretism is the reshaping of Christian beliefs and practices through cultural accommodation so that they consciously or unconsciously blend with those of the dominant culture ... Over a period of years the accommodations become routinized, integrated into the narrative story of the Christian community and inseparable from its life.' (2003: 3 internet format)

This appears to confuse religion and culture, in such a way that culture becomes a religion with which Christianity could be blended. It also fails to identify a standard according to which the 'reshaping' could be evaluated.

Van Rheenen seems to generalize and to judge the motivation of contextualizers unfairly:

'Syncretism develops because the Christian community attempts to
make its message and life attractive, alluring, and appealing to those outside the fellowship.' (ibid)

The writer is convinced that the aim of 'the Christian community' is 'to make its message' intelligible.

Communicating the gospel is the mission Christ has given to the Church, (Mt.28:18ff). Jesus based the mission of the Church in the mission the Father gave him, (Jn 20:21). It follows, then, that communicating the gospel can rightly be termed *missio Dei*. Since the Willingen Conference of 1952, the term *missio Dei* has come to mean different things to different groups of theologians. The *Heilgeschichte* School, used it to refer to the presentation of salvation theology along the lines Parnell sets out (p.33f). Theo Sundermeier describes the *Heilsgeschichtliche* thinking of Warneck in the following terms:

'According to this notion, the *What* of faith is beyond contention. Its essence is agreed by consensus, and the rest is simply a matter of finding the most effective method of adapting the available means, and of applying these economically towards achieving the goal of mission, which is to convert the heathen.' (1990:260)

This fits the “narrow” understanding of salvation in 1.2.9. Sundermeier goes on to refer to the 'great counter statement' which 'Hoekendijk set forth' at the Willingen Conference (ibid). Sundermeier describes Hoekendijk's position thus:

'To Hoekendijk the concept of missio Dei means the overall manifestation of God's turning to the world in loving care .....God wants to save his world, give it his peace. “Shalomisation of the world” - this is how Hoekendijk encapsulates the aim of missio Dei, and in this sense it is a socio-ethical concept.....’ (:261)

This fits the “broad” understanding of salvation in 1.2.9. Sundermeier equates Warneck's position, after he has modified it in terms of the thinking of Freytag, with 'the essence of the mission Theology expressed at Lausanne' (:260). This would mean that Willingen marks a major paradigm shift from evangelical mission theology [characterized by the term 'reconciliation'], to Liberation Theology [characterized by the term 'redemption']. In that case, Lausanne could be characterized as neo-evangelical, providing a corrective to the
socio-political stance of Liberation Theology.

The distinctions made here are precisely what this thesis has attempted to indicate by using the term *soteria* to refer to the broad understanding of salvation. It holds clear implications for the effectiveness of a contextualization to the amaXhosa who do not recognize any distinction between sacred and secular.

In an attempt to accommodate the *soteria/shalom* issue, this thesis will identify and describe three main hermeneutical factors in the missionary contextualization to the amaXhosa: the foreignness of the Western conceptualization in general (4.1.1.2); the non-cardinal elements which it contained (4.1.1.3) and the general lack of regard for the Xhosa culture (4.2 *passim*).

Hiebert (1994:76) says that between approximately 1850 and 1950, general missionary policy for the communication of the Christian gospel in India and Africa was to reject all the elements of the indigenous cultures, and to regard members of the host cultures as *tabula rasa*. Hiebert defines *tabula rasa* as 'the missionary doctrine that there is nothing in the non-Christian culture on which the Christian missionary can build...' (ibid). This purports to be a factual statement. *Tabula rasa* literally means ‘“[a] smoothed tablet”, a blank page’, (Deist, 1984:168). The writer considers this to be a sweeping statement and will discuss it in 4.2, when the extent to which it can justly be applied to the missionaries to the amaXhosa will be evaluated.

Hiebert associates the failure to contextualize with a failure to recognize the need for it, (1994: 76-81). According to him, the failure was caused by the theory, held in Europe and Britain in the nineteenth century, that there is only one human world-view / culture, that it is constantly evolving and that the Western world-view / culture is its highest form. The advance of science in Britain and Europe was also seen as illustrating the superiority of the Western world-view / culture.

It will be argued in Chapter Four that the iconoclastic approach adopted by many of the missionaries was entirely inappropriate because it failed to discern acceptable and helpful elements in the Xhosa culture which
could be [and to some extent already have become] legitimate accretions to the Xhosa appropriation of the gospel. Because these missionaries failed to re-contextualize to any significant extent, the AmaXhosa had only the Western form of Christianity on which to conceptualize. Thus, because such meaningful indigenizing contextualization as was done by the missionaries was not adequate, the conceptualization by the amaXhosa was distorted. There have been notable exceptions, and the missionaries who succeeded in finding points of contact and resonance will be mentioned and discussed at appropriate points in the thesis.

It is submitted that the missionaries whose work is researched and evaluated in Chapter Four of this thesis held the communication of the Christian gospel as defined above to be their ideal, even though in some respects they failed to achieve it. It is also the ideal of the students and faculty of BIEC.

On the basis of the foregoing discourse, this thesis adopts the following definition of the phrase "communication of the Christian gospel" as found in the title of the thesis:

The "communication of the Christian gospel" is the process whereby the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, revealed in the Bible both as personal eternal life and as soteria/shalom, is proclaimed to members of a host culture, with the cognitive purpose of teaching them the doctrines, and the parenetic purpose of persuading them to become Christian believers and disciples.

It will be noted that this definition makes certain assumptions. Specifically, the qualifying phrase "as revealed in the Bible", standing alone, implies the sola scriptura principle, which is the basis of the conservative-evangelical tradition. It should be noted, however, that this stance does not prescribe the way in which Scripture is to be interpreted and communicated. One of the failures of the missionaries was that they adopted a prescriptive attitude towards some of the Biblical concepts and of the doctrines of Christianity. This will also receive further attention in Chapter Four.

1.2.11 Heresies and Schisms

Although modern Africa is not concerned with the niceties of Western philosophical theology, an excursus into heresies and schisms is justified on the grounds that it serves to provide a basis for the evaluation of what is admissible in any presentation of the gospel vis-a-vis the standards for an acceptable derived
contextualization. This will apply to the evaluation of missionary activity (Chapter 4), to contemporary Western Theology (Chapter 6) and to African conceptualizations (Chapter 7).

Doctrinal problems cause division in the Body of Christ. Some result from false teaching, others from variant understandings of particular doctrines none of which can be shown to be false. The former are usually referred to as heresies and the latter as schisms.

Ferdinand Deist defines heresy as 'a doctrinal view that is at variance with the recognized, established and official doctrine of a church' (1984:73). In his definition of schism, he distinguishes between the Roman Catholic and the Protestant understandings of the term. Both recognize a schism as something that divides the one Church of Christ, but Protestants limit their definition to divisions whose reasons are 'not scripturally founded', (Deist, :151). The clear effect of this is to categorize all divisions which are scripturally founded as involving heresy.

Deist's definition of heresy begs two important questions. In the first place, his use of the indefinite article [in the phrase: 'a church'] does not do justice to the unity of the Church; and in the second place he does not specify what criterion/criteria he would use as his standard. Various denominations have differing convictions regarding authority in theological matters – Bible, Councils, Creeds, Reason – and vary as regards the weight to be afforded to each.

The lack of specificity regarding criteria is important. The stance of this thesis is that scripturality should be specified as the criterion for orthodoxy, and that the criteria for scripturality itself need also to be specified. Perhaps it becomes necessary to prescribe a particular version of the text (e.g. Textus receptus and its attendant translation “family”). Perhaps the term 'orthodox' should be used to indicate doctrines which are recognised by the vast majority of Christians as correct, according to the Scriptures. This approximates to the original intention of the term “catholic”. Its weakness is that although it effectively deals with the issue of authority, it does not prescribe a specific doctrine of Scripture as regards issues such as inspiration, inerrancy, and literal/figurative expressions. Basically, there will be an inevitable degree of subjectivity in
the evaluation of doctrines as heresies, although that degree of subjectivity will not be large.

Bearing Deist's definitions in mind, and addressing their perceived inadequacies, this thesis adopts the following definitions of heresy and schism:

A heresy is a theological tenet which contradicts the clear teaching of Scripture as revealed to the Church and in its doctrines. In the terms adopted by this thesis a heresy is anything which is anti-scriptural, in terms of a consensus understanding of scripturality in the Church.

A schism is a division in the Church caused by failure on the part of one or more parties to recognise the freedom of other parties to differ from them in matters which are not mandatory according to Scripture. In terms of this thesis these matters would be a-scriptural.

1.3 Outline of procedure

In order to meet the criteria of the hypothesis set out at the end of 1.1., the gospel needs to be fully and clearly identified in the Western and Xhosa contexts, in terms of scriptural [required] and a-scriptural [permitted] elements. This will be done in the course of the development of the thesis.

Chapter Two will examine the general principles involved in cross-cultural communication, which will be applied to the Xhosa situation during the rest of the thesis. Chapter Three will offer an account of the long process by which the Western conceptualization and the nineteenth century missionary contextualization developed. In preparation for the task of addressing the current situation, this thesis will attempt [in Chapters 4, 5 and 7] to trace the range of cultures and influences in the history of Christianity in South Africa, and to examine and evaluate the reactions and subsequent developments. In Chapter Eight the writer's assessment of the attendant prospects will be indicated; and Chapter Nine will attempt to map the way forward.

With regard to the effect of Western Christianity on the amaXhosa, there would appear to be three main directions from which influences can come: theological principles, hermeneutical principles and secular influences. These will be considered in Chapter Two.
CHAPTER TWO
CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION OF THE CHRISTIAN GOSPEL

This chapter attempts to identify the general principles which govern the process of communicating the
Christian gospel – the process of contextualization by a presenter agency - from its own conceptualization -
to a receptor group [host culture], in order for the host culture to produce its own conceptualization and
contextualization.

The chapter examines the theological and hermeneutical principles and considers the secular influences
which come into play in the situation. Finally an attempt is made to formulate a hermeneutical model which
will serve as a bench-mark to assess the nineteenth century missionary activity amongst the amaXhosa
[Chapter 4] and to inform an approach to the communication of the gospel by the amaXhosa in the twenty-
first century [Chapters 7 and 8].

2.1. Theological principles

The most basic theological question concerns the nature of the Christian religion [gospel] itself.

When the nature of the gospel has been established, hermeneutical principles can be employed to
translate it into content within a specific culture [conceptualization].

2.1.1. Can consensus be reached concerning Christianity?

Christianity exists in the form of various “derived contextualizations” (p. 31). The concept of culture-less or
culturally neutral Christianity is naive. In any case, such a form of Christianity could not be known, even if
it could exist, since one's way of knowing is largely a matter of experience and the formation of thought-
forms, which are all culture-specific.

The writer has elsewhere offered an approach towards an answer to the question: 'In what does Christianity
consist?' by referring to the character of a Christian believer. '....to call someone a Christian implies certain
expectations regarding his conduct and his beliefs, as well as about his knowledge. The expected conduct would be based upon his knowledge of the facts and his acceptance of the doctrinal statements’ (Higgs, 1983:12). Although this indicates a possible direction in which the search could be pursued, the question as to how much of 'his beliefs' and 'the doctrinal statements' comprise essential elements of a derived contextualization and how much consists of extraneous material is an important one, particularly where cross-cultural contextualization is concerned. The fact that Christians disagree amongst themselves as to what should be categorized as essential presents a further problem.

Since each culture produces its own conceptualization, and conceptualizations differ between denominations of the Christian church, it follows that there will be a variety of presentations of the gospel. Furthermore, since the distinctive doctrines or emphases of the various denominations have become blurred in recent years [on account, partly, of the Charismatic movement on the one hand and the Ecumenical movement on the other], the variety of presentations of the gospel has become even wider and more extensive.

This thesis does not attempt to identify the gospel as it is presented by each denomination or theological grouping. The gospel is discernible in the content of preaching. Good preaching does not emphasize denominational or group particularities; but these will inevitably occur as characteristics of any derived contextualization, and will form the content of *catachesis* at local church level. In a multidenominational lecturing programme, however, these non-cardinal doctrinal particularities must be looked at objectively.

In order to approach this task, the nature and source of authority in Christian doctrine must first be investigated.

### 2.1.2 The Nature of the gospel

The contents of the scriptural contextualization appear in particular and varying forms as derived contextualizations. This implies that no doctrinal formulation will exclusively encapsulate the content or significance of the Christian gospel. For this reason, a fresh approach must be made to an understanding of
what the key to the Christian gospel actually is.

The problem caused by the variety of presentations of the Christian gospel is being addressed in this thesis on the basis of the concept of "contextualized gospel" [derived contextualization] as distinct from "original gospel" [scriptural contextualization]. The task of this thesis is to evaluate the accuracy and adequacy of the Western conceptualization/contextualization as a derived contextualization of the Christian gospel, with particular reference to its presentation to the AmaXhosa by the missionaries; but more especially a consideration of the question whether the resultant Xhosa conceptualizations can themselves be categorized as admissible derived contextualizations. The following sections will elucidate the basis on which such admissibility is to be determined.

2.1.2.1 The gospel enshrined in Scripture

Scripture was defined and the general principles of a conservative evangelical doctrine of Scripture outlined in 1.2.7. At this point, the question must be explored a little more deeply, in respect of its relevance for this thesis.

The traditional Anglican stance is exemplified in the status officially afforded to the Scriptures in its doctrinal standard. Article VI of the Thirty-Nine Articles deals with the sufficiency of Holy Scripture, as follows, (Articles of Religion, incorporated in The Book of Common Prayer, 1611):

'Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of Faith, or thought to be requisite or necessary to salvation.'

The Methodist missionaries held the traditional [reformed] Anglican position on Scripture. Wesley described himself as homo unius libri [a man of one book] (1952:15). In his sermon entitled The Means of Grace, he expresses his conviction regarding the inspiration and infallibility of Scripture in the clearest possible way. 'All Scripture is given by inspiration of God", consequently, all Scripture is infallibly true' (1787-8/1944:142).
The Second Baptist Confession (1677) defines the Baptist position on Scripture as follows (Bettenson, 1966:351):

"The Holy Scripture is the only sufficient, certain and infallible rule of all saving knowledge, faith and obedience ... Nothing is at any time to be added, whether by new revelation of the Spirit or traditions of men ... The infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself..."

From the foregoing survey, it would appear that most of the nineteenth century missionaries to the Eastern Cape, Anglican, Methodist and Baptist, would have held to the sola Scriptura principle. This would not reject the Creeds or the General Councils, but would insist that they are to be judged by Scripture. The canonical books comprising the Old and New Testaments form the basis upon which any contextualization of the Gospel should be constructed, because they are the locus in which the Gospel is enshrined.

2.1.2.2 The gospel as principle rather than entity

The gospel is often thought of as an entity coterminous with the content of Scripture and a particular interpretation of it. It is important to recognise, however, that the Scriptures, as locus in which the Gospel is enshrined, do not, in and of themselves, constitute the gospel per se.

Crucial to the progress of this thesis is the understanding that the gospel is not a particular doctrinal construction at all. This thesis recognizes the sufficiency and supremacy of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments and recognizes that doctrinal truth is propositional; but believes (a) that Western Christian theology has not always presented the Biblical material accurately, nor drawn incontestable conclusions from it; and (b) that the Biblical material itself is not without difficulty for contextualizers, as far as the facts it presents and the significance it ascribes to them are concerned.

The various conceptualizations resulting from the presentation of the gospel will not necessarily be identifiable along denominational lines, or along the lines of the historic Christian traditions [Catholic, Anglican, Reformed, or Pentecostal]. In some cases several contextualizations may originate within the same
denomination. Examining derived contextualizations and comparing them could lead to greater inter-denominational and cross-cultural understanding, but it is not the task or intention of this thesis to perform such an examination. The process is implied in the concept of multiculturalism (9.1.1).

Particular contextualizations need to be examined as to their structure and claims. This field has been investigated by Henry Lederle (1988:34-41) who uses the term "proprium" to refer to a group or denominational distinctive. Although he has used Reformed theology as an illustration, his case study is Pentecostal theology. He examines the use of the *proprium* in the following contexts:

(i) Caricaturing a tradition.
For example, Lederle cites the 'very common perception that the most typical belief of Reformed Christians is the doctrine of predestination' (1988:35) and the accusation that 'Reformed Theology..... of inherent necessity, gave birth to the system of legalized racial discrimination called "apartheid" ' (ibid). This is an example of an incorrectly perceived *proprium*.

(ii) Defining the basic essence of a tradition.
In contrast to the caricature, Lederle says that the basic essence of Reformed theology is to be found 'in the doctrine of the triune God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit.' (:36).

(iii) Outlining the distinctive or distinguishing elements in a tradition.
In this connection, Lederle says: 'I would suggest that distinctly Reformed theology distinguishes itself with respect to its concept of *Lordship*.' (ibid. italics Lederle). Lederle refers to this latter context, the distinguishing element in a tradition, as the "proper" use of a *proprium*.

The following three principles appear to emerge from Lederle's study:

(i) 'It is to be expected that every group of Christians would describe their core beliefs in very "ecumenical" terminology' (Lederle, 1988:36);
(ii) the distinctive element serves as a kind of filter through which the core belief is expressed;
(iii) the varied perceptions of a tradition, particularly those held by its opponents in terms of caricature, play a significant role in causing divisions.

In order to identify the properties of an adequate contextualized gospel, the following question needs to be considered:

(i) How do the various denominations perceive one another?

In terms of Lederle's use of caricature as a means of identifying a *proprium*, a further question would need to be asked:

(ii) How do the various denominations regard the particular elements of other denominations *vis-a-vis* their own particular elements?

These questions need to be asked in multi-cultural situations, such as the interaction of Western and Xhosa Christianity. Hiebert observes three stages in the development of the practice of contextualization: Colonialism, Anticolonialism and Globalism (1994:53). Colonialism will be brought into the dialogue of the thesis in Chapters Four and Five, globalism in Chapter Six and anticolonialism in Chapter Seven.

If the solution of the problem of cross-cultural communication of the gospel were to be sought by way of detailed comparisons between denominations, groups or cultures, Lederle's schema would not help very much. If, however, an attempt were made to bracket out the finer details of the specific doctrines involved, and an approach made whereby each group sought to find fellow-Christians completely outside and beyond group particularities, Lederle can point the way and make a significant contribution in terms of guide-lines. His categories will therefore be brought into the discourse at appropriate times throughout the thesis.

2.1.2.3 The gospel as Person rather than principle

Any contribution towards the progress of the Christian gospel in the Eastern Cape must recognize that the answer does not lie in “translating” its Western form, into an indigenous equivalent. On page 30 above, the statement was made that ‘anyone who seeks the whole truth will find it only, and completely, in the Lord Jesus Christ’. This needs now to be expanded in terms of the basic principles of contextualization. Part of
the Western contextualization of Christianity is the Western conception of Jesus and his teaching. Members of host cultures, including the amaXhosa, can adequately conceptualize the gospel only by discovering the Lord Jesus Christ as Person, [which is basically a response to God's revelation through him], and submitting to him and to the power of the Holy Spirit within the indigenous cultural context, so as to be enabled to produce an appropriate and meaningful inculturation of Christianity de novo. Thus a further development in the process of defining the gospel is to move beyond principle [which is impersonal], to the awareness that the Christian gospel is based not upon theological principle(s), but in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. On page 24 of this thesis the following principle was adopted:

'(t)he conceptualization of the Christian gospel is the process
by which Christ reveals himself, through the Holy Spirit,
in the personal experience of members of the host culture
in context, transforming their own self-understanding
and value-system.'

Myklebust refers to the Lausanne Conference of 1927, and to the reaction of the churches to it:

'"the message of the Church to the world is, and must always
remain, the Gospel of Jesus Christ", and that "because He Himself is the Gospel, the Gospel is the message of the Church
to the world."'4

The process of contextualization is precisely that of introducing this Person to the people; but it is by no means a simple process. It is clear that the basic gospel [which exists only in principle] is a coherent message about the Lord Jesus Christ, expressed in culture-free terms. A derived contextualization requires that all the a-scriptural cultural accretions in the presenter's portrayal of Jesus must be recognised as secondary to the gospel, and removed if necessary; and that cognisance must be taken of the fact that the host culture will employ its own a-scriptural cultural accretions. Unavoidable cultural accretions in the presenter contextualization must be "translated" into dynamic equivalents in the host culture. The phrase 'The gospel as Person', in the heading of this subsection, should be understood as metonymy.

An attendant issue here is the relation between revelation and reception of revelation. The purpose of contextualization is to proclaim the gospel as God's chosen means of Self-revelation by God's Holy Spirit. Conceptualization can be regarded as the work of the Holy Spirit illuminating the receptor. The fact that all

of this is the work of the Holy Spirit does not protect the process from human error in the form of misunderstanding and human imagination. It is therefore incumbent upon the presenter and the receptor together to ensure that both the contextualization and the conceptualization are clearly true to the gospel enshrined in Scripture, in that a-scriptural elements on both sides have been clearly recognized as such.

The vexed question of the relation between “the eternal Son of God”, “Messiah”, “Jesus the human being” and “the Lord Jesus Christ” has also to be considered. In Western thought, attempts to resolve this issue are attended by the constant danger of dualism and extreme dispensationalism.

Briefly stated, the expression “eternal Son of God” refers to the second Person of the Trinity, whose being is not restricted to time. “Messiah” is the figure who historically and eschatologically fulfils God's promises to Israel. The term “Jesus the human being” asserts that the eternal Son of God, in taking human flesh at His incarnation, became truly human.

N. T. Wright revisits the question of the distinction between the historical Jesus and the Christ of the Church's faith, and in particular, the importance of resuscitating the quest for knowledge of Jesus in His first century situation. Wright expresses his intention as follows:

’My agenda is to go deeper into the meaning [of the gospel] than we have before, and to come back to a restatement of the gospel that grounds the things we believe about Jesus, about the cross, about the resurrection, about the incarnation, more deeply within their original setting.’ (2000:4).

Wright is primarily an Early Church historian, and this thesis will not go very extensively into either his method or his findings. His position, however, serves as the basis from which this thesis will now proceed. The important principles are:

(i) the gospel can be found only in the Lord Jesus Christ;
(ii) the Lord Jesus Christ can be clearly and accurately seen only from the vantage point of an understanding of the first century Jewish culture and context.
Wright offers four reasons for embarking on this quest:

(i) he cites the fact that 'Jesus has revealed God' (2000:4);
(ii) he asserts that 'loyalty to Scripture' motivates us to engage in this area of New Testament studies (ibid);
(iii) he claims that 'the Christian imperative to truth' requires us to find out all we can about Jesus (ibid);
(iv) he declares that he is motivated by 'the Christian commitment to mission' (2000: 5).

Wright sees Christian commitment to mission in terms of an engagement with Enlightenment modernism and contemporary scepticism in the West, particularly in America. His relevance for this thesis lies in the fact that the amaXhosa have received the gospel through a Western filter. This needs to be analyzed and addressed in the course of developing an indigenous inculturation.

Additional to the issue of this christological dualism per se is the question whether the amaXhosa themselves perceive dualism here, and if so, what its precise nature might appear to them to be. In the discourse of this thesis, this christological question will be put to Ntsikana and Tiyo Soga in 4.4 and to Sigqibo Dwane, Manas Buthelezi, Allan Boesak and Peter Mtuze in 7.2.

The discovery of Jesus as a Person implies a new understanding of the past, a new vision of the future, a new understanding of created reality, and a new perception of the present - as a participation in the coming of the Kingdom of God [through faith and in the power of the Spirit]. In other words, the message about Jesus Christ implies a coherent world-view.

If John 5:39-40, record the ipsissima verba of Jesus, he claims ontological priority over Scripture, because the reference implies that the possession of eternal life does not come 'by them', but by coming to him. This by no means implies that Jesus was distant from Scripture. From an early age He set Himself to learn Judaism, which would include its scriptural foundation (Lk. 2:46). He appealed to Scripture on many occasions (Mt. 4: 4, 7 and 10, 21:12, 22:41ff; Lk.10:26), but in Matthew 5:17ff he describes his unique relationship with the Scriptures [at least the Torah] as their fulfiller, and provides instances of the way he fulfills them. The fulfillment is so radical that his ontological priority becomes clear. Even in the synagogue itself, his declaration that the Scripture he had read was fulfilled that day (Lk. 4:16-20), implied that he is the fulfilment of it.
The Scriptures serve as the means of communication of the gospel only insofar as they communicate the Lord Jesus Christ. This principle has a three-fold effect:

(i) it qualifies any definition of a derived contextualization;
(ii) it recognizes the paramount importance of the doctrine of the Person of Christ;
(iii) it makes it easier for the amaXhosa to relate to the gospel because their culture focusses on people rather than principles or documents.

2.2 Hermeneutical Principles

This thesis will look at the differences in starting-point [world view] between Western Christianity and the amaXhosa and how these determine the conceptual framework in which the transaction took place initially and continues to take place. The use of metaphor and the ramifications of translation will be addressed, together with recent developments in socio-hermeneutics. A key word in this particular area will be resonance. The hellenization of Judaism (3.1.1) and the hellenization of Christianity (3.1.2) will serve a double purpose – both providing content and comprising a methodological model [which is illustrative rather than prescriptive]. That is to say, Hellenistic Christianity, which forms the basis of the classical Western conceptualization of Christianity, will help to determine the content to be contextualized; and the way in which Christianity was presented to first century Greeks will raise issues which will help to identify the best way to present the gospel to the amaXhosa. It is the contention of this thesis that the nineteenth century missionaries rightly identified the content but did not choose the most effective method [“form”]. Their presentation was thus flawed.

A major problem lies in the fact that definitions of “derived conceptualization”, and lists of criteria for the authenticity of a derived conceptualization vary from one group or tradition to another. The differences found in the various derived conceptualizations involve a number of controversial issues of a general nature, in which theologians, denominations, and, in some cases, groups within a denomination, form up on one side or the other. The status of these differences in respect of cardinality (2.2.1) is important because: [a] non-cardinal a-scriptural elements need to be identified and taken into account; [b] anti-scriptural elements need to be removed; [c] where a cardinal element is involved the issue would have to be resolved by co-operative study and reflection. What, then, are the parameters or guidelines involved in formulating an acceptable
derived contextualization of the Christian gospel?

2.2.1 Guide-lines: Cardinal and non-cardinal elements

The purpose of this section is to discover and set out guidelines or basic principles according to which a contextualized gospel can be recognized as such.

Among the writers whose work has informed the production of this thesis are Grant R. Osborne and Anthony Thiselton. They have each made a clear and insightful contribution in the field of contemporary hermeneutics. Osborne distinguishes between cardinal and non-cardinal doctrines. He defines a cardinal doctrine as 'a theological belief that is central to the Christian faith and clearly taught as such in Scripture' (1991:313). A non-cardinal doctrine 'is one that is not clear in Scripture or is not presented as a mandatory belief of the church' (ibid.). Most of these non-cardinal elements are distinctive beliefs which particular traditions hold, but which are not 'necessary for salvation'; for example, particular beliefs about the details of our Lord's Second Coming (premillenial, postmillenial, amillenial); or particular stances on issues over which Christians differ, for example, pacifism and contraception. There are theologians who would argue that some or all of these are, in fact, cardinal doctrines. It does not seem likely that complete agreement will be reached on these controversial issues. Arguments for various positions in these areas would normally be a-scriptural, and failure by any denomination or group to recognize such a position held by another denomination or group would constitute schism rather than heresy (pp. 38ff).

Hiebert introduces the terms 'supracultural theology' and 'metatheological process' (1994:102f) to refer to the principles and practice applicable to this particular problem in contextualization. He hopes in this way to find a resolution to the impasse arising from ambiguous contextualizations on the one hand and faulty conceptualizations on the other.

'Ironically, this metatheological process, carried out on the international level, may lead us to what Western theologians have long sought - a growing consensus on theological absolutes. It may bring us closer to the formulation of a truly supercultural Theology. But such a formulation must be an ongoing process; for as the world and its cultures change, so do the problems Theology must address.' (1994:103).
This is very close to Lederle's thinking (pp.45ff). It needs to be stipulated, however, that existing derived contextualizations which meet the criteria of scripturality should not be abandoned or rejected even after the process has been launched.

Hiebert's starting point is quite clear.

'The goal of theology is not simply to apply the gospel in the diverse contexts of human life. Theology's nature also revolves around the goal to understand the unchanging nature of the gospel – the absolutes that transcend time and cultural pluralism.' (1994:102)

One particular form of this type of non-cardinal element is the method of clarifying a doctrine or principle by means of figurative language such as parable and metaphor. Ways of expressing beliefs in symbolic form are also non-cardinal elements. The issue here is that of “form” suited to the 'diverse contexts of human life', and “content” - 'the unchanging nature of the gospel'. If nothing in the content is anti-scriptural, and the form is not inappropriate to the referent, figurative language and symbols are counted admissible. Symbolics will be considered in 2.2.6.

On the basis of Osborne's definitions of cardinal and non-cardinal doctrines and on the assumption that a derived conceptualization is defined as the sum of all cardinal doctrines plus elements not directly contrary to Scripture, the next task is that of evaluating the scripturality of the various elements in each of the derived contextualizations to assess whether they qualify for inclusion.

Osborne uses the term “denominational distinctives” to refer to the particular emphases placed by a denomination or group on certain cardinal elements of the gospel. In a diagrammatic *schema*, Osborne shows 'denominational distinctives' as occupying a middle position between cardinal and non-cardinal doctrines (1991:313). This is somewhat misleading, in that it could be understood to imply that there is an element of teaching which is neither cardinal nor non-cardinal. The writer understands Osborne to be saying here that some denominational or group particularities are emphases of cardinal doctrines, and that these emphases are, in themselves, non-cardinal. A further implication could be that particularities are regarded as cardinal by those who hold them, but not by those who do not.
This thesis adopts this double categorization. Some traditions emphasize a cardinal doctrine which all the other traditions merely include. The emphasis itself is non-cardinal. Where a denomination or group holds a distinctive doctrine which is not included at all in any other traditions, it must, according to Osborne's definition, also be categorized as non-cardinal. A problem arises when a particular denomination or group regards as cardinal a doctrine which no others include. A particular contextualized gospel would be incomplete and therefore inadequate if a cardinal element were absent; but the presence or absence of a non-cardinal distinctive would not have the same determinative significance. An agreed categorization as between cardinal elements, non-cardinal elements and group particularities is, therefore, an indispensable prerequisite in assessing a contextualization.

2.2.2 Text and Context in Biblical Interpretation

Osborne has identified three areas in which the original context of a passage of Scripture needs to be viewed (1991:19ff). The aim of studying the historical context (:19-20) is to construct the technical “introduction” to the Bible book in question, identifying the author, determining the date and gaining information concerning the people to whom the work is addressed, as well as about the themes and purpose of the work.

He describes the logical context (:21-22) as a development from the smallest detail of a text to the Bible as a whole. This is methodologically related to inductive Bible study, and is essentially the basis on which Justin Ukpong's programme is based (2.2.3).

The linguistic context (Osborne, :75ff) is the most basic for hermeneutics per se. The basis here is textual criticism and translation. It is important that all three contexts [historical, logical and linguistic] be thoroughly explored, in order to discover what the text meant in its original context. The linguistic aspect of this issue will be discussed in 2.2.3.

The host context has also to be considered. The process of communicating the gospel could be regarded as a “balancing act” in which accuracy in respect of the sacred texts is weighed against the demands of comprehensibility and relevance for the host culture.
Constructing or assessing a derived contextualization is basically a hermeneutical process. Daniel Sanchez criticizes the allegorical and praxis approaches to the task of contextualization as those which 'risk failing to do justice to the biblical text' (2002:375). He says: '...when the allegorical method is employed in the interpretation of texts which are not symbolic, it disregards their inherent meanings.' (376). The charge is also made that the allegorical approach can fail because of the subjectivity of the interpreter. The praxis approach calls for a dialectical relationship between the modern context and the biblical text. In this relationship the modern context is generally viewed as having pre-eminence.' (ibid.). The praxis method is favoured by liberation theologians, whose approach is basically ideological. The danger of this approach, which is basically eisegesis, will be apparent. Liberation Theology as an entity will be examined more fully in 5.3.

The grammatico-historical approach is charged with failing to do justice to the modern context because 'it can have a tendency to ignore the influence of the modern cultural context upon the interpreter.' (Sanchez, 2002:377). Furthermore, 'it can focus on the linguistic history but be reluctant to give due recognition to the cultural and historical conditioning of the perspective of the author of the text.' (ibid.) Sanchez adds that 'if it assumes that the hermeneutical task can be limited to defining the original meaning of the text, it will be lacking in its present application.' (ibid.).

Context is undoubtedly central in the hermeneutical and homiletical task of communicating the gospel to the amaXhosa or any other receptor. The host culture has to be considered as well as the original context. The respective importance of the two contexts needs to be carefully evaluated. Although the missionaries may well have done justice to the biblical context, they failed to do justice to the host context. Viewed positively, this teaches that in order to be able to communicate effectively, modern interpreters must be cognizant of the way in which past approaches in the Eastern Cape have failed. On the other hand, this does not mean that the original context can be disregarded, or even that the contemporary context should have pre-eminence. The two contexts must address each other, so that the genuine message of the original can be faithfully appropriated by the receptor.
2.2.3 Language and Meaning

This thesis affirms that language is not only the most important dimension of culture, but also the most important vehicle of cultural expression. Sherlock (1996:143ff) stresses the importance of language, by which 'we are able not only to communicate, but to reflect upon our living' (:143).

Since the main element in theological communication is verbal, it follows that several problems are located at the point where the gospel is verbalized. These go beyond the translation of the Scriptures into the host language, since even at a synchronic level, language [vocabulary] itself is heavily contextualized. Dialects bring multiplicity to vocabulary and meaning within the geographical area where a particular language is spoken, and vocabulary varies from one social group to another.

If the diachronic aspect of language and meaning is introduced, the problem becomes even more complicated. Words are given changed meanings in succeeding centuries, as modern readers of the King James Version (1611) of the English Bible know very well. This aspect becomes extremely significant when ancient texts are used to communicate the gospel, even within one culture. When the communication is cross-cultural, it is crucial to recognize that both synchronic and diachronic factors in the relevant languages remove the host culture still further from the source.

Ukpong expresses the basics of contextualization when he refers to the four co-ordinates: the context of the text, the text, the readers and the context of the readers (Getui, 2001:193). Osborne points to the complexity of the process, and implies a warning about the danger of over-simplification, when he says:

'...there is no inherent meaning in a word ... in reality words are arbitrary symbols that have meaning only in a context. They function on the basis of convention and practical use in any language system, and they must be studied descriptively (how they are actually employed) rather than prescriptively (according to preconceived rules)' (1991: 75-76).

The thrust of this is that any derived contextualization needs to be completely understood by the receptor, in
terms of all the variables of the original context, of the process of transmission and of the receptor's own context. Developments in a culture give rise to language changes. Each derived contextualization needs to be updated regularly, directly in the language of the host culture, by members of that culture who are also experts in the biblical languages, in order for the process of contextualization to remain efficient. Derived contextualizations produced within a culture [as distinct from those produced in a presenter contextualization from another culture] need to transact with the original [biblical] contextualization.

With regard to specific issues of translation, Thomas distinguishes between “literal equivalence” and “dynamic equivalence” as philosophies of translation (1983:55).

(i) Dynamic equivalence enables free translations to develop from the resonance approach, with varying degrees of faithfulness to the text.

(ii) Subjectivity needs to be carefully assessed in these approaches. The host context becomes all-important.

(iii) The literal equivalence approach takes the text much more seriously, but at the expense of comprehensibility to the host context.

Sanneh states an important principle when he observes:

'Scriptural translation rested on the assumption that the vernacular has a primary affinity with the gospel ... As long as missionaries were committed to translation, so long would vernacular concepts and usages continue to determine the assimilation of Christianity ...' (1989:166)

This concept suggests not only the possibility of pre-Christian elements in the host culture serving as praeparatio evangelica, but also the importance of finding dynamic equivalents in the host culture which can help to elucidate some of the truths of the gospel.

Acceptable cultural accretions found in the communication of the gospel in any culture include idioms, metaphors and other figurative language. Scriptural precedents are found in Matthew 6:3, John 1:29 and 2 Corinthians 12:7.
Hiebert brings a practical instance of the problem when he asks:

'How do you translate "lamb of God" (John 1:29) into Eskimo, in which there is no word for, or experience of animals we call sheep? ' (1978:54)

Literal equivalence is clearly impossible where a particular term does not exist in the host language at all. Here, the advocates of literal equivalence would require that the scriptural term be transliterated from the original Hebrew, Greek or Aramaic, so as to form a neologism in the host language. [“Neologism” is used in this thesis purely in relation to semantics, and has no theological significance]. This would need to be followed by a footnote explaining the meaning and significance of the word in the original context. A suitable dynamic equivalent could be added.

This seems to be the position which Kato favoured. He uses “mustard seed” as his example.

'...This is a crop not found in America or Africa. Instead of substituting a local grain for it, the term should be employed and the explanation given. While the content of God's word should remain what it is, the expression of it in teaching, preaching and singing should be made relevant.' (1985:24)

Although this applies primarily in the translation of Scripture, it has relevance also for any verbal transaction, such as preaching and teaching. There would clearly need to be parameters to indicate the criteria which a comprehensible and relevant contextualization would have to meet in order to be categorized as the gospel.

Dynamic equivalence in practice seeks to replace something in the presenter culture which is unknown in the host culture by something judged to convey the same idea. Would it be acceptable, in a country where sheep are unknown, to contextualize this expression by substituting an alternative animal known to the host culture, which has the same characteristics as those conveyed by the figurative use of the word "lamb"? This would involve making material alterations to the text of Scripture, in the process of translating into the host language, not merely to provide cultural resonance but to make the message basically intelligible. The significance of the chosen replacement metaphor and its appropriateness in its context would determine the extent to which this expression can be regarded as an adequate and acceptable element of the derived conceptualization.
Describing the Lord Jesus Christ as the Lamb of God (Jn 1:29) is one of the biblical ways of referring to His sacrificial role. The sacrificial significance of Christ's death is counted a cardinal doctrine. But inasmuch as the expression also refers to Jesus as a lamb, one has to recognize a particular metaphor which, in itself, is not to be considered cardinal in the same way as the sacrificial death is. In order to ensure that the content is identified as secondary, the figures of speech, including those arising from conceptualizations made in host cultures, need to be understood clearly as such by all parties to the contextualization.

Failure in this regard will result in a defective conceptualization. It might be noted in passing that liberal theologians would be able to perform this operation much more comfortably than conservative-evangelicals would.

Making substantive alterations to the text in the process of translation would \textit{ipso facto} involve a categorization of biblical material into that which is universally applicable and that which is culture-specific. While this might not be totally arbitrary, it would be difficult [yet needful] to establish criteria for such a categorization. This is a particular aspect of the general original problem: What is cardinal and what is non-cardinal? It is of particular significance where the grammatico-historical method is applied. To a certain extent, recent and contemporary debate in linguistics, and the tendency towards the concept of metalinguistics has suggested that this issue is irrelevant.

Charles Kraft uses the expression 'receptor-oriented communication' and expresses his view that '[b]y doing things in terms of concepts that are convenient for us the communicators, we have distorted the message' (1978:497). His argument goes beyond the confines of language as such, and will be examined in 2.2.8, when a hermeneutical model is sought.

The process of transmission by means of contextualization will clearly be better effected if the original biblical languages are translated directly into the host language [in the case of the present thesis, isiXhosa] by indigenous speakers of the language who are also biblical linguists.
The writer has elsewhere illustrated this principle by reference to C. J. Langenhoven's treatment of Euclid's Twentieth proposition - that the sum of any two sides of a triangle is greater than the third side (Higgs, 1983:52). Langenhoven's context was the struggle for the recognition of Afrikaans in the 1920's. His point is expressed (1971:88) in what amounts to a *reductio ad absurdum*:

'Maar my lieve Euklides, sien jy dan nie, wat jy met soveel trappe bewys het, weet elke dors donkie wat die reguit pad kies dam toe in plaas van die ompad?' ["But my dear Euclid, can you not see that what you have taken so many steps to demonstrate, every thirsty donkey knows when he chooses the direct path to the dam in preference to the deviation" - Translation: MJH]

Langenhoven's thesis was that it is better in all respects for Afrikaners to receive their education by means of their day-to-day home language, rather than through High Dutch [or, even more inappropriately, English], which they then had to translate for themselves before they could get to the content of the subject matter.

Higgs has adapted Langenhoven's triangular model so as to make it applicable to Christian education in modern South Africa (:52ff). The principle can be elucidated by a diagram:

In this case, the diagram refers to cultural contexts, not to languages. The writer is aware of the achievements of those missionaries who ministered in isiXhosa and became conversant with the Xhosa culture; but the effect of their work could never equal what can be achieved by Xhosa believers themselves. This thesis attempts to evaluate the “missionary path” followed in the Eastern Cape from the nineteenth century to late in the twentieth, and to apply hermeneutical principles and humbly suggest guide-lines for the “direct path” on which a start has already been made.
With regard to language and comprehension, the work of Justin Ukpong (Getui 2001:188ff) is of value. It concerns checks by lay people on academic interpretations of texts. Ukpong was concerned that “untrained” readers of the Bible should be able to express themselves as to the meaning of various texts, and that the conceptualization of the academy did not always produce the most effective contextualization. Ukpong's contribution has two weaknesses. Firstly, his “untrained readers” are dependent upon the academy for the translation of the text into their own language, so that their conceptualization amounts to a unilingual semantic exercise. Secondly, reader-response is open to abuse on account of ideological manipulation, (2.2.4).

The area of linguists in hermeneutics has undergone radical changes in the last thirty years. Thiselton (1992:10ff) describes how in the 1970's there were three main directions:

(i) the Romanticist tradition of Schleiermacher and Dilthy,
(ii) the existentialist approach of Rudolf Bultmann and, in his earlier work, Heidegger, and
(iii) Gadamer's ontologizing method in which language becomes actualized in historically-finite events.

Thiselton goes on to outline subsequent developments. He says: 'Post-Gadamerian hermeneutics represents and embodies three or four different directions of response to Gadamer's work' (:11). These are: “metacritical”, “socio-pragmatic” and “socio-critical”. Since this situation can be compared to a cross-roads junction, the fourth option would be to turn back.

(i) Metacritical. Critics evaluate texts, as for example in form criticism and redaction criticism. The metacritical approach asks: “What is the value of this work in relation to what it was intended to achieve?” [The question as to what it was intended to achieve is itself a metacritical question]. Thiselton (:315-316) gives a telling description of the experience of a film-goer who is deeply engrossed in the plot of a film, only to have the spell broken by a very practical comment from the critic reminding him that it is only a film. A critique of the “performance”, according to the metacritical approach, is only one of the criteria to be used in the evaluation. Of arguably more importance is the effect the “performance” has upon the “audience”. In terms of this thesis, what the amaXhosa receive of the gospel is arguably of more importance than the
methods used in the communication. The issue will be revisited in Chapters Seven and Eight.

(ii) Socio-pragmatic. This approach is associated with the work of Stanley Fish. Thiselton gives the following account of Fish's position: 'It is ... operationally justifiable, and even necessary if confusion is to be avoided, to replace the question “What does this mean?” by the question “What does this do?”' (538-9) [italics Thiselton]. Fish supports this claim: 'The reader's response is not to the meaning; it is the meaning.' (1980:13) [italics Fish]. This total subjectivity amounts to the position “the passage means whatever I think it means”, which is not far removed from “it means what I want it to mean”.

Sherlock illustrates this point by means of a humorous exchange between Alice and Humpty Dumpty in Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking Glass*:

Humpty Dumpty defends his right to assign to a word any meaning he chooses by remarking: “The question is, which is to be master – that's all.” This principle [“the passage means whatever I think it means”] holds very problematic implications for Ukpong's project. The relevant term in contemporary debate would be “reductionism”. This term will be examined in section 6.3, when postmodernism is discussed.

This position implies "cultural relativism". Thiselton explains (1992: 27-28):

'Socio-pragmatic hermeneutics remain explicitly ethnocentric. The community cannot be corrected and reformed as Fish concedes, from outside itself. Its only hope of change is to imperialize other communities by extending its boundaries until it disintegrates under its own weight and internal pluralism. But this is to exchange hermeneutical understanding for the random contingencies of social history.'

Whether this accusation can be laid at the door of the missionaries to the amaXhosa will be discussed in section 4.1.1.

Taking Thiselton's scenario a stage further, it is also arguable that the present confusion in Western Theology is the result of the West having 'disintegrate(d) under its own weight and internal pluralism'. However, it is the position of this thesis, against Fish, that there is an objective message in the gospel over and above the

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reader-response, and that it is available cross-culturally. Internal pluralism is created when reader-response is absolutized in hermeneutic praxis – that is, when reader-response is categorized as meaning per se.

(iii) Socio-critical. This position seeks to give recognition to both the metacritical emphasis and the 'universal or trans-contextual nature of human rationality' (Thiselton, :381 Italics his). The problem is that if the trans-contextuality constitutes a genuine relativity, there may not be an objective standard according to which a valid critique can be established. Richard Bernstein encapsulates the problem: “To speak of 'the pathology of modernity'... presupposes a normative standard for judging what is pathological...” 6 (Thiselton, :381). The need for a 'normative standard' presents a problem similar to that of reader-response subjectivity.

According to the conservative-evangelical position, which this thesis espouses, the Holy Spirit illumines Scripture not only as the standard for its interpretation but also as the guarantor of its authority. This is clearly irrational to philosophers, but is seen by conservative-evangelical theologians as a confessional position in which reason has to give way to reverent faith. Such faith cannot give a philosophically responsible account of itself, but does not consider itself required to do so. It requires, however, as liberal theologians and secular philosophers do, that its claims must not be irrational.

It is at this point that the methodological distinction between Biblical hermeneutics and the interpretation of secular texts needs to be mentioned. Biblical hermeneutics involves the work of the Holy Spirit, and operates in an authority-sphere totally different from that of secular texts.

Wolfgang Iser has propounded a theory of reader-interaction (Thisleton, :516ff) which proves quite significant for this thesis. His thought can be traced, through Roman Ingarden, to Edmund Husserl. Grounded as it is in the methodology of phenomenology, it is reminiscent of the earlier philosophical debate concerning “appearance” and “reality”. On the basis of knowledge gained from past experience, we are able to infer the nature of objects we cannot completely see. An example would be the two-dimensional perception of a three-dimensional object. No text imparts complete knowledge of its subject-matter. The

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activity of the reader is to fill in the blanks. In terms of this thesis, this is precisely the point at which non-cardinal elements are introduced. Clearly, the analogy of a physical object breaks down here, because the unseen dimension of an object will always be the same, whereas in cross-cultural reading of the Bible [and in any other instance of reception of the gospel], the non-cardinal accretions will vary. The superintendence of the Holy Spirit in any sincere application of this process safeguards the truth from any inappropriate conceptualization. The hermeneut and the disciple are saved from the dangers of metacriticism in this case, because the categorization of an element as appropriate or inappropriate [admissible or inadmissible] is also the work of the Holy Spirit in that the Holy Spirit's ministry to a believer is *testimonium Spiritus Sancti internum* [the inward witness].

The real issue is seen, once again, as being located in the nature of the authority of Scripture, and in the *Scriptura sui ipsius interpres* principle.

### 2.2.4 Ideology

A word of caution needs to be sounded at this point concerning an important hermeneutical principle. The relativity of a culture, in encounter with the text of Scripture should always be regarded as passive. A culture is able to dialogue with the text, indeed, must do so; but from the side of the host context, [i.e. the conceptualization], the dialogue will take the form of asking questions of the ancient text and receiving the text's answer - albeit in a form which can be assimilated by the host culture, and possibly foreign to the presenter culture. It can clearly be seen, once again, that the position of this thesis is diametrically opposed to the extreme subjectivity of Stanley Fish. At this point an exegete or hermeneut needs to guard against the possibly undue influence of an ideology, and the unacceptable type of *eisegesis* to which it leads. This is precisely the risk to which Sanchez draws attention in connection with praxis hermeneutics, (pp.54f).

Translators and contextualizing theologians need to be aware of the possible distorting effects of an ideology on a translation or contextualization. The translator's integrity is involved here, and s/he must not have a hidden agenda. The *sub-conscious* influence of an ideological standpoint must also be taken into account. In recognizing what ideology did to the Western contextualization as it was presented in the Eastern Cape,
(Chapters 4 and 5, below), one needs to ensure that African theologians and translators do not become caught in the same snare. Ideology in conceptualization extends beyond translation and even beyond *exegesis*. Political and cultural factors play a part, as will be mentioned in 2.3.

It is important to note that the stance of South Africa's black theologians is in line with Old Testament prophets such as, particularly, Amos. They see these Old Testament books as ideological in themselves. Perhaps it might be more accurate to say that there is a clear ideological element in them. The degree of radicality in the politico-ideological content of these theologians varies from one writer to another. Contextualizations which will be studied are those of Takatso Mofokeng (5.3.2) and Itumeleng Mosala (5.3.3).

By contrast, the less politico-ideological theologies of Sigqibo Dwane, Manas Buthelezi, Allan Boesak and Peter Mtuze will inform a discussion of contemporary South African contextualizations in Chapter Seven.

### 2.2.5 The concept of resonance

With regard to conceptualization, an approach which has rapidly been gaining ground is that based on the concept of resonance. It is not new, in that over seventy years ago Prof. C. Bailey, although he did not use the word, described the principle in this way:

> '.......there is undoubtedly in the pagan world a Praeparatio Evangeli, nor could the gospel have won its way if it had not found an echo in the religious searchings and even the religious beliefs of the time.' (1932:41)

Bailey's work concerned the relation between Christianity and the pagan religion and ritual of the Roman Empire, and refers to pre-Christian elements which were incorporated into Western Christianity when 'the pagan world' responded to the gospel. These will be examined in 4.1.1.3.

Bailey's principle holds good for all instances of contextualization, including the hellenization of the Jews, the Christian evangelization of Hellenistic Jews, and particularly the Christian evangelizing of Judaistic Jews. It applies equally to the evangelization of the amaXhosa.
The principle of resonance has come into vogue amongst African theologians. It claims that the Christian message can be interpreted by reference to corresponding elements in one's own culture. The process tends, however, to be subjective, and leaves the content of the gospel largely undefined. The gospel is seen not as a corpus of identifiable doctrines, but rather like a musical theme which is unmistakably recognizable in a number of variations. In such a case, theme and variations would be distinguishable to consciousness, but could not be isolated and analyzed in a way which could be adequately accounted for in language. Of any aspect of the host culture, someone could say: "Yes, the gospel is here", or "No, the gospel is not here". It is claimed that such a judgment would be saved from subjectivity if it were agreed to by consensus, but again, the illuminating role of the Holy Spirit should be recognized as the dominant factor. Acts 15:28 lays down the guiding principle which brings the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the guidance of consensus together.

The main problem which the principle of resonance presents is that it tends to regard the gospel as an impersonal entity parallel to, for example, the Xhosa culture. It might be easier to access this principle if, in line with 2.1.2.3 (pp. 46ff), the word “gospel” were replaced by the word “Christ” ['Christ is here”; “Christ is not here”].

The writer does not believe that resonance can be found between elements of any culture as such [natural theology or general revelation] and the truths of revealed theology [special revelation]. The former are categorized as non-cardinal and the latter as cardinal. This conviction will be applied, for example, to a comparison between ritual slaughtering in African tradition and the sacrificial death of Jesus (below, 4.2.2.2 and 7.2.2.2). Instances of resonance can, however, serve to illustrate gospel truths in a “vestigial” way [as in, for example, vestigia trinitatis]. More importantly, they can help a member of the host culture to feel “at home” in the Christian faith.

2.2.6 Symbolics

Since various forms of non-verbal communication are possible and effective, this aspect of communication has to be considered in respect of the communication of the Christian gospel. The term “Symbolics” is used
to refer to a number of types of non-verbal communication. Their significance for this thesis is that they are non-cardinal elements which must be recognized and accounted for as such.

(i) Significant actions and gestures. There are a number of instances in Scripture of what are often described as “acted parables”. Jeremiah 13: 1-11 and Acts 21:10-11 are examples. Although verbal communication accompanied these dramatizations, the message was essentially conveyed by the non-verbal actions. Such actions are as much culture-bound as verbal communication. The point becomes clear when social conventions are considered. A polite Englishman will always rise to his feet when a woman enters the room. The semiotic significance (Thiselton, 1992:80ff) of such an action is quite different for a traditional African, who might view the standing up as an aggressive gesture. Differences of this sort could be expected to have caused confusion and possibly even to have led to hostility in the early Western/Xhosa interaction. It is even more serious if they impinge upon an understanding of the gospel. This touches the heart of the hermeneutical process, which is basically a case of “cracking the code”.

(ii) Physical objects. The most extreme context for physical objects in religious symbolism is the use of an idol as an object of worship. Israel encountered this phenomenon. Judges 16:23 and I Samuel 5: 1- 5 tell about one such idol, Dagon. Early Christianity had also to respond to it. On his visit to Athens, Paul found that city “full of idols” (Ac. 17:16 NIV).

A brief comparison of the way in which each of these phenomena was dealt with, in Judaism and Christianity respectively, is very instructive. The account in I Samuel of Dagon falling in front of the Covenant Box holds for modern Western readers an air of superstition and credulity. The Israelites seemed to be as convinced as the Philistines that Dagon was real; but for them he was inferior to Jahweh. It would be wise to attribute this to the underdeveloped state of progressive revelation at the time this event took place. By contrast, the apostle Paul, confronted with idolatry in Athens, (Acts 17:16ff) was “greatly distressed” by it. Nevertheless, he simply made reference to it (v.22) and proceeded to preach the Christian gospel. Paul's contextualization in Athens will be discussed in 3.1.2.2.
2.2.7 The significance of Textuality and Orality in modern Africa

West points to the fact that the level of literacy in Africa plays an important part in the transmission of the gospel (2001:89). Many members of African congregations are not literate and therefore have no access to the written text of Scripture. They are thus dependent on those who read the Scriptures to them, and on their own ability to memorize them. In many cases the pastors themselves are not literate, and the oral tradition prevails at the communicator level as well as at the receptor level.

Orality tends to diminish the status of the Bible as the definitive document of Christianity. Textuality tends to be undermined and textual studies neglected. On the other hand, a slavish biblicism which overrides the work of the Holy Spirit is equally undesirable. God can be trusted to address illiterate and pre-literate Africans with the truth of God's Word, just as God addresses translators and expositors of the written Word. As was demonstrated in 2.1.2.3 above, the gospel is ultimately the Lord Jesus Christ. What matters for a genuine communication of the Christian gospel is not whether it is read from the text of Scripture or heard from the reading of Scripture or recalled as memorized Scripture, but whether the read, heard or memorized communication is faithful to the written text and to the Lord Jesus Christ as He is revealed in and through it. However, it must be borne in mind that orality represents a step of removal from the gospel. It might be argued that the Gospels were first transmitted in oral form, but it must be pointed out that at the time of the oral transmission many of the eye-witnesses of the events recounted were still alive.

2.2.8 Towards a hermeneutical model

On page 27 above, the following pragmatic definition of religion was presented:

'A religion purports to contain truth about God (gods),
leading its devotees to worship Him (them); guides
the formation of the moral structure of the way of life
of the devotees' community and provides a framework
within which perceived reality (world-view) can be interpreted.'

From a hermeneutical perspective, the last phrase of that definition would be definitive. A genuinely Christian paradigm is provided when Christ comes as the transformer of culture (pp.13f). The hermeneutical task is to apply the message of the gospel in such a way that it becomes formative for a
Christian world-view. The following question, which is critical for this thesis, needs now to be asked: How can a derived contextualization be presented to a host culture in such a way that its non-cardinal elements are clearly recognized as such? The complementary consideration should be: What a-scriptural elements in the host culture can be applied as praeparatio evangelica?

One indication of how to identify such elements is Adeney's methodology to contextualize gender equality as a universal value (2007:33-37) (p.22). Her work, in principle, can be instructive as a method for contextualization in Christian mission generally. According to this method, in order to contextualize the gospel as a whole, each element would need to be taken individually as a “universal value”. Adeney proposes the following six-stage agenda:

1. Recognize the importance and universality of the value.
2. Check out the acceptability of the value in another context.
3. Identify other cultural values that prevent the practice of the universal value.
4. Recognize the complexities of the culture.
5. Work with Christians in the culture to clarify priorities of traditional practices in light of the universal value.
6. Work with Christians in the culture to devise new patterns of behaviour that demonstrate the universal value.

With regard to stage [1], Adeney asserts that the importance and universality of a value is to be found in Scripture. She points out that 'fresh study can discover new insights from the text'. (:34). In addition to 'clarifying our own views of the universal value', such study can serve 'as preparation for accompanying our sisters and brothers in another culture in the theological study they will want to do' (ibid).

In the task which this thesis is considering, the term 'context' in stage [2] would need to be replaced by the term 'culture'. The other culture is examined to determine the extent to which the universal value under review is recognized and acted upon. Attitudes and habits are formed which, over time, permeate society. Observation of the behaviour of members of the other culture will show whether the people accept and live by the value in question.
Stage [3] attempts to identify elements in the other culture, including values which the other culture regards as important, but which militate against the value in question. These could also include popular misconceptions and prejudices which have arisen with time, and have no rational basis. Adeney advises that ‘(c)ommunities working with conflicting values need to take time to prioritize their efforts to practice (sic) those values in light of societal norms and their Christian commitments.’ (:35).

Stage [4] arises out of a recognition that cultures are complex, and that one needs to guard against hasty criticism of practices in the other culture which would not be acceptable in one's own. The practice in question would be part of a network of behaviours having significant meanings within the culture. In this stage, respect is afforded to the complexity of the other culture, and a sincere attempt made to understand the behaviour in its cultural setting.

In stage [5], Christians in each culture work together to develop 'the wisdom to navigate between traditional practices and new forms that promote' the targeted value. (:36). The process will result in changes of attitude, as participants 'identify the deeper meanings and interconnectedness of their traditional practices' (ibid).

Stage [6] marks the transition from theory to praxis. It might be found that some practices would need to be discarded. Others might need to be modified. Still others would need to be interpreted differently, so as to develop a new traditional meaning more acceptable than the old one.

It can clearly be seen how these principles could be applied in South Africa, and how their implementation would facilitate intercultural dialogue concerning the Christian gospel. Discussion of the nature of a universal value, and the praxis resulting from it, would create an understanding of the respective world-views of the presenter and the receptor in terms of which the gospel could effectively be presented.

With regard to the gospel itself, Hiebert issues an insightful warning regarding cultural biases.

'As the church in a given sociocultural setting seeks to contextualize
the gospel, it is keenly aware of the needs the gospel must address within its setting and the foreignness of Christian forms that have been introduced from without. It is often unaware, however, of its own cultural biases, which it projects into its understanding of the Scriptures. Believers in other cultures are generally more aware of these'. (1994:103)

It is noted that Hiebert uses the verb 'contextualize' for the process this thesis has described by the verb 'conceptualize'.

The writer has elsewhere suggested four categories for religious education in post-apartheid South African schools (Higgs, 1995:118 ff). In that paper, it was assumed that if religious education is provided in post-apartheid state schools, it would need to address a multi-faith situation.

The first, or phenomenological phase comprises a factual, objective study of the various religions represented in the learner-body of the school. In the second, or philosophical phase, learners would investigate what the various religions teach concerning the meaning of human existence. The third, or formative phase would be the study of religion per se, as revealed in the various “living faiths”. In the final, or theological phase, 'one particular religion ...... is made the basis of the quest for truth' (:119).

Many of the nineteenth century missionaries appear to have attempted the fourth stage without any reference to the other three. Although the preliminary three phases are not necessarily required per se in the missionary situation, they ought at least to have formed part of the missionaries' preparation of their contextualization for the amaXhosa. This aspect will form part of the profile for pastoral training/formation in Chapter Nine.

Two qualifications need to be made at this stage. Firstly, The categorical difference between a classroom situation in a multi-faith community and a Christian presenter/church situation is that the objectivity which is morally and legally essential in the former does not necessarily apply in the latter. Nevertheless, although the methodology would differ in the church or “missionary” situation, the principles which Higgs enunciates would still apply. Secondly, the extent to which westernized Xhosas have adopted a secular paradigm will
determine the extent to which this process needs to be adapted to meet a cultural situation as distinct from a multi-faith one.

Higgs issues an important warning, which is basic also to the discourse of this thesis: 'It should also be recognized that ... each participant comes to the task with a particular religious viewpoint as part of his existential situation ... He is not a tabula rasa ... on which ideas can simply be impressed.' (:120).

Mention has already been made of the term tabula rasa (p.38) in connection with Hiebert's missiological theory. The import of this is that what Hiebert said about the nineteenth century missionary situation applies not only at the level of the community but also at the level of the individual. One may not assume that because certain members of a community have conceptualized the gospel appropriately, all the members will do so. The prior knowledge of each individual has been uniquely shaped by a set of individual existential experiences. It follows that logically each individual believer makes her/his own conceptualization and therefore her/his own “derived contextualization”; although for practical purposes so fine a distinction cannot be sustained. The basic domicilium for a “derived contextualization” would be a denomination, a section of a denomination or in some cases a local congregation.

Some of the missionaries assumed that the tabulae had first to be wiped totally clean, before the gospel could be written on them. It needs to be recognized that this was a wrong assumption both theologically and methodologically. In other words, not only is a member of the receptor culture not a tabula rasa; he does not need to become one.

The relativity of cultures acknowledges that no one culture is totally right in that no one world-view can conceptualize and contextualize the whole objective truth, or produce a conceptualization free from cultural accretions. It is for this reason that cultural and denominational accretions in the Western conceptualization of the gospel need to be recognized as such and either bracketed out or clearly explained. When the gospel is contextualized for another culture, the objective truth in the presenter conceptualization needs to be distinguished, logically and methodologically, from the subjective elements found in that conceptualization.
It can then be conceptualized by the host culture in terms of its own subjective elements, care being taken not only that those subjective elements are compatible with the gospel, but also that they are recognized as non-cardinal by all parties to the transaction.

Osborne sets out the guiding principles according to which this can be done. He gives a brief account of the work done by Eugene Nida and Charles Taber in 1969.

'The first step is analysis, in which the surface structure is studied in terms of its grammatical relationships and word meaning... The second step, transfer, mediates from the original to the receptor language... Finally, the material is restructured to be completely understandable to the new language.' (Osborne, 1991:94).

The presenter culture and the host culture must be aware of the problems of contextualization, not the least of which is the fact that the presenter's context is itself a receptor context.

In the terms of this thesis, it is at the first stage in the programme that Western idioms and symbolism need to be recognized as cultural elements to be identified and taken into account; and it is at the third stage that suitable Xhosa idioms and symbolism need to be found and applied.

The restructuring process can be achieved by means of an exchange of symbols, and an exchange of metaphors within theological, ideological and ethical parameters which do not include anything which is inconsistent with the gospel as such.

At the core of this process is the perennial problem of form and content. Colin Brown states that 'the unique significance of the philosophy of the Christian religion could be brought out by drawing a distinction between \textit{form} and \textit{content}.' (1969:287, emphasis Brown). The essence of the problem which this thesis addresses is that in attempting to present the content of the Christian gospel, many of the missionaries tended also to prescribe its form. The twin principles of dynamic equivalence and resonance are relevant at this point, inasmuch as these missionaries failed to employ them in their contextualizations. In order for an adequate contextualization to be constructed, the biblical text and the modern contexts need to interact or
Against the background of his criticism of approaches which fail to do justice either to the biblical text or the modern context (p.56) Sanchez offers guidelines for the development of a contextual hermeneutic (2002:380-382). He refers to Charles Kraft's taxonomy of contexts in terms of levels of abstraction: ' (1) culture-specific; (2) general principle; (3) human universal.' (Sanchez, :380). Greeting with a holy kiss is cited as an example of a culture-specific injunction, coveting cattle as an example of a general principle and loving God as an example of a human universal command.

The injunction 'Greet one another with a holy kiss' is found at 1 Cor. 16:20. Gestures, which are distinctively cultural and vary from country to country and even between generations in the same country, become a significant factor in biblical hermeneutics and contextualization. In the Western culture of the twentieth century, a smile, nod or handshake seemed to fulfil the requirements of the scriptural “holy kiss”; and more recently embracing and patting on the back (both sexes) has become the current equivalent.

The prohibition of coveting cattle is found at Exodus 20:17. In modern Western culture, the motor-car, power-boat and holiday home have become objects of covetousness. Sanchez appears to fail to notice the phrase 'or anything that belongs to your neighbour' (N.I.V.) in this verse, which effectively removes the need to refer to specific objects, and therefore disposes of the need for dynamic equivalents.

The command to 'love the Lord your God' is found at Luke 10:27. Sanchez cites the Shema (Deut. 6: 5) directly (ibid), but the New Testament reference is preferable because the Shema is specific to the Judaic culture, and because the injunction from the lips of Christ has dominical authority as well as universal application.

Sanchez adds a further qualification when he points to another basic hermeneutical principle:

'Another precaution which the interpreter needs to keep in mind in dealing with passages which have obvious cultural trappings is that
the overall teachings of Scripture must be brought to bear in the exegetical task’ (:381).

It might be expected that from the overall teachings of Scripture, a supracultural meaning could be drawn from the text, which will form the basis for a new conceptualization in a receptor culture. Developments in the concept of meaning in hermeneutics claim that it is possible to embark on a quest for a theological absolute without having to attempt the impossible task of defining the parameters of the “basic gospel”. In view of the inescapable culturality of all hermeneuts, this exegesis would presumably have to be done on a consensus basis. Subtle nuances in the vocabulary of the various languages and the inadequacies of some of the vocabularies would constitute problems. It is also expected that the concept of resonance would play a major part in the process.

With reference to the status of Scripture in the relationship between hermeneutics and the modern sociocultural context, Sanchez distinguishes between the dialectical [in which both are equal partners] and the dialogical [in which ‘the modern context is willing to be questioned and modified by the biblical text’ (:382)]. In terms of the quest for a supracultural meaning as a [theoretical] basis for contextualization, the relationship between Western participants and Xhosa participants would be dialectical, and the relationship between them and Scripture would be dialogical.

Questions genuinely reflecting the existential concerns within the culture are addressed to the biblical text. There must be no ideological “hidden agendas”. With the help of grammatico-historical, historico-critical and social science methods, answers must then be drawn from the original sociocultural context of the text. Questions posed by the text must also be heard and responded to, in respect of the possible re-evaluation and modification of a contextualization in terms of elements condemned by the biblical text. This will lead to questions of a higher order being put to the biblical text in an ongoing [spiral] dialogue.

African theologians have emerged who are capable of conceptualizing the gospel adequately, of contextualizing it and communicating it to their respective cultures in their respective contexts. The Western conceptualization was produced by Western theologians and church leaders. It would seem to be preferable,
therefore, for a process to take place parallel to that by which Christianity developed in the West. To ground such a process, the development of the Western conceptualization is traced in Chapter Three.

An appropriate conceptualization of the gospel will be one which is doctrinally pure and, as far as possible, consonant with the culture it addresses. Any heresies [anti-scriptural content] must be recognized and avoided, and the distinctive non-cardinal elements [a-scriptural content] clarified in such a way as to make possible the construction of an acceptable conceptualization by the host culture. This can only take place if receptor cultures respect one another and perceive value in one another.

2.3 Secular Influences

It needs to be recognized that the intercultural communication of the Christian gospel involves, or is affected by, far more than the preaching and teaching of biblical and theological content. What is in question here is not simply what the preachers and teachers present as the doctrinal content of the gospel, nor the way in which they present it and their hearers understand it. It is rather a question of a total interaction of the ethnic groups (presenter and host) in all spheres, helping to shape one another's world-view.

Three types of secular influence will now be considered: political, cultural and sociological. The findings will then be applied to the hellenization of Christianity as model (3.1.2) and to the nineteenth century missionary presentation in the Eastern Cape (Chapter 4 passim). Finally they will be applied to an enquiry into the current situation of the amaXhosa (Chapter 7), as a preliminary for a contemporary contextualization [or contemporary contextualizations] (Chapter 8) and for outlining a plan of action for future theological training (Chapter 9), bearing in mind the findings of the phenomenological enquiries in the earlier chapters.

Secular influences are found in the Church struggle against apartheid, both in the stance of the Afrikaans churches and in the reaction of the proponents of Black Theology. It is also found in the work of some proponents of African Theology such as J. Ukpong, whose basic orientation appears to be socio-economic. 2.3.1 will examine the way in which politics has aided or hampered the progress of the gospel in the
missionary context and subsequently. 2.3.2 will interrogate secular culture on the same basis. As a model, the Roman Empire is of particular significance, since this was the socio-political context of the New Testament. The social structure will be examined in 2.3.3. These three sections will then be considered in such a way as to draw up principles for admitting secular elements into a contextualization.

Great Britain established colonies in a number of countries of what used to be the British Empire, at about the same time the missionaries were evangelizing. Unfortunately, in the minds of many of the indigenous people the two processes became blurred into one, as British imperialism. This was certainly the case amongst the amaXhosa of the Eastern Cape and will be discussed in Chapter Four, when the interaction is described and evaluated. The quasi-culture of British imperialism, which was the basis of the colonization, will be examined in 4.1.3.1, the missionaries' own brand of imperialism in 4.1.3.2 and racism in 4.1.3.3.

At this stage it becomes necessary to expand the scope of the main hypothesis of this thesis (p. 9) to include non-cardinal elements which are not strictly cultural, so that:

Specific cultural elements and other elements affecting the life of an ethnic group need not, in practice, be bracketed out of any context, [either of the presenting world-view or the receptor world-view], but they need not be a problem for the communication of the gospel, as long as they are identified and understood to be secondary to it.

2.3.1 Political Factors

Because the gospel is addressed to human communities, and human communities are political by nature, it follows that political factors will influence the conceptualization of Christianity by any receptor culture.

In order adequately to indicate the nature of political influences in the context of this thesis, a distinction must be made between the institutionalized church as it is in human history, and the community of faith which has sometimes been called the Church Invisible. Dean Inge makes a significant comment in this connection:

'But the Holy Spirit has never left himself without witnesses; and if we will put aside a great deal of what passes for Church history, and is really
a rather unedifying branch of secular history, and follow the course of the religion of the Spirit and the Church of the Spirit, we shall judge very differently of the relative importance of events from those who merely follow the fortunes of institutionalism.’

(Bruce, 1958:161)

This implies that political influences are to be found inside the institutionalized Church, such that the history of the institutionalized Church must sometimes be categorised as secular history. The material which Inge sees as comprising ‘a rather unedifying branch of secular history' would include many of the cases of intrigue and deception which have accompanied the election of church leaders historically, and the manner in which some of those leaders have attempted to wield secular as well as religious power, (Bettenson, 1963:140).

In more general terms, the struggle for supremacy between the East and the West, which had a profound influence on the early Church Councils and later the filioque controversy were all basically political in nature.

The significance of political influence as it concerns the amaXhosa can be identified in three eras in South African history: the colonial era; the apartheid era and the post-apartheid era. The first of these will be treated in 4.4.4, the second in Chapter Five passim and the third in 7.1.5.

2.3.2 Cultural Factors

No community of people exists in cultural neutrality. The conceptualization of anything new by a community can be done only in terms of its existing culture. It is inevitable, therefore, that pre-Christian elements will to a large extent shape any new, indigenous conceptualization of Christianity. The extent to which the Western conceptualization was the result of Western philosophy and culture will be demonstrated in Chapter Three. By contrast, the extent to which the amaXhosa were denied the privilege of conceptualizing Christianity within their own cultural milieu will be demonstrated in 4.2. What is important is that if such pre-Christian elements are not anti-Christian, they may be adapted and brought into service as praeparatio evangelica. In other words, in terms of the underlying hypothesis of this thesis as extended, (p.79), cultural and other influences need not be bracketed out, and they can be used positively in the process.

Inge, W.R. 1933, Things New and Old, [publisher not stated] p. 57;
An attempt to bracket out the cultural distinctives of the host culture while ignoring [or failing to recognize] those of the presenter culture would amount to 'cultural imperialism'. This label would certainly be a justified accusation against the *apartheid* theologians. In the sense that the liberation theologians were a presenting culture and the West a receptor culture, the label could apply to them as well, except that their distinctives were ideological rather than cultural, and, in South Africa, a reaction against *apartheid*.

### 2.3.3 Sociological Factors

B. A. Pauw distinguishes two main types of society, which he labels, respectively, small-scale and large-scale (1975:7ff). Small-scale societies are typically pre-literate, primitive and self-contained in the sense that their world-view is rational only within their own context. Large-scale societies are typically literate, civilized and having a comprehensive rationality in the sense that its members can communicate with members of other large-scale societies in terms of their world-view. Pauw goes on to distinguish three paradigms in terms of which the types of society can be distinguished. Small-scale societies tend to conceive of the supernatural in terms of *magic*. In large-scale societies the supernatural is either conceived of in terms of *religion* or ignored in terms of *secularity*. The difference between small-scale and large-scale societies in respect of religion is that the small-scale societies have magico-religious beliefs within a system not shared with other societies; whereas large-scale societies have world religions such as Judaism, Christianity and Islam, or a universally recognized secularism.

The writer questions the suitability of the word “magic” since it obfuscates the status of miracles in Christian theology when an individual turns from the small scale religion to Christianity. Radical liberals would have no qualms about declaring many of the miracle stories recorded in Scripture to be remnants of the pre-scientific period, and therefore “magic”. The term “animistic” would perhaps be more suitable to characterize that period of cultural development to which Pauw gives the title “magic”.

Pauw (:15-16) outlines the process of development from small-scale societies into a large-scale society, in a
way which describes the effect of the Western irruption into the Eastern Cape remarkably well:

>'If it is valid to associate magicality with small-scale society, we may expect a shift away from magical ways of thinking towards greater concern with comprehensive rationality when a small-scale society or a number of such societies evolve into a large-scale society or are drawn into the orbit of one that is already large in scale. The shift could then be either towards a religious or a secularist orientation, but it may also be towards both at the same time.'

The irruption of the West into Africa, including the Eastern Cape, is clearly a case of a number of small-scale societies being 'drawn into the orbit of one that is already large in scale'. The amaXhosa can be recognized as one such small-scale society.

Historically, the Christian West, together with other cultures, has experienced all three orientations. The early Church provided a religious faith from early Christian times, but this became mixed with a degree of superstition [as expressed, for example, in Early English and Middle English literature]. In the course of time, the religion became purer, arguably from the Council of Trent and the Reformation onwards. Religion came under threat at the time of the Enlightenment, with the result that secularity has become an increasing characteristic of Western culture, as a desacralization process took place. The persistence of religious faith in contemporary Western culture means that its large-scale character shows signs of both religious and secular orientations.

Pauw (16) adopts the term 'intermediate societies', to refer to 'groups of societies that form part of a larger society, but are nevertheless sufficiently distinct, socially and culturally, to be studied by themselves.'

The background and distinctions Pauw makes, together with the qualification the writer has offered, will inform the assessment of the contextualizations dealt with in Chapter Four and the quest for contemporary contextualizations in Chapter Eight.

2.3.4 Principles for admitting secular elements

(i) Political, cultural and sociological factors are necessarily present in each and every culture and cannot be
ignored.

(ii) Cultural, sociological and even political factors exist in the church and existed in the world-view of the missionaries.

(iii) Pre-Christian elements are to be found in cultures whose paradigm is Christian, because they were permitted to survive the “Christianization” process.

(iv) Pre-Christian elements should likewise be permitted to survive the “Christianization” process of other host cultures.

(v) Pre-Christian elements in presenting and receiving cultures must be evaluated as to their status as a-scriptural or anti-scriptural. A-scriptural elements must be recognized as non-cardinal and anti-scriptural elements must be disallowed.

(vi) The current status of a culture should be taken into account, bearing in mind the fact that this status is constantly changing as cultures develop by interaction with one another and experience such phenomena as technological development and advances in education level.

2.4 General Principles and Paradigms

The general principles (theological and hermeneutical) and secular influences outlined in this chapter will be applied to the various examples of conceptualization and contextualization which are examined in the rest of this thesis. Wright's findings (pp. 48ff), and to a certain extent his methodology, will be examined and applied in 6.3, when postmodernism is discussed.

An indication of the two ways in which the term “paradigm” is used in this thesis was given on pages 3f. In this section of the thesis it refers to a pattern or structure in terms of which the various components of a world-view relate to one another; and the principles to be enunciated are those which guide the way in which the Christian gospel relates to the world-views of cultures to which it is presented. The Western paradigm shows how Christianity is related to Western philosophy, ethics, morality [mores], politics, aesthetics and social conventions in the world-view of the Western culture.

It is important to notice that the Western paradigm has undergone several shifts in the course of its history.
The irruption of Christianity into the Western world dates from New Testament times [the establishment of the Church in Rome], but as it spread to other countries in Europe and to Britain, each country experienced a paradigm shift from pre-Christian to Christian, in that Christianity tended to reform the world-view. In terms of Christianity, the modern West must be categorized as post-Christian, in that Christianity has lost its leading place in the paradigm. For Christians, however, the Christian paradigm remains, in that Christ is Head of every Christian world-view. The nature of that paradigm in South Africa, however, will no longer be related to Western “civilization” [Dutch or English] and colonialism as it was in former times. From the viewpoint of Christian witness, this can be looked upon as advantageous in the sense that the spectre of colonialism can no longer bring the motives of Western Christians into question as they interact with non-Westerners.

The Xhosa culture, generally speaking, has similarly undergone a number of paradigm shifts: from traditional to Christian; from Christian to secular [ideological]. There are degrees of ambiguity, in the sense that traces of all three Xhosa paradigms survive and coexist in contemporary Xhosa society. This thesis examines the impact of Christianity upon the Xhosa culture. The Xhosa culture to which the missionaries came had a paradigm which was traditional, holistic and primal. Controversy exists as to whether it should be categorized as animistic. At all events, it was very different from that of the Western culture of the time. Background has been provided for this issue in 2.3.3, and 6.3 will take it further. Xhosa Christian theologians need to discover the nature of a Christian Xhosa paradigm, and contemporary Western theologians need to make a parallel discovery in respect of the changed paradigm in the West, [but that is not the mandated concern of this thesis]. Chapter Eight will investigate these situations in depth.

The definitions in 1.2 and the principles outlined in 2.1 and 2.2 together with the appropriate principles for admitting secular influences outlined in 2.3.4 must direct the formulation of general principles and paradigms in terms of which contextualizations and related conceptualizations can be evaluated: in thesis-specific terms, the Western contextualization and the Xhosa conceptualization.

A world-view was defined (p.20) as 'the totality of reality as it is perceived in a particular culture'. In each
context of the culture it receives or rejects philosophical and theological presentations made to it. This material is interpreted and systematized within a framework usually referred to as a paradigm.'

The first principle is that contextualizations of Christianity to a host culture should be made with knowledge of the world-view of that culture and awareness of the way in which the Christian gospel can best find a place within it, together with an understanding of the paradigm adjustments that will be involved.

Culture was defined (p.11) as 'the meaningful response to the world-view according to which a group of people seek to express and live out their own historically transmitted collective self-understanding, and formulate their value-system by means of symbols, as they attempt to come to terms with their experience of life, including their experience of what they perceive as supernatural.'

The second principle is that contextualizations of Christianity to a host culture should be made with awareness that the world-view of that culture already has a religious component to which the Christian gospel should be made to relate in terms of resonance and dissonance.

It has been affirmed (p.34) 'that Christianity comprises a unique revelation of God, historically inculturated in the people of Israel, culminating in Jesus of Nazareth [Who is also the eternal Son of God], and made available in the New Testament to Jews, Greeks and Romans, and in later centuries to many other cultures.'

The third principle is that in presenting the Christian gospel to any culture, particularly in respect of resonance and dissonance with the religious component of the world-view of the host culture, the historical basis of Christianity and the central belief concerning the Person of Christ are not negotiable.

The point was made (p.24) that 'Christ reveals himself, through the Holy Spirit, in the personal experience of members of the receptor culture in context, transforming their own self-understanding and value-system.'

The fourth principle is that contextualization of the Christian gospel should be made in awareness that Christian experience is ultimately a relationship between an individual member of a culture in context, with his/her own world-view. The work of the Holy Spirit must be acknowledged.
A religion has been defined (p.34) in terms of 'religious content', its main claim and functions.

'When a contextualization/conceptualization transaction takes place, religious content is offered by members of one culture to another culture, comprising belief-statements about God (gods) which guide the formation of the moral structure of the way of life of the community and provide a framework within which perceived reality (world-view) can be interpreted'.

The fifth principle is that the epistemological claims and the formative functions of the religion of the host culture must be taken into account when Christianity is offered.

The Holy Scriptures have been defined (p.28) as consisting 'of the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament [Hebrew Bible] and the twenty-seven books of the New Testament'.

The sixth principle is that the epistemological claims of Christianity are contained in the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament and the twenty-seven books of the New Testament.

The important point was (p.49) that '(t)he discovery of Jesus as a Person implies a new understanding of the past, a new vision of the future, a new understanding of created reality, and a new vision of the present'.

The seventh principle is that the Holy Scriptures should be recognized and presented as Christocentric.

The proviso was made (p.58) that 'the process of transmission by means of contextualization will clearly be better effected if the original biblical languages are translated directly into the receptor language ... by indigenous speakers of the language who are also biblical linguists'.

The eighth principle is that the Holy Scriptures should be presented in the indigenous language of the receptor culture, by biblically competent speakers of that language.
CHAPTER THREE

THE WESTERN CONTEXTUALIZATION UP TO THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Sanneh (1989: 6) enumerates five paradigm shifts in the course of Christian history: Judaic, Hellenic, Reformation, nineteenth century *laissez-faire* and modern missionary movement. This chapter attempts to survey the first three of these, together with eighteenth century empiricism. The fourth will occupy chapter four and the fifth, chapter six.

Before considering Sanneh's paradigm shifts, the writer considers it necessary to begin with the Hellenization of Judaism in Asia Minor, in order to be able adequately to study Hellenistic Judaism as represented by Philo (3.1.1.1), the conservative Jewish reaction (3.1.1.2) and Hellenistic Christianity (3.1.2.2). The purpose of reviewing the Hellenic background is three-fold: (i) to help to show how the missionary contextualization came to be what it was; (ii) to identify points of resonance with Xhosa culture at appropriate places, [so that they can be investigated later in the thesis] and (iii) to identify principles upon which Western and African contextualizations can relate to each other in present and future South Africa, in the awareness that all cultures are constantly developing. It is selective for two reasons. Firstly, the requirements of length and depth in this thesis do not permit a fuller treatment; and secondly, the nineteenth century missionary presentation was not pitched at an academic level which would involve the intricacies of Greek philosophy. In fact, the academic background of most of the missionaries would not have included a more detailed study of this area than what is presented here. For these reasons, attention is given to persons and schools of thought in proportion to their perceived relevance for the thesis.

3.1 Christianity and Hellenism

Sanneh (1989:82ff) points to the hazards which 'the Hellenistic transformation of the gospel' entails. The danger is that the gospel could be reduced to 'a cognitive system' (:82). This issue will be revisited in 4.1.1.2. Sanneh draws support from Arnold Toynbee, who asserted that '(i)t would be no remedy' to make a translation into Western metaphysics because this would merely push the problem another step instead of removing it \(^8\) (Sanneh, ibid).

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The writer would reply that historically, Hellenism was the culture into which Christianity was translated in New Testament times, and that each successive translation has come about according to the accidents of history. It is crucial therefore, that although the problem cannot be remedied, its effects can be neutralized if non-cardinal elements in each translation are recognized as such and taken into account.

3.1.1 The Hellenization of Judaism

The Hellenization of Judaism played a far more significant role in the development of Christianity than is sometimes imagined. In reply to Tertullian's famous question: 'What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?' (de Praescr. 7; Apol. 46), Chadwick asserts that 'they represent a coming together of the categories of Biblical and Hellenic thinking, a synthesis which leaves an indelible mark on subsequent Theology' (1966: 1). For the purposes of this thesis, the term “hellenization” refers to the process by which the Jewish communities in Asia Minor adopted or were assimilated into the Greek culture, known as Hellenism, in the last two centuries before Christ, and the subsequent influence of Hellenistic thought on the contextualization of the Christian gospel.

The fact that Judaism was already bicultural at the inception of Christianity is crucial to the comparison drawn between the situation of the New Testament church and the situation of the amaXhosa today.

The teaching of Jesus Himself was contextualized in Palestinian Judaism, which had not been hellenised to the same extent as that of Asia Minor. The context into which Christianity was contextualized to the Jews of the dispersion, of which information is given in The Acts and the Pauline corpus, was not pure historic Judaism, because a second culture had been introduced as a result of the hellenization which followed the rise of Alexander the Great and the expansion of the Greek empire. Conservative Jewish resistance to Hellenism was a factor in Palestine, particularly in Jerusalem (3.1.1.2). The two cultural groups which constituted the biculturality in early Christianity, Εβραιοι and Ελληνισται, were clearly identified in Acts 6: 1 (Stott, 1990:120). The way in which Christ's teaching was presented to Hellenistic Jews during the missionary journeys of the Apostle Paul, could therefore be expected to differ from the way in which Christ Himself taught. It is instructive to compare Paul's preaching to Jewish audiences with his preaching to
The hellenization of Judaism is crucial to this thesis because of the perceived resonance between the Old Testament and Africa on the one hand, and the fact that the Western contextualization to Africa is linked to Hellenism on the other. If the Hellenists and the first century Jews had modern counterparts, it might be possible to establish that the difficulties which the missionaries encountered had their origin in the fact that the missionaries are the descendants of the Hellenists and the amaXhosa tend towards the Judaistic worldview and thought-forms. This might well form a topic for future academic research (9.3 No.3).

3.1.1 Philo

Philo was a Hellenistic Jewish philosopher who lived in Alexandria from about 25 B.C. to A.D. 40. His reaction to Hellenism serves as a model for the contextualization of Judaism in the Greek culture. The fact that his life and work coincided with the inception of Christianity means that, to a certain extent, the situation represented by his theological philosophy provides the nodal point out of which Western Christianity developed. Philo's influence on the Alexandrian school of the early Christian era will reward exploration.

One of the most striking facts about Philo is that he could read the Jewish Scriptures only in the Septuagint translation, (Bultmann, 1953:94). He was one of the acute Jewish scholars who recognized that for all its paganism and immorality, the Hellenistic world was turning away from its primitive polytheism as a result of the work of its philosophers. The Stoics were proclaiming a doctrine of virtue which was on a level with Jewish morality, even if it did not have the same theistic base.

One of the characteristics of Philo's Hellenistic Judaism was that he existentialized, for example, the sacrificial system:

'For you will find that all this careful scrutiny of the animal is a symbol representing in a figure the reformation of your own conduct...' (Philo, de spec. leg., I, 260, tr. Colson, F.H. and Whitaker, G.H.; Bultmann, 1956:95).
It may be appropriate to inquire whether, without applying the whole of Bultmann's demythologization process, the Western enculturation of Christianity might have benefited from being less history-bound, and whether it might have been easier for the amaXhosa to accept the gospel if they had been given the opportunity, in the process of conceptualization, to existentialize such of its content as is foreign to their culture and non-cardinal to the gospel.

Philo was prepared to take the Homerian myths seriously enough to recognize that value could be drawn from them by allegorical exegesis. Chadwick comments, 'It was widely agreed that the apparently crude myths of the poets really contained inspired allegories about the cosmos and the place of man in it.' (1996:6). He applied the same process to the Pentateuch as well.

This suggests that Philo placed Homer beside Moses and implies that if one adopted this principle, it would not be inappropriate to place the traditional stories of the amaXhosa beside the parables and narratives of the gospel, treating them as allies instead of deadly rivals. The position of this thesis is that there might well be merit in recognizing traditional Xhosa stories as illustrations or points of resonance at the level of 

praeparatio evangelica. The writer's confessional position, however, would be that such a comparative exercise should not be understood to imply that traditional Xhosa stories (or pre-Christian legends from any other source) are equal in status to the canonical scriptures.

Alexandrian Judaism took the Stoic doctrine of the Λογος as the rational aspect of the natural world, and used it to enrich its doctrine of creation. The orderliness of the cosmos was a typically Greek conception. The creatureliness of human beings in their participation in and dependence upon the Λογος is a necessary concomitant of this cosmology and fits well with the understanding of the Old Testament, particularly the creation narrative in Genesis 1. The genius of Philo was that he could use the λογος 'to bridge the gulf between an uncompromising monotheism and a Platonism that excludes divine agency in the material sphere' (Sanneh, 1989:17).
3.1.1.2  Conservative Jewish reaction

Not all Philo's Jewish contemporaries were prepared to accommodate Hellenism in the way he and his school did. The stance of the conservative Jews is demonstrated in the attitude of the parents of the apostle Paul, as perceived and described by F.F. Bruce (1977:126). Paul, born and growing up in Tarsus, 'had been sent or brought to Jerusalem in his youth by his parents in order to be immunized against the infection of the Hellenistic world... The pagan influences of Hellenism were kept at bay from the circle in which Paul received his education' (ibid). The fact that Paul was sent to Jerusalem shows that Hellenism was particularly strongly resisted by Palestinian Jews.

Two reactions in South Africa are comparable with this, namely, the insistence of the Afrikaner on having schools for his own language group and culture, and resistance on the part of the amaXhosa to Christianity, on account of their perception of it as a “white” religion.

Paul's parents would be aware of the enormities committed by the Seleucids less than two hundred years before. The tendency of some of the missionaries to adopt an iconoclastic attitude towards everything in the Xhosa culture with which they were not familiar, was probably less severe in its immediate impact, but quite devastating in the long term. The implementation of apartheid a century or so later, bore obvious Seleucid-like characteristics.

3.1.2  Christianity in the Graeco-Roman World

The previous section has examined the process by which Judaism in Asia Minor was influenced by the Hellenistic culture in which it lived there. The next task is to discover how the apostles' proclamation of Christianity to Palestinian Jews (3.1.2.1) differed from that to Hellenistic Jews and to Gentiles (3.1.2.2). This is expected to provide a bench-mark for determining those elements which are cardinal [of universal validity] and those which are non-cardinal [because they are culture-specific]. The way in which Christianity came to be interpreted in the Graeco-Roman world is instructive for the consideration of how it came to be interpreted in the world of the amaXhosa.
3.1.2.1 Christianity in the Gospels and early chapters of The Acts

In the very early days of its existence, Christianity was to all intents and purposes a Jewish sect. At the risk of over-simplification, Acts 10 could be taken as marking the point at which the extension of Christianity beyond the bounds of Judaism began. It would seem to follow, therefore, that whatever is found in the Gospels and Acts 1-9 refers to Jewish Christianity. To this must be added Paul's preaching to Jewish audiences recorded in the later chapters of The Acts.

Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost (Ac.2:14ff) has two main characteristics. Firstly, it shows how the phenomenon of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit was anchored in Judaism with a quotation from Joel 2:28-32 (Ac.2:17-21). Secondly it identifies 'the LORD' of Joel 2:32 with Jesus (Ac. 2:36). This involves [for the Jews] a significant transfer of the religious power implicit in Joel 2:32, from the Covenant and the Law to Messiah as a Person. This tends to confirm the principle set out in 2.1.2.3 that the gospel is a Person rather than a principle.

Because, as far as is known, the ministry of Jesus was confined to Palestine and because Palestinian Jews resisted Hellenism (above, p. 96) it is not surprising to find little trace of it in the Gospels or the early chapters of The Acts. Jesus is presented in the Gospels predominantly in Judaistic terms. He is “Son of David” (Mk 10:47f) and “Messiah” (Jn 1:41). Yet even in Palestine, the influence of Hellenism was evident. John records how some Greek people came to the disciples to enquire about Jesus (Jn 12:20). Acts 6: 1- 7 reports a problem which arose in the early Church between hellenized Jewish converts ['Ελλενισται] and non-hellenized Jewish converts [ 'Εβραιοι]. It was dealt with by the double expedient of appointing men from the aggrieved party to handle it, and ensuring that these men were “full of the Spirit and wisdom” (Ac. 6: 3 N.I.V).

The term Χριστος as it is used in the Gospels is a little ambiguous. In John 1:41 it is used as a translation of Messiah, but the Greek form Μεσσιαν is also used in that same verse. The use of the term Χριστος appears to be a translation for the benefit of Greek readers. As a Greek word it simply means “anointed one”
without the Judaic significance necessarily implied.

The significance of the term Λογος is also controversial. John takes up the term and applies it to the Lord Jesus Christ. Guthrie has pointed out that Rendell Harris and C.F. Burney are amongst a number of scholars who 'firmly reject the view that the Prologue [of John's Gospel] is Hellenistic and maintain ... a Jewish origin' (1970:310).

Latourette observes that although this particular aspect of hellenization was not an unqualified success, and even had serious drawbacks, Christians managed to give these borrowings truly Christian meanings:

'They were not entirely successful, for many of the terms carried over with them to those who employed them something of their pre-Christian and even anti-Christian connotations, yet in varying degrees Christians gave peculiarly Christian meanings to the words they adopted.' (1953/2000:250)

Bruce refers to line 1237 of Goethe's Faust, in which the German word "Tat" is offered as the mot just for Λογος. 'In the beginning was the deed, the action.' (Bruce, 1983:29). The significance of this is that it facilitates an association with the Hebrew concept of God's activity 'especially in creation, revelation and deliverance' (Bruce, ibid). While Dodd does not categorically ascribe the New Testament use of the term Λογος to its Greek origin, he 'regards the Logos doctrine as appropriate for leading “a public nurtured in the higher religion of Hellenism”' (Guthrie, ibid). Bruce tends to support this assessment, and to reconcile the two positions regarding the background of the New Testament use of Λογος, when he suggests that although the true background of John's thought and language is found ... in Hebrew revelation', yet

'because of its usage, logos constituted a bridge-word by which people brought up in Greek philosophy, like Justin Martyr in the second century, found their way into Johannine Christianity' (ibid, italics Bruce).

This is of great significance for this thesis, because the nineteenth century missionaries to the amaXhosa encountered precisely the same phenomenon in the way the amaXhosa received their message (4.2). The question would be whether a 'bridge-word' could be found to help the amaXhosa in the same way that Λογος helped the Greeks. The Xhosa response to the missionary contextualization is discussed in 4.4.

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The writer believes that John's adaptation of the Hebrew idea of “The Word” [memra, (Sanneh, 1989:17)] to the Greek idea of the Λογος is most fortunate. It shows that the use of a Greek word does not necessarily mean that the contents are exclusively of Hellenistic origin, though it may be an accommodation to Hellenistic readers. Even if John's use of Λογος was not a conscious Hellenism, the fact remains that early Christian apologists made the connection between the Λογος in John's gospel and the λογος of Greek philosophy, recognized it as a useful instance of resonance and used it in their contextualization to the Hellenistic world. Sanneh says:

'The inclusion of the Johannine corpus, so different in tone and temper from the Synoptics, within the Christian canon shows the lengths to which the community of believers went in its practice of translatability.' (1989:17).

3.1.2.2 Christianity in the later Chapters of The Acts and in the Letters.

Although Christianity was born in Palestine, and into Judaism [as a natural extension of it], its later New Testament contextualization was to the complex religious, cultural and political situation of Asia Minor. Jews who had settled there had become hellenized. Some Gentiles had embraced Judaism as proselytes. Other Gentiles, known as “God-fearers”, had become associated with Judaism but had opted for a looser attachment to the religion. Gentiles [Hellenes, pure “pagan” Greeks] represented a fourth sub-culture.

It is to be noticed that the presentation of the gospel to the Greeks from a Judaeo-Christian conceptualization was one part of a two-way process in which the kerygma affected the Hellenistic culture as well as being affected by it. Werner Jaeger describes the two-way process as follows,

'...[T]his process of the Christianization of the Greek-speaking world within the Roman Empire was by no means one-sided, for at the same time it meant the Hellenization of the Christian religion.' (1965: 5)

Jaeger's analysis of the two-way relationship involved in the Hellenistic/Christian interaction is quite far-reaching. Starting with the fact that the New Testament was written mostly in Greek, Jaeger traces hellenisms in the Pauline literature, and the [Johannine] adoption of the term Λογος as a referent for the Lord Jesus Christ, (1965:28). The work of the Alexandrian school, particularly Clement and Origen is also featured. The Greeks were typically intellectuals, and the influence of Platonism on the Alexandrians
well as on the Cappadocians some two hundred years later] forms a crucial part of Jaeger's study. In all these areas, the two-way nature of the process is evident.

Latourette makes reference to the quasi-Marcionite view, held by many, that the contribution of the Apostle Paul to the development of Christology in Hellenistic, as distinct from Judaic Christianity, was radical:

'So great has been his influence that Paul is often said to have been the chief creator of what we now know as Christianity, and so to have altered what had been transmitted to him that it became quite different from the teachings of Jesus and transformed Jesus from the Galilean teacher and martyr into the cosmic Christ.' (1953/2000:70)

Against this interpretation, Latourette argues:

'While ... giving evidence on almost every page of his letters of his own distinctive characteristics, Paul was so loyal to the mind of Jesus as we see it in the Four gospels that if we did not have these documents we would still be able to know what manner of person Jesus was, what were the essentials of his teachings, and his crucifixion, resurrection and continued presence.' (:71)

Latourette thus offers the assurance that despite his Hellenistic environment, Paul did not produce a Christianity divorced from its roots or in any way inauthentic. Although in preaching to Hellenes the term “Messiah”, tended to be replaced by “Son of God” and “Saviour” [a trend of which the ΙΧΘΥΣ tradition is an example] the Lord Jesus Christ remained Messiah in Paul's own thinking and devotion. It is clear, therefore, that these are cases of form rather than content; and particularly is this the case when consideration is given to the fact that the title "Son of God" was an acceptable Jewish title for the expected Messiah and the title Saviour is a valid translation of 'Jesus' ['Jeshua', meaning 'Jahweh saves'], (Mt. 1:21).

Hellenistic anthropology tends to be resisted in the New Testament proclamation, in favour of the Biblical (Judaic) heritage. In contrast to the Greek optimism concerning human potential, Bultmann finds that the New Testament asserts the impotence of the human will and reflects Old Testament anthropology to a large extent, (1956:180-182). This differs considerably from the Greek dualism of spirit and sensuality. Bultmann contrasts the value which the Greeks set on human wisdom with Paul's determination to boast only in 'the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ' (Gal. 6:14; Bultmann, 1956:183). A further contrast is that between Stoic
freedom from the future, [gained by shutting out the world of time and encounters], and Christian freedom [which is gained by opening oneself to encounters with God's grace], (Bultmann, 1956:186). It would seem then that the process was not simply bringing Hellenistic thought into subjection to Christ, but also of significantly modifying it in order to do so.

The encounter between the Hellenistic culture and Christianity involved a number of areas of transformation. The incorporation of the Gentiles brought the double task of softening Judaistic elements and affirming Gentile culture. Sanneh puts it this way:

'... Christianity, from its origins, identified itself with the need to translate out of Aramaic and Hebrew and from that position came to exert a dual force in its historical development. One was the resolve to relativize its Judaic roots, with the consequence that it promoted significant aspects of those roots. The other was to destigmatise the Greek culture and adopt that culture as a natural extension of the life of the new religion.' (1989: 1)

It is important to note that Hellenism per se is a culture and not a religion. By the beginning of the New Testament period it was no longer a political power either. Although the cultural ethos was predominantly Hellenistic, the political power was exercised by Rome. A broad categorization can be made for the purposes of this thesis: The way in which the New Testament Christians of Asia Minor related to Greece exemplifies an attitude of Christianity towards a culture, and the way all New Testament Christians related to Rome exemplifies an attitude of Christianity to a hostile secular [political] environment. The further implications of this for this thesis will be drawn out in a comparison of Hellenism with the nineteenth century Xhosa community as receptor cultures (4.3), and in an approach to contextualizing to the contemporary Xhosa culture (8.1).

After his conversion to Christ, Paul's own attitude to Hellenism was more positive than that of his parents and teachers (p. 92). In I Cor. 9: 19-23, he explains how he accommodated 'those not having the law' in order to win them for Christ. Paul recognised that Hellenism was basically cultural rather than religious, and that cultural trappings are, to use a popular metaphor, the “bathwater” rather than the “baby”. The major hypothesis of this thesis is totally in line with Paul's stance.
The Acts and the Pauline corpus provide evidence of the emergence in the early Church of a number of critical issues concerning contextualization and conceptualization. W.H.C. Frend puts it this way:

'The difficulty of adapting a message of repentance and salvation preached to an Aramaic-speaking Palestinian countryside to the provincials of the remainder of the Greco-Roman world whose personal religion was often that of the mystery-cult was becoming evident even at this early stage.' (1972:39)

Acts 13:16-25 gives an account of a sermon preached by the apostle Paul to hellenized Jews and to Gentiles in Pisidian Antioch. Stott (1990:222) says, 'Although some Gentile God-fearers are present, it is essentially an address to a Jewish audience.' The first part of the sermon consists of a review of Israel's history. The second part is an account of how Jesus was taken, tried and executed. Paul refers to the resurrection and relates it to key Old Testament passages. The conclusion is an appeal to his hearers to accept his message that Jesus is their Messiah who died for their salvation. Paul, as a Pharisee, was in the best position to recognize and to present Christianity as a consequential development of Judaism, so that at the contextualization /conceptualization level there was, theoretically at least, no problem for this particular type of audience. The rejection by many Jews, which caused the reception to be a mixed one, did not have any basis in cultural alienation. The fact is that, some of the Jews, although hellenized, accepted Christ as their Messiah and others did not.

Acts 14:14-18, by contrast, gives information concerning idolatry as it was practised in the pagan communities of Asia Minor. It is interesting to note that many of the Greek gods were recognized by the Romans, albeit with different names. When the apostle Paul visited Lystra (Ac.14: 8ff) he and Barnabas were mistaken for the gods Ἐρμην and Δία respectively. These are the Greek names [transliterated as Hermes and Zeus]. The Roman equivalents are Mercury and Jupiter. English translations of The Acts are divided as to which names to use. This is probably due to differences in resource manuscripts and is not considered significant. The Xhosa Bible (1967 and 1996) follows the Greek faithfully in reproducing the Greek names: nguHermes and nguZeyus. What is significant here is that Paul made it quite clear to the Lystrans that their actions were totally inappropriate because they were gravely in error. The apostles' distress is evident in verse 14. Paul proclaimed an orthodox monotheism and in verse 15 described the belief
system of the Lystrans [Hermes and Zeus] as τοὺτον τῶν ματαιῶν ("these worthless things", N.I.V.; “all this foolishness”, C.E.V).

Acts 15: 1-21, recording the proceedings of the Council of Jerusalem (A.D. 49), is a pivotal passage for missionary policy. Strict Jewish Christians (Judaizers) were insisting that the Gentiles should be circumcised, (Ac.15: 5). The apostle Peter, himself a non-Hellenistic Jewish Christian, persuaded them that this was not appropriate. The criterion for Peter's attitude towards Gentiles was God's activity amongst them, (Ac.15: 7- 9) and what it implied, (Ac.15:10-11). James, the leader of the conservative Jewish Christians expressed his judgment in verses 19-21, in what is sometimes referred to as the “Jerusalem Quadrilateral” (Stott, 1990:248). Debate surrounds the respective significance of the four provisions, but it can confidently be said that none is purely symbolic. The important point about this judgment is that circumcision and keeping the law had come to be regarded, even by the conservative Jewish Christian leaders, as non-cardinal and thus dispensible in the situation.

Perhaps the *locus classicus* for the communication of the Christian gospel to the Hellenes, [as distinct from hellenized Jews and Gentile adherents of Judaism], is Acts 17. A number of guide-lines are to be found here, which will inform the communication of the gospel cross-culturally and which are applicable to the amaXhosa. These will form one side of the comparison offered in 3.1.2.3.

It is significant that, as Bruce says,

'...while he preached to the Hellenes, it was no Hellenized gospel that he preached. His proclamation of deliverance and life through Christ crucified brought his gospel into basic conflict with accepted standards of Hellenistic value...' (1977:127)

This demonstrates a basic principle for cross-cultural hermeneutics, which was mentioned in 1.2.1. above, in a brief account of Niebuhr's contribution to the Christ-and-Culture debate; that is, that a relationship between Christ and Culture can take place only when Christ transforms the Culture. The implications of this for the presentation of the gospel to the amaXhosa will be studied in Chapter Four (*passim*) and in Chapter Seven.
In addition to his preaching which is recorded in The Acts, Paul interacts with Hellenism in his letters. Chadwick (1966:7ff) describes Gnosticism and hints at the way Paul dealt with it:

'The fact that the initial synthesis between the Christian gospel and the ideas of the hellenistic world were on the side of religion and mysticism meant that the Christian mission on Gentile soil was haunted by Gnosticism virtually from the start. St. Paul's epistles to Corinth and Colossae already reveal the immediate development of a dualistic Gnosticism. Even at this early stage we meet the agnostic claim to a higher, non-rational knowledge of truths profounder than those apprehended at the level of simple faith...’ (1996:7-8)

Paul's basic answer was to warn believers:

'See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than Christ'

(Col. 2: 8 N.I.V. emphasis MJH).

From this it is to be inferred that Paul's objection to Gnosticism is characterized by the distinction between natural reason and supernatural revelation. He makes no attempt to accommodate the Christian revelation to the Hellenistic tradition. Some of the ascetic prohibitions of Gnosticism are hinted at in Colossians 2:20-21: 'Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!' These may well be indications of Judaistic influence, which could have a strong appeal to Jewish converts, creating a problem similar to the one Paul addressed in his letter to the Galatians. Colossians 3 is a lengthy reply to such impressive legalism, presenting the issues of godly living in the context of the salvation-event which is at the centre of Christianity. This suggests that a biblical Christian approach to the Xhosa traditional religion would be to proclaim the salvation-event as definitive for both faith and conduct.

Bultmann appears to be exaggerating somewhat when he describes early hellenised Christianity as being 'full of tendencies and contradictions' (1956:177-178), and even wider of the mark when he describes it as 'basically syncretistic' (1956:175f). He dates the start of the process of syncretism at the point where 'the good news of Jesus ..... was carried beyond the confines of Palestinian Judaism' (1956:209).

Bultmann seems to be making certain claims concerning the way in which the culture of the Hellenes shaped
the conceptualization of the gospel and the resultant contextualizations by contemporary preachers and Church leaders. The word “shaped” in the previous sentence is crucial because if the shaping affected the fundamental content of the doctrines, Bultmann would be justified in describing the process as syncretistic. If, however, the shaping affected only the form of the presentation, it would be clear that Bultmann has overstated his case.

As an example of syncretism, Bultmann states that

'.....the chief difference between Hellenistic Christianity and the original
Palestinian version was that the former ceased to be dominated by the
eschatological expectations and the philosophy of life which that implied.' (1956:210)

Two observations need to be made in response to this. Firstly, the phrase 'ceased to be dominated' needs to be qualified. New Testament evidence shows that the gospel as it was presented in the Hellenistic world included a very clear eschatological element, even if it was not dominated by it (1 Thess. 4:16, 1 Tim. 6:14 and Tit. 2:12 regarding the Parousia; 2 Thess 1: 6-10 and 1 Pet. 1:3-5 regarding judgement and Rom. 8:18ff regarding the final consummation). Secondly, in view of the fact that syncretism is generally defined and identified in terms of additions, it is strange that in support of his case, Bultmann should provide an omission as his instance of 'the chief difference'.

On page 33, the Christian gospel was defined in terms of its involving 'God's dealings with humankind through the Lord Jesus Christ, throughout Biblical history and for the whole of time'. This wide definition makes it difficult to trace what constitutes the Christian gospel per se, in order to test in general terms Bultmann's claim that Hellenistic Christianity was syncretistic. The via negativa would attempt to demonstrate that Hellenistic Christianity did not contain any element from another religion which was not found in Judaeo-Christianity, and Bultmann would be required to identify and indicate such an element. A less rigorous approach would be to ask whether any of the “borrowings” from Hellenism were a-scriptural [rather than anti-scriptural], and of such a nature that they could be incorporated into a valid contextualization of the Christian gospel. It is arguable that such material would belong to the “form” rather than the “content” of the gospel, and therefore not constitute syncretism. The principle is indicated, that a-
scriptural material incorporated into a contextualization does not constitute syncretism. To the question: “Was the Western contextualization of Christianity syncretistic on account of the influence of Hellenism?”, this thesis would respond that on the understanding that Paul's contextualization is acceptable, and Bruce's assessment (above p.104) is accurate, the answer is in the negative.

3.1.2.3 A comparison of the New Testament contextualizations

The way in which the form of the Christian gospel changed in the process of being contextualized into Hellenistic thought can inform a contextualization into Xhosa thought. The principle enunciated above, 'that a-scriptural material incorporated into a contextualization does not constitute syncretism' is highly significant for this subsection and more particularly for an assessment of the missionary stance indicated in 4.2.

The two preceding subsections have provided general outlines of the Jewish contextualization of Christianity (3.1.2.1) and the Hellenistic contextualization (3.1.2.2). For the purpose of drawing out principles for contextualization in general and contextualization in the Xhosa culture in particular, two passages from The Acts have been selected for comparison. They are Acts 22:1-22, in which Paul gives an account of his call and discipleship to a Jewish crowd and Acts 17:16-34, in which Paul presents Christianity to an audience of Hellenes in Athens. As individual episodes in Paul's life, these stories are not presented in chronological sequence, because in general terms the Jewish contextualization was chronologically and theologically prior to the Hellenistic one.

The account in Acts 14:8-20 of Paul's visit to Lystra shows how he contextualized for the primitive pagan Greeks [as distinct from the cultured pagan Greeks], but his message on that occasion was essentially the same as that delivered outside Athens.


The immediate context of this passage is that Paul has been accused by a party of Asian Jews of teaching 'all men everywhere' against the Jewish people, the law and the temple (Ac. 21:27-28). This is a very specific context which might seem, for that reason, to be unsuitable in the more general context of communicating
the gospel. However, it displays an attitude with which traditional Africans could identify in respect of the threat which they perceived the missionaries to have posed towards their culture. Some of the early missionaries to South Africa acted as Paul did, but many did not.

(i) It is significant that Paul should address these hearers in τη 'Εβραι διαλεκτω [either Hebrew or, more likely, Aramaic] (Ac.21:40). Although this situation is the reverse of the more usual presenter / receptor transaction in that the missionary is defending himself against people of his home culture, it indicates the principle that the language of the receptor is preferrable. This will be addressed in 4.1.1.1.

(ii) Paul's reference to Gamaliel (Ac.28: 3) is significant. J. S. Stewart records that Gamaliel was the grandson of the famous Hillel and taught the 'more advanced and liberal Judaism' for which the school of Hillel was noted (1935/1957: 37). Stewart brings out the significance of this when he says 'Proselytes from other faiths were welcomed by those who shared Hillel's views... the Mosaic Law was interpreted by the broader school in a more spiritual and more sympathetic way' 7:(37f). This appears to point the way towards an openness to receptor religions and a quest for points of resonance as opposed to the tabula rasa syndrome, (pp. 38 and 73f).

(iii) Paul impressed upon his hearers the extent of his loyalty to Judaism (Ac.28: 3-4). Within the context of his recognition of Jesus as Messiah, Paul wanted to emphasize the integrity of his faith. The communication of the gospel by Western missionaries was obfuscated by the perception that their association with the colonial government had sinister motives. They, and all contextualizers after them, would need to make it quite clear that their motives were pure and that their concern for their hearers was genuine.

(iv) In narrating the circumstances of his conversion, Paul avoided ineffectual argument over theoretical issues in favour of presenting the gospel in simple and direct terms, as he had experienced it.

(v) Paul's reference to Ananias (Ac.22:12) was strategic. The fact that Ananias was a 'devout observer of the law', together with the fact that he restored Paul's sight, would lend credibility to Paul's claim to orthodoxy
and authenticity. Although, in the nature of the case the first missionaries were unable to present such
credentials, modern communicators of the gospel to traditional Xhosa hearers would do well to refer to
Xhosa Christians who have accomplished the difficult task of embracing Christianity without rejecting their
Xhosa heritage.

Acts 17:16-34  Paul's Hellenistic (cultured pagan) contextualization.

(i) Paul grounds his message in the context of his hearers. The word used by Paul (δεισιδαιµονεστερους)
to refer to the idolatrous practices of the Athenians is extremely interesting. According to Liddell and Scott
(1889/1959:177), it had two connotations. In the commendatory sense, it could be translated 'religious', and
in the pejorative sense 'superstitious' (Bohnen and Germiquet, 1997:74). It is significant that both the King
James Version of 1611 and the Revised Version of 1881, which the missionaries would have used, translate it
as 'superstitious'; whereas modern translations such as the New International Version and the Good News
Bible translate it as 'very religious'. If most present-day Anglophone theologians use the modern
translations they will be inclined to regard the traditional African cultus as religion; whereas the nineteenth
century missionaries, on the basis of the version they were using, would categorize it as superstition. This
difference of perception is at the heart of the issues addressed in this thesis. If the nineteenth century
missionaries had understood the double meaning of the expression δεισιδαιµονεστερους they might have
had cause to identify appropriate elements in the Xhosa culture as being of religious value, albeit at a
secondary level. It is interesting to note that the Ghananian academic, Kwesi Dickson, recognizes both
meanings and opts for superstition (1976:103f). Hayes, using the word in a broader context, translates it as

(ii) Paul did not compromise on fundamental Christian principles, but used the issue positively. Paul's
response (v.23) is instructive in two ways: it implies non-acceptance of idols as such, but also shows that
Paul took the opportunity to declare that the living God is, in fact, knowable and that God's message is
communicable. Paul reacted in a totally appropriate way, by referring to the current situation indicated by
the Athenian inscription, and proceeding to preach God's revelation in history. It is to be noted that Paul did
not discard or discredit the religion of his pre-Christian, non-Jewish hearers. The influence of the school of
Hillel through Gamaliel (p.99) is evident here. He even quoted from their poets, (v. 28). This is a principle which those who wish to communicate the gospel cross-culturally would do well to observe. Here Paul includes something from the receptor culture, which he could have chosen to omit. The way in which this applies to the presentation of Christianity to the amaXhosa will be examined in more detail in Chapters Four, Six and Seven.

(iii) Paul recognized an inherent need, and addressed it (v.23). All evangelism, not least that to the amaXhosa, should be need-initiated, and thus immediately relevant.

(iv) Paul did not provide details of the revelation to Israel, or of his own attachment to Judaism [as he did in his Jewish contextualizations], because this would have been meaningless to them and would actually have hindered their understanding of the message. Michael Green shows (1970:138) how the term Κυριος tended to replace, or at least to accompany, the term Χριστος when the apostles preached to Gentiles. Western theologians teaching in South Africa need to recognise the meaninglessness of the Euro-centric content they have been communicating, and its potential actually to hinder the progress of the gospel.

(v) Paul made sure that his hearers would identify with the message by pointing to a universal human phenomenon – sin. He strengthens this by identifying the sin which was prevalent in Athens – idolatry. While the concept of ancestor veneration has not been conclusively categorized as idolatry, it could be considered, in principle, a parallel issue. It will be engaged in 4.2.2.5 and 7.2.2.5.

(vi) Paul referred, in closing, to the resurrection. He gave his hearers just enough information to make them curious, and ensure that those who were serious would want to hear more. The technique and the content are models for gospel communication to the amaXhosa and any other culture.

The important principle which Sanneh draws is that '(t)he missionary obligation ... grows out of the context of the proclamation, and mission must proceed by arriving on the ground thus laid for it" (1989:158). The writer recognizes this as a universal principle which applies to the issues of this thesis.
3.1.3 Christianity in the Early Church
The Early Church period is generally recognized as covering the time from the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ to the beginning of the Middle Ages [fifth century]. The New Testament portion of this period has been covered in 3.1.2. The remainder of the Early Church period, comprising the Sub-Apostolic period (c. AD 90 to AD 150) and the Patristic period (c. AD 150 to AD 450), is dealt with in 3.1.3.1. Augustine of Hippo is considered individually (3.1.3.2), on account of his particular importance at a turbulent time in the history of the Church, arising from the demise of the Roman Empire.

Molnar observes that '(t)he dynamism that the Christian religion displayed ... does not mean that it remained free from pagan admixture.' (1987: 7). The crucial question here would be whether the 'pagan admixture' was purely a-Christian or whether there were anti-Christian elements.

3.1.3.1 The Sub-Apostolic and Patristic Periods
The controversies which plagued the Church during this period were the result of doctrinal and cultural differences in the main schools. Basically there were two orientations: that of the East and that of the West. In the early years, Alexandria represented the East, and Rome and Carthage the West. Antioch was drawn into the battle on account of differences with Alexandria. Successive Ecumenical Councils defined various doctrines and condemned as heretics those whose theological stance did not conform.

The Alexandrians, particularly Clement and Origen, form the second or transitionary stage in this conceptualization process. This is considered to be particularly appropriate for this thesis, in that Alexandria can justly claim to be African, since it is part of the African continent. The part to be played in the African Renaissance by the legacy of the North African tradition on the one hand and a genuine conceptualization of Christianity by the amaXhosa of the Eastern Cape on the other, make this section of the thesis excitingly relevant.

The importance of Alexandria, therefore, is twofold:
(i) It played a significant part in the Western conceptualization of Christianity and this will be studied quite
extensively.

(ii) The presentation of Christianity to the Hellenistic culture of this period is a model by which to assess the initial contextualization to the amaXhosa methodologically, and will be treated as such in 4.3.1.

During the Sub-Apostolic period, the Church was subject to the changing policies of the Roman power. Cochrane (1957:98ff) draws from the noted Roman historian, Livy [59 B.C.-A.D. 14], an indication of the Roman view of religion during the reign of Caesar Augustus. Cochrane ascribes to Livy a rather liberal view of history, and argues that 'if this involves an element of artistic distortion, such distortion is to be justified in view of the purpose to be served ... an effort to “sell” the Augustan system.' (98f). Livy's attitude to history is extended to religion, As a classical idealist, Livy sees religion as resolving 'itself purely and simply into a matter of form' (101), in terms of which legally appointed cults 'correspond precisely to the demands of idealist thought ... their one and only object is to maintain the “peace of the gods”' (ibid). To a certain extent Christianity confronted a similar cultural situation when it was brought to African traditional religion and its concern to appease the ancestors. The writer sees a parallel which resonates with the Roman pragmatic approach to religion in the policy of using missionaries to maintain peace and assist the implementation of British policy in Cape Colony.

Christianity was regarded as a form of Judaism until about AD 62, when Nero married Poppaea, who has been described as 'a friend of Jews' (Bruce, 1958:141). Bruce (ibid.) quotes Josephus to the effect that the manner of her burial in AD 65 indicates that she was, in fact, a God-fearer. Poppaea evidently turned Roman policy against the Christians, and Christianity was declared a religio illicita. The refusal of Christians, particularly Gentile Christians, to take part in the social life of Rome was seen not to have the ethno-cultic basis of the Mosaic Law, and was consequently attributed to an anti-social attitude. The hatred displayed by Rome towards Christians is well known and well documented. The Neronian persecution which followed the fire in Rome (AD 64), for example, indicates that the Christians were often wilfully misunderstood and probably falsely accused.

More serious was the perceived crime of atheism, of which they were accused, on account of their refusal to worship or recognize the Graeco-Roman gods. The impression gained by the Roman rulers and populace
can be traced to the attitude of the Christians towards idolatry. This was a political issue because the idolatry which the Roman authorities demanded was worship of an image of the emperor. Had the Christians in Rome adopted an assimilationist policy, there would probably have been less persecution; but the true Christian gospel would not have survived. The very hostility seems to prove that Christianity was not syncretistic (p.101f) – at least not in the normal meaning of the term.

The Patristic period is replete with examples of how early Christians fought their theological battles both defensively and offensively. Attacks upon the Faith came from the uneducated masses and from the pagan philosophers. The Eucharist, in particular, because it was a closed rite, attracted rumours of the grossest kind. Christians were accused of killing babies, eating their flesh and drinking their blood. On a higher level there were objections from the philosophers concerning the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Christian apologists defended themselves against these charges.

The apologists counter-attacked their accusers. They referred to the immoralities ascribed to the gods. They condemned the polytheism of paganism as inconsistent and crudely anthropomorphic. An assessment of the reactions of the nineteenth century missionaries, to similar characteristics in the Xhosa culture of their time will be considered in 4.2.

Mention has already been made (pp. 86f) of Philo's work as a Hellenistic Jew. Wand describes Philo's position as representative of 'an alliance between the noblest religion and the widest learning of the day' (1963: 69). As Wand remarks, 'this alliance once established could be carried over into the Christian Church' (ibid). In a very telling phrase, Wand elaborates on the details of this alliance or interaction:

"The philosophical side of it was pushed to the extreme by the Gnostic leaders.....Equilibrium was restored in the wonderful catechetical school, which shared with the apologists the honour of capturing the most advanced learning and bringing it into subjection to Christ". (70, Italics MJH).

The crucial question, which, in principle, captures the burden of this thesis is: How did the early Christians subject Hellenism to Christ? Three characteristics are to be noted.
(i) Part of the answer is that it was done by indigenous people. Pantaenus, the first master of the catechetical school founded by Athenagoras, was 'a native of Sicily and a converted Stoic.' (Wand, 1963:10).

(ii) Hellenisms were accepted as non-cardinal elements, somewhat in the nature of dynamic equivalents. Paul was able to clothe his message with Hellenistic form, while remaining true to the gospel in respect of basic content. Following the examples found in The Acts and the Pauline letters, a judicious process was undertaken in terms of which some elements of the receptor culture were rejected and others embraced, albeit in a “Christianized” form.

(iii) Opportunity was given to the host culture, in the process of conceptualization, to existentialise elements foreign to them. The hymns of Ntsikana (4.4.2) show that to a certain extent the nineteenth century missionaries were successful in this as well.

Sanneh effectively puts all these considerations together when he says (1989: 37) 'Once an entire culture opened itself to the Christian presence it was possible for the missionary to influence and mold that culture without fear of total rejection.'

The Christian message was clearly being influenced by Greek thought-forms, but in terms of Osborne's distinctions (above, p.57f) the differences to which Hellenistic influence gave rise were instances of non-cardinal elements. The differences do not represent ways in which Paul's thinking was definitively influenced, but rather were the result of his seeking to be intelligible to his Greek constituency (1 Cor. 9:20-23). This would make them homiletical rather than hermeneutical issues.

Reference was made in 2.2.6 to symbols and works of art in relation to conceptualization and contextualization. Latourette states that '(t)he effect of Christianity upon art was not immediately revolutionary or startling', although '(l)ong before the year 500 paintings inspired by the Christian faith had begun to appear' (1953/2000:251). He further observes that:

'the Christian scenes normally used non-Christian art forms.
Thus at least some of the portrayals of the Good Shepherd are clearly modelled after pagan pictures in which Orpheus
was the central figure: with some modifications a representation
of Jesus was substituted for that of Orpheus.’ (ibid).

The way in which political, cultural and religious changes have been reflected in art can be observed in many
places and at many times in world history - not least in nineteenth century Africa, *apartheid* South Africa and
post-*apartheid* South Africa. A study of Xhosa art and poetry from the point of view of Christianity, might
well prove to be a fruitful exercise.

Although Hellenism provides the cultural paradigm of the Graeco-Roman world-view, a Roman influence,
mainly political, is also to be found. It is interesting to note that the Graeco-Roman period was characterized
by instances of religious toleration on the one hand and the imposition of Emperor-worship on the other.

Wand describes the situation as follows:

>'Of all these religions and schools of thought the Government
was quite tolerant, but in return it expected them to be
mutually forbearing. And to them it added one necessary
religious observance of its own in the shape of a blatant
State-worship centring in divine honour paid to Caesar.’ (1963:10)

Wand comments that '(a)cestor worship made this possible, the honour paid to the dead emperor becoming
attached to his living successor' (ibid). The existence of ancestor worship in the ancient West is of obvious
significance to this thesis.

Jean Seznec shows how Euhemerus in the third century B.C. attempted to trace the process by which mortals
became gods (1953:11ff). Aristotle had taught that there was a divine spark in every human soul, and the
Stoics recognized its manifestation in deeds of service to one's fellow human beings. Euhemerism was
revived in the first century A.D., when Pliny expressed the principle: 'Deus est mortali juvare mortalem et
haec ad aeternum gloriam via.' [For mortal to aid mortal – this is God, and (this is) the road to eternal glory]
(*Historia naturalis*, ii, 7, 18). Here Pliny is describing a philosophy of life which resonates well with
*Ubuntu*, but at the same time he is implying a means by which human beings can become divine.

Clement implies a condemnation of euhemerism when he writes: 'Those to whom you bow were once men
like yourselves.' (Cohortatio ad gentes – PG, viii, 152; Seznec :12).

In the classical Roman context, the issues of ancestor-worship and emperor-worship, however, were not religious. By the time Christianity appeared, a desacralization, had taken place in the Roman Empire. Latourette says that:

'the state religions were no longer believed in as strongly as formerly. However, the continuance of their rites was believed to be necessary for the welfare of society. They were, accordingly, kept up, with great pomp.' (1953/2000:23)

This puts Christian dealings with the Roman gods firmly in the political arena. Most Christians refused to participate in those aspects of state ceremonies which involved devotion to the gods, and to the deified Emperor. This called down upon them the wrath of the authorities and the calumny of the pagan philosophers. The significance of the ancestor issue for the present thesis will be outlined in 4.2.2.5 and 7.2.2.5.

Justin Martyr (circa A.D. 100–163) is an interesting example of a convert to Christianity from a “pure” Hellenic (pagan) background. He was steeped in Greek philosophy, and when he became a Christian he conceptualized the gospel in his Hellenistic context. Chadwick says of him that '(t)owards cult and religious myth Justin is sharply negative.....But towards philosophy Justin could hardly be more positive and generous.' (1966:11). At issue here is the relative impact of religion and philosophy under the paradigm of a world-view. The writer sees Justin's position as an indication that his new paradigm is Christian rather than pagan, and that within his total world-view he can confidently accommodate Greek philosophy and bring 'it into subjection to Christ'. Justin was able to distinguish, as this thesis does, between Greek religion and Greek philosophy, turning away from the former but theologizing in the latter. This position may be perceived to be dualistic, until one recognizes what Justin's acceptance of Christianity actually involved. Within Justin's pre-Christian world-view the religious component was filled by the classical Greek polytheism and this religion related to Greek philosophy within the classical Greek paradigm. In his Christian world-view, the Greek philosophy [which he did not discard with the Greek gods] now came into relation with the Lord Jesus Christ. Such an arrangement is no more dualistic than the traditional concept of
“form” and “content”. In this case, the form remained [Greek philosophy], but the content changed [Greek polytheism replaced by the Lord Jesus Christ]. Justin teaches that rejecting a particular religion as paradigm and replacing it with Christianity does not mean totally abandoning other components in the world-view, such as philosophy, with which Christianity can engage in a holistic world-view. In classical Greek philosophy there are concepts which are still highly respected and philosophical categories which are still recognised in the twenty-first century.

A particular implication of Justin's stance is that it may be possible to draw a distinction between the wisdom of traditional African folklore [myths and fables] and African Tradition Religion as such. As Justin used pagan philosophy and discarded pagan religion, so it might be possible to “baptize” traditional African folklore and 'bring it into subjection to Christ' without accepting all the religious beliefs of A.T.R. In terms of the Xhosa culture, Xhosa Christians, in common with Christians of any cultural group, need to reflect on the precise way in which the Christian paradigm modifies their world-view, particularly in respect of the religious beliefs which were formerly part of it.

Justin, even as a Christian, continued to be favourably disposed towards Platonism. Chadwick sums up Justin's sentiment by saying: 'For a Platonist to accept Christianity, as Justin himself had done, is no revolutionary step involving a radical rejection of his earlier world-view' (1966:12). In many respects Plato's thought can serve as praeparatio evangelica. His definition of God is implicitly monotheistic - the belief that 'God is one, transcendent and the First Cause of all things' (Chadwick, :39) - despite his sub-Christian concept of the demiourgos. The status of A.T.R in this respect will be examined in 4.2.1.1

Hanson has described Clement of Alexandria (c. A.D. 150–215) 'the first unequivocally to welcome contemporary Greek philosophy as an ally of Christianity' (1969:66) He has evidently not considered Justin. Among Clement's best-known writings are Protrepticus, and Stromateis in which, in line with the naturalists, he attacked the anthropomorphism of pagan beliefs, such as the Homeric conception, and attempted to persuade pagans to adopt the Christian faith (Irwin, 1989:39-40). His contextualization of Christianity rested on two bases.
Firstly, he admired the advances which the pre-Christian philosophers had made. In particular he recognized
Plato's implied monotheism. Clement recognized, with Philo, 'that philosophy is a preparation for Theology'
(Chadwick, 1966:40; Sindima, 1994:14). As a case in point, having in his pre-Christian days been initiated
into the Eleusian mysteries, he 'followed the successive steps of such initiation, interpreting them as stages in
the Christian life' (Wand, 1963:71). This is an example of the accommodationist approach recently adopted
for the amaXhosa by P.T. Mtuze, whose work is referred to at various stages in the thesis. Clement goes so
far as to say that 'philosophy was necessary to the Greeks for righteousness, until the coming of the Lord'
(Stromateis, I v. 28; Bettenson, 1963: 8). This suggests that Clement sees Greek philosophy as the Greek
equivalent of the Mosaic Law for the Jews. If Clement's rather extravagant claim is admitted, the status of
African tradition on the basis of this argument presents exciting possibilities.

Secondly, he recognized, with Justin, that '(a)ll wisdom is summed up in Christ, who is, as it were the
keystone of the arch of knowledge and its uniting principle. (Stromateis, i. 37; Chadwick, 1966:40). The
Λόγος debate re-emerges at this point. The writer recognizes that there is a wide hermeneutical distance
between Clement's philosophical postulation and John's biblical declaration and that the comparison is in
danger of violating the personality of the Lord Jesus Christ and reducing the gospel to a philosophical
construction.

Clement deals with the details of Christian initiation in his book, Paedagogus. Wand refers to this book as
'Tutor', and comments that 'the title ... designates Christ Himself teaching the convert from paganism what
changes his conversion will necessitate in practical matters such as food, manners, language and personal
adornment' (:71). These are open-ended issues on which some of the teaching of Scripture is generally
recognised to be culture-specific.

Chadwick quotes extensively from Clement, showing his main areas of concern (:61f). Clement taught that
women should be modestly, but not dowdily dressed, that they should not use cosmetics unless they were
married to pagans, and they should not dye their hair. Baths were a luxury not to be over-indulged in, and
sport and exercise were good in moderation. Clement would not compromise on the question of eating meat
offered to idols, nor in engaging in military service on behalf of the pagan empire. Dancing to sensual music was forbidden, and instruction was even given in respect of appropriate images for signet rings. Most of these issues would today be regarded as non-cardinal. The concessions given to women married to pagans is interesting, and instructive for this thesis. It speaks to the status of Christian Xhosa women who are married to non-Christian Xhosa men, and how Christianity can be practised within the African traditions. By extension it implies questions such as: “Is it appropriate to grant a Christian Xhosa women who is married to a “traditional” Xhosa man dispensation to take part in traditional ceremonies in which ancestral spirits are invoked?”

Origen (186-215) is generally regarded as having made a greater contribution to the advancement of Christianity than even Clement. Latourette expresses the view that 'Clement's successor as head of the catechetical school in Alexandria, Origen, was to be more influential than he' (1953/2000:148). He describes Origen as 'an indefatigable worker' (ibid). Origen found a formidable opponent in the pagan philosopher Celsus, and his *Contra Celsum* is a brilliant response to a most penetrating argument against Christianity, (Latourette :150).

Chadwick says that Origen's attitude to Hellenism is 'reserved and critical', (1966:102) but adds that, in comparison with Clement's stance, 'there is ... an even profounder synthesis between Christianity and Platonism' (ibid). Origen appears to approve Celsus' presentation of Platonic doctrine, and also the content of the doctrine itself. He accepts the Platonic definition of God as the ground of being and even “beyond being” ’ (Chadwick, :83). He acknowledges that there is a gulf between the uncreated infinite and created finite beings, but at the same time wants to present God and finite creatures as free.

Perhaps Origen's closest resonance with A.T.R is the 'adventurous step' which Chadwick describes in these terms:

'He proposes to regard the diversity of spiritual entities, stretching downwards from the archangels through inferior powers and saints to men and yet lower still to demonic powers, as constituting a hierarchy of consubstantial rational
Origen proceeds from this to teach that it is possible for human beings to climb the hierarchy. Chadwick quotes Origen to the effect that the human and divine natures in Jesus make it possible for 'human nature' to 'become divine, not only in Jesus but also in all believers.' (Origen, *Contra Celsum*, iii, 28; Chadwick, :92).

The precise meaning which Origen's translator intends to convey by using the word “divine” in this quotation is problematic, particularly if it were to be juxtaposed with euhemerism (p.106f).

It is interesting and instructive to study the vacillating fortunes of paganism during this period. In the early years of Christian history, pagan Rome persecuted the Church, sometimes severely. Under Constantine, laws were promulgated against paganism, (Cochrane, 1957:254), which were extended under his son, Constantius, (Cochrane, ibid). These were relaxed under Julian [the Apostate], who curtailed many of the privileges Christians had enjoyed under the first “Christian” emperors. He extended to the pagans the privileges Constantine had extended to Christians, applying the principle of toleration in the reverse direction (Cochrane (1954:284). When Gratian became emperor in 375, the tide turned once more in favour of Christianity. Gratian appointed Theodosius as his co-emperor in the east, and this accession marked what Cochrane calls '(t)he formal liquidation of paganism' (:329). In the year of the second ecumenical council of Constantinople [381] an edict was passed which prohibited participation in pagan rites and nationalized the pagan temples (Bruce, 1958:310), in what seems to have been a move similar to the dissolution of the monastries during the reign of Henry VIII in England. In 385 divination came under fire, and in 392 a 'final and comprehensive enactment against paganism' (Cochrane, ibid) was promulgated.

This treatment of paganism bears at least two characteristics which are significant for this thesis:

(i) It is to be noted that the “Christian” emperor used his imperial powers to act against the pre-Christian religion of the empire by means of legislation. Bruce says of Theodosius that he 'made Christianity - and Christianity understood in the Nicene sense – the established religion of the Roman state' totally excluding 'equal toleration for all religions' (1958:322).

(ii) As Cochrane put it: 'By expunging pagan festivals from the list of public holidays, the empire cut one of
the most familiar links binding her to her historic past' (1957:331)

Molnar makes the same claim

'...very little has been written about ... the spiritual and
intellectual devastation that the victory of the new religion
brought to the entire Mediterranean basin, a devastation
in two clearly discernible areas, the mass cult and elite culture.' (1987:6, italics original)

It will be noted that Mtuze and particularly Villa-Vicencio report the same effect upon the amaXhosa, (4.1.3.3). Molnar describes the way in which the host culture 'lost its moorings' (: 8). This will be revisited in 4.2.2.6 and 7.2.2.6 when the spirit world and divination will be considered.

3.1.3.2 Augustine of Hippo

There is a sense in which it could be said that Western Christian theology traces its lineage, not from Rome, but from Africa. The influence of Augustine of Hippo (AD 354–430) is to be found in the Roman Church as it existed throughout Europe and Britain in the Middle Ages and beyond, as well as in the work of the Protestant reformers and the Reformed movement up to the present day.

Augustine, a North African theologian of note is a significant example of the transition from Hellenism to the mediaeval and modern Western tradition. His work can rightly be termed a “watershed” in the sense that, as Richardson puts it:

'In him many of the currents of the thought of the ancient world
flow together: from him stem many of the characteristic ideas
of mediaeval thinking'. He serves, then, as a transition from the
classical period to the Middle Ages. (1969:25)

Bruce is more specific. He says that 'all the main streams of Western Christianity draw upon him – Roman,
Lutheran, Genevan and Anglican.' (1958:334). This being the case, it can confidently be asserted that all the missionaries who came to the Eastern Cape in the nineteenth century were influenced by him to a certain extent.
Markus reviews biographical studies of Augustine which at the time he described as “recent” (1972:31ff). He questions whether those writers who had been concentrating on Augustine's statesmanship as 'the great architect of the alliance between Church and state' (:32) did not down-play Augustine's value as a thinker. However, the significance of his statesmanship is that it serves as a backdrop for the resistance to the influence of the Roman Empire in Church affairs which characterised not only the Donatist movement but North African Christianity more widely. This resonates with the attitude of the amaXhosa to British Imperialism, for example, which will be considered in 4.1.3.1 and 4.4.4.

Dooyeweerd shows the extent to which Augustine's thought was determined by his Greek world-view (1979:113f). Although Augustine accepted the Greek notion of formless matter [and found a reference to it in Gen. 1:2], he differed from the Greeks in ascribing the creation of it to God.

Augustine's formulation of the doctrine of Original Sin in terms of sexual desire is heavily dependent upon the Gnostic notion that matter is evil. Dooyeweerd's general assessment is:

'The example of Augustine clearly demonstrates how even in a great father of the Church the spiritual power of the Greek ground motive worked as a dangerous counterforce to the ground motive of revelation.' (1979:115)

Dooyeweerd sees this as an interference of 'accommodation' into a situation where 'reformation' was required. He offers a worthy guiding principle for all contextualizations, including that of the amaXhosa under consideration in this thesis, when he says, 'Only the ground motive of God's revelation can furnish us with the appropriate answer.' (1979:115).

Cochrane quotes extensively from the Prologue of Augustine's Recantations (1957:382ff), and describes Augustine's understanding of his Christian journey as 'a progressive emancipation from pagan ideology' (:382). If Dooyeweerd's assessment is a fair one, it would seem that Augustine was never totally emancipated. Augustine's conversion experience in 386 'gave him the light necessary to perceive the deficiencies of Classicism' (Cochrane, ibid) and placed him 'in a position to resume, in the spirit of Plato but from a fresh standpoint and with fresh resources, the long-neglected attempt at a synthesis of experience...'(:383). The writer sees this as confirming his understanding of Justin's position (p.120f).
Cochrane concludes (:384) that the wideness of Augustine's thought requires that his *fides quarens intellectum* must not be understood 'in any narrowly “theological” sense' but rather as 'the guiding maxim of his life' (ibid). What Dooyeweerd views negatively can, following Cochrane's sentiment, be viewed positively. It is precisely the openness which, in many respects, most of the nineteenth century missionaries appear to have lacked (below, Chapter Four).

If the wideness of Augustine's thought is considered in the context of the definitions of salvation (p. 34f) Augustine would be seen to favour the wide view. This is not to imply that Augustine's stand on salvation by grace through faith is in any way to be questioned; but rather to say that his view of faith was not restricted to a narrow view of “saving faith”.

Augustine's thought is clearly discernible in Anselm (3.2.2), in Luther (3.2.3.1) and Calvin (3.2.3.2), and in Karl Barth and the neo-orthodox school. The nineteenth century missionaries would not, of course, have been influenced by Barth, but many of them were Lutherans or Calvinists. Karl Barth and neo-orthodoxy are not considered in detail in this thesis because the writer does not consider that their work affected the Xhosa conceptualization of the gospel to any significant extent, although it has been valued in Europe and in the [white] Afrikaans churches in South Africa.

### 3.2 Christianity in Post-Roman Europe and the British Isles

The survival of Christianity during the Dark Ages [basically from the fall of Rome to the Renaissance] was characterized by syncretism and superstition – a clear demonstration of the results of failure to distinguish a-scriptural and even anti-scriptural elements from scriptural ones. At first it was Catholicism confronting paganism, later it was Catholicism and Protestantism confronting each other, and later still it was pre-modern conservatism confronting Enlightenment modernism.

#### 3.2.1 The Christianization of the British Isles

The way in which Christianity was presented to and contextualized by pagan Britain is of utmost importance to this thesis, because:
The resultant British conceptualization was the basis from which the contextualization presented by many of the missionaries to the amaXhosa developed.

(ii) It presents points of comparison with the missionary presentation in respect of the non-cardinal elements which were admitted.

The diachronic modifications produced in the course of development will be outlined in the rest of this chapter.

It will be observed in the course of this chapter, that the British conceptualization of Christianity included quite a number of pre-Christian elements. The religious situation in pre-Christian Britain was rather complex. Christopher Fee lists and briefly describes the pagan British pantheons, [gods of a given culture] (2001:13ff), which he classifies into two groups: Germanic and Celtic. The Celtic conceptualization will be taken as a model in 4.3.2, and will be discussed in detail there. The best examples of Germanic mythology are the stories of Beowulf and of King Arthur.

Rosenberg makes the following insightful and highly significant comment concerning the epic of Beowulf:

'The author was a Christian who loved the pagan heroic tradition of his ancestors and blended the values of the pagan hero with the Christian values of his own country and time...... The Sutton Hoo royal ship burial dating between 650 and 660 A.D. was discovered in Suffolk, England, in 1939. Its artifacts authenticate the details of court life described in Beowulf. Like the epic itself, these articles combine aspects of Anglo-Saxon culture with the contemporary Christian culture.' (1986:286)

Fee has found evidence of an accommodational relationship between Christianity and the pre-Christian Germanic myths. He cites the case of Weland, the Smith, a deity who is mentioned in Beowulf. Fee expresses the accommodational relationship in this way:

'Thus in Weland we find a paradox: his name first appears in a number of Old English texts and representations of him appear in various artistic contexts, quite often in combination with Christian motifs; here is a god who was clearly known and revered in pagan and early Christian England...' (2001:62)
All this is evidence that when Christianity was first presented in Britain, pre-Christian elements were incorporated into the Christian conceptualization. Fee's expression 'pagan and early Christian England' indicates in connection with Weland that early Christians as well as pagans worshipped this pagan deity. This is to be condemned and regretted and is not recommended as a model for any contextualization to, for, or by the amaXhosa.

An indication of the relationship between Christianity and pre-Christian mythology is provided by the fact that the pre-Christian myths were preserved by Christian monks. It is clear that the motive of the monks was not syncretistic, although the principle of resonance seems to be operating in reverse. Fee explains:

'...Christian monks in Britain were anxious to document local traditions and to write down old tales, but they also strove to assert the superiority of their own faith, sometimes even going so far as to insert aspects of Judeo-Christian mythology into their retelling of Celtic stories.' (2001:63)

It is not clear whether the monks were prepared to tell the Celtic stories in juxtaposition to the biblical stories and if so, what their motivation was. They insisted on 'the superiority of their own faith'. In his discussion of the Germanic myths surrounding Thor, Fee shows that the Christians who perpetuated these stories tended to make their story-telling a *reductio ad absurdum.*

'... it is not unreasonable to assume that some of the humour associated with Thor in the later tradition was injected by the Christian compilers of the stories, scribes who surely could take no pagan god – and certainly not the primary Germanic competitor of Christ – too seriously.' (2001:37)

The treatment of Thor seems remarkably parallel to the iconoclastic approach of some of the missionaries with regard to Xhosa mythology, but the principle is established that pre-Christian content was at least brought into dialogical relation with a conceptualization of the Christian gospel. The significance of this for the present thesis is that this freedom was not afforded to the amaXhosa in respect of their indigenous pre-Christian elements. The hypothesis is that

*a revisiting and evaluation of traditional Xhosa lore would enhance and facilitate a new Xhosa conceptualization of the gospel.*
The policy of accommodation tends to be confirmed in the advice given by Gregory the Great to Augustine of Canterbury concerning the evangelization of England in about A.D. 596: 'Destroy as few pagan temples as possible; only destroy their idols, sprinkle them with holy water, build altars and put relics in the buildings.' (Collins and Price, 1999:85. Primary source not cited).

Gregory's advice, however, gives rise to a number of questions:

(i) Why should the temples be preserved and the idols destroyed?
(ii) What effect would “holy water” have on the ruined images?
(iii) What sort of things are we to categorize as “relics” in terms of sub-Christian practices?

These questions indicate the conviction that Gregory's instructions should not have been followed unquestioningly; but the principle implied in Gregory's stance suggests that the nineteenth century missionaries could have been more flexible in their attitude towards the indigenous Xhosa practices they encountered.

3.2.2 The Mediaeval Church

Latourette assesses Anselm's indebtedness to Augustine by saying, 'Steeped in Augustine, Anselm did not slavishly reproduce that great master, but did his own thinking' (1953/2000:499). Anselm made two major contributions to the development of Western Theology: the ontological argument for the existence of God and Cur Deus Homo dealing with the incarnation and the atonement.

The ontological argument postulates 'a Being which is the best, the greatest, and the highest of all existing beings; that whatsoever is, exists through Something' (Latourette, 1953/2000:500). Anselm argues further, that the non-existence of such a Being is inconceivable because if that Being did not exist, something that did exist would be greater. (Anselm, Proslogion, iii, quoted by Bettenson, 1963:191f). A comparison of Anselm's postulation with the biblical revelation of Jahweh and Christ shows how far Western philosophy had moved away from its Judaeo-Christian roots, in seeking to prove philosophically what God had revealed to humble faith. However, Anselm's description of God as 'the best, the greatest and the highest...' accords with the biblical description of God, and the Zulu name 'Unkulunkulu' expresses the same concept. There is a clear
resonance between the concept of a remote divine Being [as conceived in Western philosophy] and the Xhosa concept expressed in the name Qamata. This issue will be raised in 4.2.1.1.

In *Cur Deus Homo*, Anselm argues that God's mercy desired to overlook human sin, but that since that sin was an offence against God's justice, on which the moral order of the universe depended, God had to vindicate God's honour. Human beings are incapable of providing that satisfaction, therefore God provided it by means of the sacrifice of the Son of God, (Bettenson, 1963:193f; Latourette, 1953/2000: 501f). The classical doctrine of the Atonement as set out, for example, by Anselm, will need to engage the issue of sacrifice in A.T.R., particularly as it is encountered amongst the amaXhosa. At this point, Anselm's teaching would impact negatively any assertion that Xhosa food rituals could be understood to be sacrifices, whether to God, to ancestral spirits or to the ancestors.

The later mediaeval period led into the European Renaissance. Schaeffer describes the Renaissance understanding of reality in terms of a dichotomy between “Grace” and “Nature”. Grace, the higher, is the realm of ‘God the creator; heaven and heavenly things, the unseen and its influence on earth; man's soul; and unity.’ (1968:61). Here there is clear resonance with Xhosa spirituality. Nature, the lower, is the realm of '(t)he created; earth and earthly things; the visible and what it (nature + man) does on earth; man's body; diversity.' (ibid). This is the paradigm in which the Protestant reformers worked and witnessed, and these were the assumptions which they addressed.

3.2.3 The European Reformation

In the view of the writer, the development of Western Christianity found its cusp in the Protestant Reformation in Europe. In order that the scope of this thesis should not be too broad, and consequently too shallow, the Western contextualization of Christianity with which this thesis deals will be predominantly its Protestant manifestation. The motivation for this decision is that the missionaries whose stance this thesis considers were Protestant and that the target institution which is featured in the evaluation and assessment (B.I.E.C.) is also Protestant in its orientation.
The doctrinal stance of B.I.E.C. has already been described as “conservative-evangelical” (1.2.8). In this context, “evangelical” is more-or-less equivalent to traditional Protestant, [as distinct from liberal Protestant], embracing Lutheranism, Calvinism, Evangelical Anglicanism and all the developments from them, from a conservative standpoint. The Protestant Reformation in Europe in the sixteenth century is therefore a key period in the development of the theological stance of the Institute.

In order to provide an adequate critique of Western Protestant Christianity, by means of which to assess the various contextualizations which have been presented to the amaXhosa, it must be frankly admitted that pre-Christian remnants have survived in the Western conceptualization even to the present day. An assessment will be made in 4.1.1.3 of the extent to which these pre-Christian elements found their way into the missionary contextualizations and the question whether they were taught as part of the esse of the gospel or merely as part of its bene esse will be addressed.

On the assumption that the Protestant Reformation and the European Renaissance were mutually influential, it could be argued that the Protestant Reformation can provide some sort of guide-lines [mutatis mutandis] for whatever theological and spiritual movement is required to engage in a similar way with the African Renaissance of the present century. M. Madise lends support to this view:

"The formation of the African Independent Churches in Africa reflected the same type of historical events within the Protestant Churches as occurred in the Catholic Church in the 16th century. As in Europe, the cultural context played a major role in the reformation of the church which was influenced mainly by the Renaissance." (2005: Internet format)

It will not be possible, within the compass of this thesis to offer a full treatment of all the issues raised by, and at the time of, the Reformation. Therefore, only items of special relevance to the thrust of this thesis will be mentioned.

The Protestant Reformation is significant for this thesis because of its interaction with the Enlightenment, which characterized the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and shaped the formulation of Christianity which
the missionaries brought to the Eastern Cape. Wright describes the Protestant Reformation in Europe as a 'protest in favour of the historical and eschatological reading of Christianity' (2000: 6, emphasis Wright). Wright's further comments point to the error which confounded the missionary presentation – failure to take account of the original context of Scripture.

'Getting at the literal historical meaning of the texts, as the Reformers insisted we must, meant historical reading; the question of what Jesus or Paul really meant, as opposed to what the much later Church said that they meant, became dramatically important' (ibid, italics MJH).

Against this general description of the Reformation, the contributions of its greatest leaders, Luther and Calvin will now be briefly described and assessed.

### 3.2.3.1 Martin Luther

Martin Luther's position regarding theology and culture, as presented by Justo Gonzalez, appears to be quite promising. Gonzalez writes:

'As is well known, Luther claimed that tradition – especially the most recent tradition of the Middle Ages - must be rejected in favor of Scripture ... he believed that tradition had erred, and that it had to be brought back to the true meaning of the gospel through the authority of Scripture, which is above tradition, the church, the theologians and Luther himself.' (1975:48)

This clearly marks a turning point, at which the tenets of Scholasticism, and their foundation in Greek philosophy are rejected. This assessment is confirmed by J. T. McNiel: 'To Luther, Scripture-testimony rather than tradition or scholastic opinions was the sufficient test of all doctrines,...'. (in Richardson, 1969:201). However, this does not mean that Luther was biblicistic. Gonzalez points to a distinction which Luther allegedly made between Scripture and gospel:

'As a matter of fact, the proper form of the gospel is its live, oral proclamation. Christ commanded the apostles not to write but to proclaim... The authority of Scripture is not in the canon, but in the gospel.' (1975:49)

In support of this position, after quoting from Luther's *Theses concerning Faith and Law*, thesis 41 (Luther's Works 34:112), Gonzalez adds: 'This is why Luther felt free to take certain liberties with the canon of Scripture, while still insisting on the primacy of Scripture over tradition.' (1975:48).
Luther's stance on Scripture and Tradition is instructive for this thesis. His stance on the relation between Scripture and the Canon appears to resonate well with the African situation, and to speak to the current debate concerning textuality and orality. The problem, however, is that if the finality of the canon is not taken seriously [Luther appears to have harboured reservations concerning the Letter of James], what precisely is the Scripture which has the primacy over tradition?

The point is nevertheless taken, that the gospel as set forth in Scripture has pre-eminence over the Western culture and the Xhosa culture equally, and needs to be understood as standing in judgment over both.

Luther’s stance on the Mosaic law is interesting. He says: “......I dismiss the commandments given to the people of Israel. They neither urge nor compel me” (Luther's Works, 35:166; Gonzalez, 1975:51). His point is that Gentile Christians are not subject to the Mosaic Law, and neither are Jewish Christians unless they choose to be. In neither case is their salvation dependent upon observing these laws. Although this position might appear to be somewhat Marcionite, it is in fact a reiteration of the principle adopted at the Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15) and found in the teaching of Paul in, for example, his letter to the Galatians. The status of the requirements of the African tradition, such as ritual slaughterings to appease the ancestors, are in parallel to those of the Mosaic Law, that is, non-cardinal. If, however, the rituals were seen as atoning sacrifices, they would have to be categorized as anti-scriptural and rejected.

In the context of cross-cultural communication of the gospel, including the specific context of this thesis, this would mean that a presenter contextualization and a receptor conceptualization may include as cardinal only stipulations made in the gospel; that is, by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself in the New Testament. This is a watershed moment, because it reaffirms that Christ, and Christ alone [not Scripture as such] is the arbiter of the content of the Christian gospel. This tends to reinforce the principle set out in 2.1.2.3. It must, however, be pointed out that the authority rests in “Christ-in-Scripture” rather than in “Christ-in-tradition”, or “Christ as a construct of philosophy”.

In 1530, the Lutheran doctrine was set out by Melancthon in the Confession of Augsburg. Subsequent debating within the Church, led to a compromise known as the Augsburg Interim (1547), and later to the Leipzig Interim. This debate is quite significant for this thesis. Melancthon claimed that the statements he had accepted, which gave offence to many of his fellow-Protestants were *adiaphora*, and could therefore be either accepted or rejected without being unfaithful to the gospel in either case (Gonzalez, 1975:109-110).

The concept “adiaphoristic” applies in the area of what Osborne calls non-cardinal elements. With regard to dynamic equivalents, this principle grants a measure of freedom to hermeneuts which should be recognised and accepted.

Closely associated with this issue is Luther's teaching regarding the two kingdoms. The spiritual kingdom [the Church] is the realm of grace; whereas the temporal kingdom is the domain of law. Gonzalez draws out the implications:

‘Christians should not presume on the support of the state or of physical

force for true religion, and ... rulers should not make the church a mere

tool of their civil government.’ (:68)

As will be demonstrated in Chapter Four, the missionaries to the Eastern Cape did, in fact, accept support from the state, and the authorities in the colony clearly expected the missionaries to act as government agents in some respects. This compromised their presentation of Christianity, by causing the amaXhosa to believe that it was a tool of British imperialism. Most colonists and even some missionaries believed it as well.

### 3.2.3.2 John Calvin

Alister McGrath claims that the Reformation was a major factor in 'the “desacralization” of nature.' (2004:200), which led to atheism in Europe. From the perspective of this thesis, the problem is not atheism so much as secularization, which this thesis understands as the development of a way of life which simply ignores any spiritual realm and does not consider belief in the possibility of the being of God to be relevant or worth discussing. Unfortunately, McGrath tends to use the term 'Protestantism' almost as though it were synonymous with 'Calvinism'. At the *locus* cited he specifies only Zwingli and Calvin. McGrath's thesis is that nature lost its sacred quality when 'Protestantism ... insisted that the ways and will of God were to be
known through the Bible, and preaching based on that sacred text’ (202). He juxtaposes his perceived Reformation view against the ‘fundamental principle’ held in the Middle Ages that the sacred could be known through and be present in the secular, the spiritual in and through the material’ (ibid). McGrath sees the desacralization as tending to exclude nature as a means of revelation, in a way Barth was later to adopt. The writer believes that McGrath overstates his case by generalization, and reads more into his sources than is warranted. An absolute separation of religion from the natural world could lead to the demise of religion as such, and would certainly be disconsonant with traditional Xhosa culture. A close relationship between sacred and secular is highly resonant with African tradition. Modern Christian Xhosas, as distinct from traditional Xhosas tend to recognize the sacred and the secular as distinct [but not absolutely separated] elements in their westernized world-view. It should be noted that the relation between sacred and secular is not comparable with the relation between religion and philosophy, since the former impinges on one’s world-view and the latter on the functioning of one’s paradigm. This will be revisited at various appropriate points in the thesis.

3.2.4 Post-Reformation Developments

3.2.4.1 The Enlightenment and “Modernism”

The Enlightenment of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries brought what came to be known as “modernism” and the effects of this development were still being experienced when the missionaries arrived in the Eastern Cape. The Enlightenment was characterized by scientific discoveries such as those of Isaac Newton, and tended to reinforce the dichotomy implied in the Calvinist conceptualization, between the natural and the supernatural. In general, the “pre-modern” world would have counted such a dichotomy foreign to their world-view. This will be of particular significance when the question of the postmodern reaction to Enlightenment modernism is applied to an evaluation of Xhosa spirituality in 6.3. In its most radical form, Enlightenment modernism represented an intellectual rejection of Christianity and of the supernatural in general.

In the eighteenth century, H.S. Reimarus (1694-1768) 'challenged unthinking would-be Christian dogma about the eternal Son of God and his establishment of the oppressive system called “Christianity”', (Wright,
Historical verifiability became the criterion of truth in secular circles in the Enlightenment period, just as logical or epistemological verifiability became the criterion for the Logical Positivists in the twentieth century. Michael Bird appears to attribute a hidden agenda to the work of Reimarus and others whom he mentions, when he says:

'The purpose of such studies was twofold: (i) To destroy the orthodox picture of Jesus; and (ii) To erect another view of Jesus that was free from theological influence, that was acceptable to the modern mind (i.e. nothing miraculous) and be a worthy moral example.' (2004:6)

This point will be taken up again in 3.2.4.3, when the nineteenth century emphasis on history is considered. It will also contribute to the discussion of demythologization in 6.1 and of postmodernism in 6.3.

The principle of historical verifiability as such, resulted in a separation of history and faith so radical as to place them in diametrical opposition to each other. This led, in turn, to the modernist rejection of faith.

A major problem here is the ambiguous nature of the word “faith”. The English term is used to translate both fiducia and assensus. Fiducia refers to commitment statements which are not based on reason, such as, for example, “saving faith” - trust in the efficacy of the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation. This is confessional by nature and is not available for evaluation according to rational criteria. On the other hand, assensus refers to acceptance of verbal propositions, and the reasonableness of the assensus depends on the degree of probability, which is clearly available for evaluation according to rational criteria.

The scientist and the philosopher will dismiss as special pleading the principles which aver the supernaturality of the Christian message, such as the authority of Scripture; but it is the confessional position with which the writer would address the issue. He would see his position as being in the realm of fiducia, which Reimarus and his academic descendants would probably not recognize.

3.2.4.2 Eighteenth Century Theology of Experience

Arguably the most significant philosophical movement of the eighteenth century was Empiricism, and its key
figures are Locke, Berkely and Hume. In terms of epistemology, the basic issue is between *a priori* knowledge [coming before, and independent of sense-experience] and *a posteriori* knowledge [deriving from sense experience]. Empiricists claim that the only basic knowledge which human beings can possess is the sense-data which they experience.

The theological counterpart of this was the message of the evangelical revival which emphasized personal experience (of the new birth, assurance of salvation, and sanctification by the Holy Spirit). These distinctives have been expressed in what are sometimes called the “Wesleyan Universals”, summarizing the basic soteriological emphases of John Wesley (Sangster, 1950:21f).

These are:

(i) All human beings *need* to be saved (universal sin);

(ii) All human beings *can* be saved (universal grace of God apprehended by faith in Christ alone);

(iii) All human beings *can know* they are saved (assurance by the witness of the Holy Spirit)

(iv) All human beings can be saved to the *uttermost* (Christian perfection by the power of the Holy Spirit).

There is a case for categorizing these propositions as subjective. Proposition (iii) which relates to the *testimonium Spiritus Sancti internum* would be the confessional Wesleyan response.

There is, however, a fundamental difference between the empiricism of Locke, Berkely and Hume and the experiential theology of Wesley. For Wesley, spiritual experience was supernatural, whereas for the Empiricists sense-data were exclusively natural. It is the stance of this thesis that the category “faith” comes as a *tertium quid* between the categories of idealism and realism, and *in tandem* with each. Hume's thought was used by the Logical Positivists in the twentieth century in an attempt to establish the unreasonableness of religious belief, and the meaninglessness of religious statements.

### 3.2.4.3. Nineteenth Century Problem of History

The expression “problem of history” indicates that in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries history became a significant factor in biblical studies. The Gottingen school, notably J.S. Semler, combined
literary and historical criticism. It came to be recognised that the Bible's claim to provide historical records needs to be understood within a completely new historiographical paradigm. Richardson puts it this way:

'...because Christianity is an historical religion, a faith which sprang out of actual situation in real history, it is obvious that theologians will have to come to grips with the problem of the nature of historical thinking...  (1964:156)

The 'nature of historical thinking' involves an understanding of the difference between history and the natural sciences. The latter are exact sciences, whereas historiography has characteristics of subjectivity in respect of one's interpretation of historical events, in addition to the problem of verifiability.

Disputes between philosophers and theologians are usually in the area of *assensus*. It must be acknowledged that given the lack of concrete evidence in many cases, the credence given to historical records can be no more than an assessment of the degree of probability in the given situation, which is not verification. Early historical records are no longer verifiable in any meaningful sense. Eye-witness accounts are notoriously subject to error; and eye-witness accounts of events cannot be checked after the death of the eye-witness. Bible statements, which are based on the witness of people no longer living, have limited status at this level. Thus, *assensus*-faith is no less reliable than historical verification. The Enlightenment objection that the Biblical records have no historical verification, is, therefore, irrelevant.

With regard to the relative values of the Christian missionary message and Xhosa folk lore, it has to be acknowledged that from the viewpoint of historical verifiability, the records of the Bible do not appear to have any superiority over the orally transmitted stories of the African Traditions. There is, of course, a large measure of external evidence to support, for example, the historical statements in the gospels and The Acts; but it would be unfair to cite this because in the very nature of the case, equivalent external evidence for the Xhosa tradition cannot be produced, and it was not possible to commit Xhosa lore to writing as the New Testament history was.

It is the contention of this thesis, that where the scriptures are concerned interpretation is one of the ministries of the Holy Spirit. If one accepts Luther's principle that '(t)he authority of Scripture is not in the
canon, but in the gospel' (p. 120) and the metonymy set out in 2.1.2.3 that the gospel is the Lord Jesus Christ, the words of Jesus in John 16:14 are definitive.

Clearly one's doctrine of Scripture is crucial at this point, (1.2.7). If the contents of the previous paragraph were applied to the problem of history as a whole, the argument could rightly be dismissed as a “quick fix”. This thesis is not arguing that the problem of history has thus been solved. It is arguing that within the realm of faith, as distinct from the realm of epistemology, the problem is not relevant. Believing philosophers, as philosophers, will continue to examine this problem. There appear to be only three options:

(i) to bury one's head in the sand and deny that there is a problem;
(ii) to consign the total Christian experience to the realms of fantasy on the advice of the logical positivists;
(iii) to accept the duality of the situation.

With regard to the third option, which appears to be the only one open to a Christian believer, Schaeffer's Renaissance schema (p. 118) might be a good starting point. Simplistically, faith lies in the realm of grace, and history in the realm of nature.

More particularly, and of particular relevance to this thesis, is the specific question of history and myth. This will be addressed in section 6.1, when the work of Rudolph Bultmann and others will be examined in greater detail.

It should be noted that the historical point has been reached at which the nineteenth century missionaries came to South Africa. Those who were up-to-date in their theology [or, indeed, were even interested in theology at that level], would have come to this country very aware of the renewed conviction that the events of the life of Jesus took place in actual time and space. This could be expected to contrast sharply with the vague Xhosa “ancestor myth/history” which they encountered on arrival. The problem of history was beginning to reduce the status of the biblical record in the minds of younger theological students, but there seems to be little or no evidence of this having affected those who came to the Eastern Cape as missionaries.
The history of Western Theology up to this point as outlined above, will inform the discourse of Chapter Four. The later history of Western Theology [Twentieth Century] will be outlined in Chapter Six, whereafter modern African responses will be reviewed in Chapter Seven.

3.3 Assessment

From the information gathered and the conclusions reached in this chapter it is possible to provide a philosophical and theological profile of the nineteenth century missionaries. Historical information will be presented in Chapter Four to show whether the expected profile fits the actual situation.

3.1 passim, 3.2.1 and 3.2.2 would not have affected these missionaries directly, but they helped to shape the developments outlined in the rest of the chapter. The missionaries were, however, strongly influenced by the Protestant Reformation (3.2.3), by Enlightenment modernism (3.2.4.1), eighteenth century experiential theology (3.2.4.2) and nineteenth century historicism (3.2.4.3).

From the Protestant reformers, they would have inherited a love and respect for the Bible, which would tend to alienate them from the amaXhosa, who were at that stage still pre-literate. The Enlightenment would present another barrier between their world and the world of the amaXhosa, which was still pre-modern. Eighteenth century evangelical theology, which emphasized personal salvation would present yet another barrier for the amaXhosa whose culture was [and still, to a large extent is] community-orientated. Finally, the problem of history, if the missionaries were concerned with it at all, would confuse the amaXhosa, to whom history was all basically mythological.

The political orientation of the missionaries was another element in their general profile. It has not emerged from the research outlined in this thesis thus far, but will be considered in 4.1.3 and 4.4.4, because it had a profound effect upon their attempts to contextualize the gospel in the Eastern Cape.
CHAPTER FOUR

INITIAL CONTACT- THE NINETEENTH CENTURY SITUATION

Having stated the problem, offered thesis-specific definitions of key concepts and outlined the development of the culture and the range of theological background with which the missionaries came to the amaXhosa, the tasks which were enunciated on pages 6ff can now be approached.

*The first task of this thesis is to identify and describe the Christian gospel as it was communicated to the amaXhosa in the nineteenth century and its reception by the amaXhosa, given the complex nature of the theological and cultural situations on both sides.* (p.6)

The diagnostic question can be formulated as follows:

**To what extent did the missionaries of the nineteenth century offer a contextualization of the gospel such as would enable the amaXhosa to make a meaningful conceptualization?**

This question implies a criticism of the missionaries' contextualizations. A balanced assessment of the missionary presentation will produce guidelines for contemporary contextualizations by highlighting what must be avoided and what must be emulated. In Chapter Five *apartheid* will be judged according to these and other criteria, and in Chapter Seven the same criteria will be used to assess modern African contextualizations. The question is framed in such a way that the positive and negative aspects of the missionaries' work, and the evident effectiveness of their contextualization as reflected in the conceptualizations of the early African Christians can be brought into the discourse.

In this chapter, the missionary contextualization will first be outlined, after which the most significant features of the Xhosa culture will be identified and described. In the third part the Xhosa culture will be compared with Hellenism and the Celtic culture [as receptor cultures], so as to assess expectations for the missionary interaction with the amaXhosa. Finally, the Xhosa reaction and proaction will be outlined in terms of early Xhosa contextualizations. Primary sources for the missionary contextualization and the Xhosa response are provided at appropriate points in the various sub-sections.
4.1 The Missionary Contextualization

Reference was made (pp.26f) to Robinson's three-fold categorization of religion as (i) Theology, (ii) relationship between worshipper and worshipped, and (iii) ethics. These aspects will be taken into account in this chapter, as the Western contextualization of Christianity, which was moulded by the developments outlined in Chapter Three, is described. The theological aspect will be covered in 4.1.1 (hermeneutical) and 4.1.2 (doctrinal). The second of Robinson's elements, the relationship between the worshipper and the object worshipped, will be treated in 4.2.2 when Xhosa traditional religion and spirituality are described. The ethical aspects of the respective cultures of the West and the amaXhosa will also be introduced into the discourse of 4.2.2.

At the time the missionaries laboured in Southern Africa, the basic elements of the Christian message were generally taken for granted in the West. In this connection, David Hedegard writes:

'What is the Christian message to the heathen world? The question was never raised when Protestant missionary societies first sent missionaries to heathen countries, nor was it asked in the great era of missionary expansion in the 19th century. No one asked this question because the Christian message was self-evident to every Christian'. (1964:90)

This would appear to be an oversimplification. As will be asserted in 4.1.2, the missionary presentation was characterized by significant differences in respect of the work of the Holy Spirit, the nature of holy orders and the status of the Virgin Mary. The doctrine of the Person of Christ and the doctrine of Salvation are also considered in this chapter, not because there was doctrinal divergence amongst the missionaries but on account of the danger of misconceptions in the Xhosa conceptualization.

In contrast to this Western preoccupation with the finer points of doctrine stands the writer's perception that the world-view of the amaXhosa is not only simpler but also less fragmentary. One manifestation of this is that within the Xhosa Christian community, differences based on doctrine are perceived as less significant than ethnic identity.
In 3.1.2.2 it was noted that the Pauline model for contextualization to Greek listeners was not Hellenistic. It might be added that, equally, it was not exclusively Judaic. By contrast, the Western contextualization to the amaXhosa was virtually unchanged from its British/European conceptualization. It made the invalid assumption that its own doctrinal corpus was the only “derived contextualization”. The Western contextualization will now be evaluated.

4.1.1 Hermeneutical factors

Attention was drawn on page 61 to Thiselton's thesis that '(s)ocio-pragmatic hermeneutics remain explicitly ethnocentric' and that when a community extends its boundaries it 'disintegrates under its own weight and internal pluralism'. Thiselton comments: 'But this is to exchange hermeneutical understanding for the random contingencies of social history' (1992:27-28).

It is arguable that the missionaries of the nineteenth century were guilty of exchanging 'hermeneutical understanding for the random contingencies of social history' when they ignored the existence of the Xhosa culture as a possible receptor and insisted on teaching the amaXhosa in the way that Christianity had happened to develop in the West. This can clearly be seen to be cultural imperialism. On the socio-pragmatic principle this would amount to the accusation that the missionaries forced the amaXhosa to accept a meaning of the gospel, not in terms of what they, the amaXhosa, thought it meant, but in terms of what the missionaries wanted it to mean [for the amaXhosa as well as for themselves]. Perhaps it would be fair to say that in the case of the missionaries the imperialism was unintentional because it did not occur to them that a Xhosa conceptualization was possible. Evidence of this will be found in 4.2 and 4.4 where attention is given to the missionary stance and the Xhosa response respectively.

4.1.1.1 The importance of language

Sanneh (1989:90f) tells how the early missionaries considered vernacular languages to be essential to a contextualization of the gospel. In the Spanish dominions, for example, they opposed the imposition of the Castilian language on the native Indians. Some of the missionaries to the amaXhosa, notably A.A. Kropf of the Berlin Mission, came with the same enlightened and dedicated attitude towards isiXhosa which Sanneh describes in respect of the “Spanish” Indians. These are surely amongst the ‘intrepid pioneers’ to
In spite of these efforts, Hodgson evokes no surprises when she expresses the conviction that 'the Dutch hymns which the black converts had been taught by the London Society missionaries were alien to their style as well as language' (1980:5). The amaXhosa were thus unable, at that stage, to relate to the truth of the gospel at the deepest level. The contributions of Ntsikana and Tiyo Soga to rectify this situation will be considered in Sections 4.4.2 and 4.4.3 respectively.

### 4.1.1.2 The Western philosophical / academic approach

A Western contextualization of the Christian gospel for the amaXhosa should involve processes parallel to those that were noted in the contextualization from its Judaistic to its Hellenistic form (3.1.3.1). The general principles are: a relativization of the presenting culture's roots, a destigmatization of the host culture and the adoption of 'that culture as a natural extension of the life of the new religion,' (Sanneh, 1989: 1). Applying these principles to the subject of this thesis: a relativization of the Western roots, a stigmatization of the Xhosa culture and the adoption of 'that culture as a natural extension of the life of the new religion.'

Reference was made on page 38 to the *sola scriptra* principle. It was noted that this principle does not prescribe the way in which Scripture is to be interpreted and communicated. It was alleged that one of the failures of the missionaries was that they adopted a prescriptive attitude towards some of the Biblical concepts and doctrines of Christianity. It evidently did not occur to the missionaries that Christians in non-Western cultures would interpret Scripture in typically non-Western ways, and that such interpretations might be acceptable.

The extent to which the missionaries who brought Christianity to the Eastern Cape had actually embraced the principles of Enlightenment modernism is difficult to ascertain. Hayes asserts that

> 'most of the missionaries who came to sub-Saharan Africa from Europe in the nineteenth century were thoroughly imbued with the Enlightenment world view. These Western missionaries brought the Christian faith to pre-Enlightenment cultures. They soon became
aware of the cultural gap, and the typical way of dealing with it was
to say that before the Christian faith could take root, the pre-
Enlightenment culture must make way for the Enlightenment
culture, or, as they put it, civilisation must precede Christianisation.’ (1995: 4f. internet format)

The issue needs to be interrogated at two levels: firstly, the extent to which the Church as a body had
embraced modernism, and secondly, the extent to which the theological understanding of the individual
missionaries themselves had been influenced by it.

It can easily be seen that when missionaries came with the Enlightenment attitude, the amaXhosa would
perceive an air of superiority, and this would tend to alienate them from the missionaries and their message.
The missionary contextualization was formed against the background of Western philosophy which distorted
the Christian message to a significant extent and proved to be a barrier to the amaXhosa conceptualization
because (i) it was totally foreign to them, and (ii) they had no means of distinguishing between culture-free
and culture-specific elements. Even the distinction itself would have been one which their empirically
derived world-view would not have encompassed.

in terms of which Africans accepted the gospel on the basis of the Scriptures as they were expounded by the
missionaries, and the missionaries 'paid huge “vernacular” compliments to Africans, enabling many peoples
to acquire pride and dignity about themselves in the modern world' (1989:172). Confusion arose when the
Africans discovered that 'the scientific
approach of the missionary, which for many of them remained unassimilated to the outlook of the world of
the Bible, often conflicted with the assumptions of African religiosiety' (:173). Sanneh gets to the heart of the
burden of the Western academic approach when he declares:

'The rational spirit of Western Christianity had shifted the
burden of faith to the method, process and ways of knowing
rather than to the subject and substance of religious conviction.' (ibid).

The issue will be addressed in 7.1 as a factor which needs to be taken into consideration in the area of
accommodation.

Moltmann makes the insightful and significant observation that
'(i)t was only when theology began to employ a concept of reason and a concept of nature that were not derived from a view of the promise but were taken over from Aristotle, that the problem of revelation appeared in its familiar form.' (1967:44).

The concept of promise in Moltmann's thinking is the biblical and eschatological expectation brought about by the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. That event, which is historical but which also has eternal/eschatological significance stands in defiance of the temporal/logical thinking of Western philosophy. It could be expected that the African world-view would find Moltmann's concept of hope easier to embrace than the concepts the West had taken over from Aristotle.

In more general terms, the Western academic approach would present a formidable barrier for pre-literate people whose orientation was to the concrete rather than the abstract, (Ukpong, 2001:192.).

4.1.1.3 Non-cardinal elements which were included

Although it is difficult to identify non-cardinal elements in a conceptualization, particularly one that has had a long history of development, the Western conceptualization of Christianity provides examples of pre-Christian symbols which were used in other areas of culture, and which came to form non-cardinal elements in the Western contextualization of Christianity. Although the elements *per se* are cultural, they are included at this point in the thesis on the grounds that debate as to whether it was appropriate to accept them and recognize them as non-cardinal is a hermeneutical issue. A notable example is the date of Christmas. Originally a pagan festival to mark the rebirth of the sun after the winter solstice, 25 December was consecrated in 400 A.D. as the festival of Christ's birth (Cochrane, 1957:331). Goetz claims, however, that the festival had been inaugurated 'by AD 336,' but agrees that the day had previously been celebrated as the 'birthday of the unconquered sun [natalis solis invicta] (Goetz, 1990:283). He adds that the Eastern Church took 06 January (ibid). Since Scripture does not afford any detailed material from which the date the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ can be calculated, the date we have is a-scriptural rather than anti-scriptural; but the fact that the West chose an existing pagan festival as the date they would use is quite significant. In this
Mtuze claims that 'before the arrival of Christianity Easter denoted the vernal equinox, and subsequently ... it denoted the anniversary of the resurrection of Christ.' (2003:12). This fails to recognize that it was the practice of the Roman Church, as early as the second century, to date the celebration of the resurrection according to the Passover as prescribed in the Jewish calendar. Bruce gives an account of the controversy in the church of the second century as to whether 'the Christian Passover' should be celebrated on the fourteenth day of Nisan, irrespective of the day of the week on which it fell, or 'on a Sunday, whatever the day of the month might be' (1958:210-211). In either case, since the Jewish calendar is lunar, Easter inherited from the Jewish Passover the characteristics of a “movable feast” [when worked into the solar calendar]; whereas the vernal equinox continued to take place every year on 21 March, according to the solar calendar. It is true that the name “Easter” is derived from the Old English name of a pre-Christian goddess, and that many Western cultural traditions surrounding Easter are pre-Christian. This does not necessarily mean that they are anti-Christian. Certainly it does not mean that the Western celebration of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ has pagan rather than Jewish links. In any case, since Scripture does not give the information, the precise dating of Easter must also be recognised as non-cardinal and secondary to the gospel.

Maboea asserts that when Africans became able to read the Bible in their vernacular languages, they 'discovered something different from the message delivered to them by a missionary' (2002:30). Africans had gained from the missionaries 'the impression that the doctrine of the church was on the same level as the Bible' (ibid). The implication is that the new perception which resulted from reading the Bible in their own languages enabled Africans to identify non-cardinal elements in the missionary proclamation which were being presented as though they were cardinal.

It could be argued, however, that some African theologians have overreacted to certain pre-Christian remnants in Western culture. Mtuze quotes Luke Pato, with apparent approval regarding alleged syncretism in Western Christianity (2003:13). Pato says: 'Christmas trees, Easter eggs, hot cross buns, to mention only a
few, are ..... examples of syncretism.' The use of the term “syncretism” indicates that Pato regards these elements as religious, rather than simply cultural symbols. It also implies that they have been added to Christianity from other religions. To what extent these practices formed part of an actual religion, or had significance in an actual religion, is open to question. Pato's claims also suggest that he regards the issues as cardinal, whereas there would appear to be no solid grounds for doing so. As cultural accretions to a Christian festival, they cannot be categorized as examples of real syncretism. Many Western Christians do not include Christmas trees or Easter eggs in their celebrations, neither do they regard hot cross buns as syncretistic. The sign of the cross on a bun can hardly be associated with any religion other than Christian.

Furthermore, it is extremely unlikely that any of these elements were included in the initial contextualization of the gospel to the amaXhosa. They would not have been practised in settler homes, because most of them came into popular use in England only towards the middle of the nineteenth century, and some even later.

Nevertheless, the implied point is taken, that because cultural accretions are permitted in contemporary Western Christian culture - albeit without unanimous acceptance - similar accretions should have been judged admissible to the amaXhosa and were not.

There are a number of non-cardinal elements in the Western culture which, together with Christmas trees and hot cross buns, have Christian associations and need to be mentioned:

(i) The ceremonial use of Advent candles;
(ii) Pancakes eaten on Shrove Tuesday, immediately before the Lenten fast begins;
(iii) Rogation-tide, when ripening crops are blessed in the northern hemisphere, just prior to Ascension-tide;
(iv) Harvest festivals, when agricultural and garden produce is brought to church;

These and other customs are culture-specific and as such have no cardinal status. Some of them are clearly specific to the northern hemisphere, such as reference to snow in Christmas carols and the word “Lent” which is derived from the lengthening of the daylight period in spring.

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Where culture-specific practices did come to be associated with Christianity in the minds of Xhosa people, a double remove (time and culture) was set up between Jesus and the amaXhosa. The “time remove” cannot be deleted; but if the specific cultural elements which cause the “culture remove” could be recognized as secondary to the gospel, the way would be open for those cultural elements to be replaced by Xhosa ones. Similar customs are observable in Xhosa tradition and will be discussed in 4.2.2. In this way, an authentic contemporary Xhosa conceptualization in which Jesus is recognized as a living and contextually-relevant person could be constructed.

It is of the utmost importance each culture should be recognized as having a-scriptural elements in its conceptualization, provided all parties to the contextualizations clearly understand that the accretions in question are merely cultural, and therefore non-cardinal.

4.1.2 Doctrinal factors

At the time Christianity first came to be seriously and purposefully presented to the amaXhosa, two main theological streams were identifiable in Western Christendom: Catholic and Protestant. In view of the fact that B.I.E.C. is distinctively Protestant in orientation, this thesis will restrict itself to that stream.

Research indicates that some of the elements of the doctrinal position of the missionaries in their contextualization of the gospel to the amaXhosa proved to be a hindrance to its acceptance and to a satisfactory conceptualization and contextualization.

The diagnostic question on page 129 constitutes an invitation and challenge to indicate and take up the strengths of the missionary presentation and avoid its weaknesses. This positive challenge will be taken up in Chapters Eight and Nine. What follows is a listing and brief discussion of the major factors which the writer has discovered in the nineteenth century missionary enterprise.

There would seem to be two types of doctrinal factor. Some are denominational distinctives, such as modes of baptism, distinctive details in the theology of the Eucharist, the doctrine of election and the various
positions regarding the end times. These distinctive and divergent views appear side-by-side throughout the Church, sometimes within denominational boundaries. It is not possible, nor necessary, to adapt contextualizations in respect of them; but rather to hold them all, as accepted or “tolerated” elements, (see Maoz's multiculturalism, below, 9.1.1). It is not necessary for this thesis to evaluate these in detail; but the point is urged that their non-cardinality should be clearly understood by all presenters and made clear to all receptors.

Other factors are more basic to the gospel, and also of such a nature as to cause serious confusion to the amaXhosa on account of some of the elements in their indigenous culture, which would naturally affect the Xhosa conceptualization of Christianity. These include the Person of Christ, Salvation, Holy Orders and the status of the Virgin Mary.

4.1.2.1 Person of Christ

The eurocentricity of the missionaries finds focus, inter alia, in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. Even to the present day, many Westerners picture Jesus as a white person, and portray Him as such. In this process, historical facts about Jesus, which by their very nature are culture-specific to the Middle East of the first century, have been adapted undiscerningly in the specific culture of the West in specific periods of history. Mediaeval Christian art, in which biblical figures are dressed in Middle Age clothing, is a clear example of this. The result was that Xhosa hearers conceptualized Jesus as a white man, largely because, subconsciously or otherwise, the missionaries tended to regard Him as a white man, and to present Him to the amaXhosa as such. Another factor in this situation is that since the message was being brought by white men, and the amaXhosa had no knowledge of the existence of any other ethnic group, they would naturally assume that Jesus was white.

For the sake of clarity, a conceptual distinction [which does not exist theologically] needs to be made between the historical Jesus and the eternal Son of God. T.F. Torrance points out that according to the standard of the Nicene teaching '(t)he Son is eternally begotten of the Father' and '(c)reatures ... are freely brought into being from non-being by the will ... of God' (1988:84). This serves as a confirmation of the
orthodox Christian doctrine that the difference between the eternal Son and other human beings is ontological. The eternal Son of God has two natures, other human beings only one. It is precisely this doctrine that gives rise to the danger of dualism.

The Christ of the church's faith [the eternal Son of God] can be presented as supra-cultural, albeit in culture-friendly language. What is vitally important here is that dualism, and even the suggestion of dualism, should be avoided. The christological controvery of the fifth century in which Nestorius of Constantinople and Cyril of Alexandria were the main contenders forms a bench-mark in this area. Nestorius tended to emphasize the distinctions between the human Jesus and the divine Son of God; whereas Cyril went to the opposite extreme or requiring that the mother of Jesus be styled θεοτόκος [bearer of God]. The Chalcedonian Definition emphasizes the absolute unity of the two natures. On this basis, the assertion can be made that because Jesus identified with the poor in Palestine, the eternal Son of God identifies with the poor in every age and in every land.

On pages 48ff, an account was given of Wright's insistence on a renewed quest for the historical Jesus (2000:4). The findings of such a quest would serve to emphasize the historicity of Jesus in the Christian story, thus removing the confusion as to His identity and at the same time taking Him out of the sphere of mythology.

The Jesus of history, as a first century Jew (Semitic), cannot be identified as white (Caucasian) or black (Hamitic) in terms of any contextualization. Portraying the historical Jesus in any culture other than His historical own, whether through ignorance or ulterior motive, must in principle be judged anti-scriptural, because it directly denies the historical context which the Bible describes. However, poetic licence is recognized in classical and popular devotional literature, [for example, the works of Gerard Manley Hopkins and G.A. Studdert-Kennedy] and artistic licence must be granted to art in the same way. In this case, the portrayal of Jesus as a black man would be a metaphor for the truth that the eternal Son of God identifies with blacks; but it should not be understood to imply that in his human form in Jesus he was literally black, or that he identifies only with blacks. In terms of the definitive hypothesis of this thesis, (p. 82), these
perceptions are 'cultural elements' which 'need not be bracketed out' but which must be recognized as 'secondary to the gospel'.

The Xhosa response to the doctrine of the Person of Christ will be examined in 4.4 when the teachings of Ntsikana and Tiyo Soga are interrogated, and in 7.2.2.5 when specific issues of the contemporary South African contextualizations are examined.

4.1.2.2 Salvation

The term “salvation” was described in 1.2.9 in terms of a “narrow” sense and a “broad” sense, (p.33ff). It is often understood exclusively in the narrow sense in conservative-evangelical circles. This was also the conception which the missionaries taught. Their work included many of the elements categorized under the broad definition of salvation, without their recognizing them as such. Although the missionaries laboured in the fields of education and medicine, they appear not to have presented these areas as part of a holistic shalom/soteria.

With regard to the narrow view of salvation, the amaXhosa find difficulty with the concept of individualism, their culture coming close to the Old Testament concept of corporate personality. A comparison between this Old Testament concept and the African concept of Ubuntu will be made in 4.2.2.7.

Another factor which made it difficult for the amaXhosa to understand salvation in the narrow sense was that they did not distinguish the natural from the supernatural.

Hodgson explains

'The primal religion of the Xhosa-speaking people made no distinction between natural and supernatural. All was pervaded by divinity. The ancestors, the spirits of the dead members of the lineage, who were thought to take a continuing interest in the living, were the focus of ritual activity in daily life.' (1982:69)

Desmond Tutu confirms Hodgson’s findings when he says:
The African world view rejects popular dichotomies between the sacred and the secular, the material and the spiritual. All life is religious, all life is sacred, all life is a piece. (1995:xvi: Pato, L.L; Kourie, C. and Kretzschmar, (Eds) 2000:93.)

The writer does not see this as a deficiency in the Xhosa world-view. The Xhosa world-view accommodates the broader view of salvation with little difficulty. What is needed is that the narrow view be seen to be part of the broader view, and that a sense of personal sin be inculcated and the doctrine of the Atonement be proclaimed as relevant and essential in the work of salvation. By limiting salvation to the sacred realm, the missionaries not only missed an opportunity to make their message more assimilable by the amaXhosa, but also made the same mistake of which McGrath accuses Protestantism, and to which he ascribes the decline of religion and the coming of atheism to Europe in the eighteenth century, (p.128f). By limiting salvation to “personal eternal life” the missionaries caused confusion among the amaXhosa, by introducing the distinction between sacred and secular which had previously been unknown to them. Had the missionaries been able to include “personal eternal life” within the wider compass of soteria/shalom, they would have achieved resonance with the Xhosa culture. These issues will be taken up in 7.1.3, where they will be specifically related to the issue of community life and individualism.

4.1.2.3 Holy Orders

This was not an area of confusion in the initial contextualization as such, because the amaXhosa did not have a religious hierarchy comparable to the structures of the various denominations of which the missionaries were members. However, it was a factor among the missionary denominations themselves, and became an issue in the course of the establishment of mission stations.

The question of the nature and scope of ordination includes differences which exist regarding the structure of the Church’s ministry, and specifically the nature and authority of the episcopate. It is most unfortunate that the question of authority and personal status within church structures and local congregations has in many cases resulted in division and the formation of new denominations.

The Anglican Communion claims to be both "catholic" and "reformed". "Reformed" in this context refers to
Calvinism in its stance against the Church of Rome. During the nineteenth century, a development took place in the Anglican communion which was to have a significant effect upon the missionary scene in the Eastern Cape. As a result of differing interpretations of the Thirty-Nine Articles, two streams of churchmanship, and, by implication two distinctive contextualizations emerged within the Anglican communion: one espousing a reformed interpretation of the Articles [and the historic creeds] and the other an interpretation nearer to that of the Roman Church. The differences became institutionalized in South Africa in the Church of England in South Africa (C.E.S.A.) and the Anglican Church of South Africa (A.C.S.A.) [formerly known as the Church of the Province of South Africa]. It is noteworthy that this development took place in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, when missionary activity was at its height. These denominations produced their particular contextualizations for the amaXhosa.

Just as the Puritans within the Church of England valued the epithet "reformed", the A.C.S.A. values the epithet "catholic"; and just as the Puritans interpreted "reformed" in terms of Calvinism, the High Church wing interprets "catholic" in a sense which indicates nearness to the Church of Rome, especially in respect of the three-fold ministry of bishops, priests and deacons. Some High Church Anglicans set great score by the principle of Apostolic Succession [an allegedly unbroken succession of the ordained clergy from Peter the Apostle as the first bishop of Rome].

The significance of this section for the discourse of the thesis is that different forms of churchmanship and even of doctrine resulted in some mission stations where the teaching and ambience was almost Roman, and others where they were evangelical and in many cases Calvinistic.

John Wesley remained a staunch clergyman of the Church of England for the whole of his life. He did, however, act irregularly on several occasions, in appointing clergy such as Thomas Coke without episcopal sanction, to serve the American colonies. Garth Lean, himself an Anglican, comments that in all these cases Wesley 'was moved by the urgent necessity to provide the Sacraments for those whom the Church refused to admit' (1964:87). This incident is relevant here because (i) it shows the stance Wesley was prepared to take in a “missionary” situation, and (ii) it indicates a possible area of dispute in the West [and therefore cause of confusion for the amaXhosa] in the presentation of the gospel. It is significant that one of William Shaw's
chain of Xhosa mission stations preserves Coke's name.

Bishop Webb, an Anglo-Catholic, is on record as criticizing French Protestant doctrine by saying: 'the doctrine (sic) of the apostolic succession is set aside by you, and that of the sacraments is enfeebled' (Du Plessis, 1911/1965:356). The enfeeblement of the sacraments may have entailed Zwinglianism, or at least some denial or down-playing of the doctrine of the real presence; but Webb's position on these two issues suggests that he regarded both as cardinal elements.

Unfortunately, the issue of ecclesiastical “rank” has found expression in the African Church, particularly in the African Independent Churches, where schism has resulted in the proliferation of new denominations. The term “archbishop”, the title given to the most senior bishop, or the presiding bishop in a Province, appears to have no scriptural warrant at all. There is in some quarters a tendency to equate it with the scriptural term “apostle”, but the latter was reserved in the New Testament for Christian leaders who has seen Jesus in the flesh, (or in Paul's case, by personal epiphany in a vision), and who were planting new churches.

It is clear that the scriptural position on these matters needs to be taught and applied. This would include not only the narratives in The Acts referring to the appointment of elders in churches planted during the New Testament period (for example, Ac.14:23), and the teaching of the Apostle Paul regarding deacons and overseers (επισκοποι 1 Tim. 3: 1ff) but also the words of the Lord Jesus Christ about servant leadership (Mk 10:43).

4.1.2.4 The status of the Virgin Mary.

This might appear to be a peripheral issue. However, in terms of the traditional African concept of 'gods', 'demigods', 'divinities', 'nature spirits', 'ancestral spirits' and the like”, (Mbiti, 1969:75), there is a danger that Mary might be misunderstood to have a position which is nowhere indicated in Scripture. In his note on Luke 1:30, Wesley says: "This salutation gives no room for any pretence of paying adoration to the virgin" (1754:203). While this is the typical response of an evangelical Anglican, it serves to define also the Methodist position regarding the status of the Virgin Mary.

Anglo-Catholics hold the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which is not
held by evangelicals in the Church of England, nor by other Protestants. This dogma, defined by Pope Pius IX in 1854, claims that, in order to produce a sinless child, Mary herself was born without taint of original sin.

According to the parameters of Osborne's definitions, (pp.51f) this dogma is disqualified as a cardinal element of the gospel, by virtue of the fact that it is not 'clearly taught as such in Scripture'. It is an article of faith that Jesus was born free from the taint of original sin; but there is no necessary reason to extend this to His mother. In fact, logically such an extension would not serve its intended purpose because the principle of immaculate conception would need to be applied in an infinite regression through Mary's genealogy. It cannot rightly be insisted on, and for those who accept the doctrine of the universality of sin (Rom. 3:23), it cannot be admitted to the essential gospel, even as a non-cardinal distinctive, because it is anti-scriptural.

With regard to the doubt cast upon Mary's virginity by liberal scholars, it must be conceded that the Hebrew word translated “virgin” at Isa. 7:14 [almah] means “young woman” rather than “virgin”, and that there is another Hebrew word which more specifically translates the latter [bethulah]. The Greek word παρθενος came into the Old Testament through the Septuagint, (Scott, 1956:218)) and thus, by quotation, into the New Testament (Mt.1:23). It is noteworthy that νεανις is a more accurate translation of almah but that παρθενος was nevertheless preferred. Furthermore, Mary is described as παρθενος at Luke 1:27, which is not dependent upon the Isaiah reference.

Associated with this is the equally important theological consideration that the Virgin Birth qualifies Jesus as the God-man (“conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary”) and actualizes the two natures of the Lord Jesus Christ, as set out by the Council of Chalcedon. This is seen by many Christians as the only way by which God (the Father) could have been “in Christ, reconciling the world to himself” (2 Cor. 5:19 KJV).

There appears to be nothing conclusive on either side, and it has to be conceded that the virgin birth is not 'clearly taught in Scripture'. Some evangelicals believe that it should be insisted on, but at face value,
Osborne's criterion does not appear to support such a claim. However, it might be argued that if the expression “μονογενος παρα Πατρος” in John 1:14 indicates that in a unique way Jesus was fathered by God, no human being could have fathered Jesus. From the foregoing, it would seem that the doctrine of the Virgin Birth of the Lord Jesus Christ merits a prominent place in a derived contextualization, although it cannot be categorized as cardinal.

To summarize, the doctrine of the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary should be categorized as anti-scriptural and therefore inadmissible. The doctrine of the Virgin Birth of the Lord Jesus Christ cannot be regarded as cardinal, although the doctrine of the two natures and the hypostatic union would arguably be so.

4.1.3 Secular Factors

Even a cursory reading of the writings of South African theologians and church historians reveals that the political imperialism expressed in colonialism is often seen as a greater contributing factor to the rejection of the gospel by indigenous African people than the cultural imperialism of Westernization in religion and culture. It is important, therefore, to examine and attempt to understand the dynamics of the nineteenth century interaction between the West and Africa from this viewpoint. There can be no doubt of the fact that the West, and particularly Great Britain, had imperialistic intentions at that time. What is almost as certain is that the Church, or at least some missionaries in their individual capacities, shared this vision and these intentions. An examination of the relations between Church and State during this period will lead to a clearer understanding of the nature of colonialism and the colonization process as negative factors in the Western contextualization of the gospel amongst the amaXhosa.

4.1.3.1 Western imperialism and national/tribal sentiment

It would not be fair to describe the seventeenth century Dutch settlement as imperialistic in the strict political sense, because the Dutch East India Company had no plans to establish a permanent colony when they built a station at the Cape in 1652. It is nevertheless true that their descendants the Afrikaners, who became ipso facto settlers, viewed themselves as the custodians of Christian civilization at the tip of Africa. This means that they were religious and cultural imperialists. Their subsequent policies [to be examined in Chapter 5]
leave no doubt that they were political imperialists as well, despite the fact that they had no ambitions outside South Africa.

The British, however, came to South Africa with the deliberate purpose of expanding the British Empire. This means that they, unlike the Afrikaners, were imperialists in the sense of empire-builders. They tended to equate Christianity with the British culture (both in the sense of "way of life" and in the sense of "civilization"). The acquisition of the English language and of Western-style clothing seemed to be definitive elements in Christianity as they wished it to be accepted by the AmaXhosa. From 1820 onwards, the missionary enterprise and colonization happened concurrently, with the unfortunate result that in many Xhosa minds the two processes became blurred into one – British imperialism. It is unfortunately true that in the minds both of colonial officials and missionaries, there was perceived to be such a close link between missionary activity and colonial policy that even some missionaries tended to equate Christianity with Western culture. Colonial officials, for their part, looked to the missionaries to be their allies, even agents, in the matter of communication with the Xhosa population. The communication was soon extended so as to include negotiation. As Mtuze says:

'The missionaries who had come to Xhosaland as “Saviours” soon gained the notoriety of being partners-in-crime with the colonial authorities and forces. Christianity was seen as a veiled attempt to soften the people's hearts while the colonial authorities were dispossessing them of all their land, their cattle and their culture. No doubt this feeling led to the rejection of evangelization in the Eastern Cape as the target audiences suspected ulterior motives on the part of the evangelizers.' (2003:69-70)

These suspicions of the amaXhosa were not unfounded. The practice of some missionaries of flying the Union Jack over their mission stations lent credence to this perception. Villa Vicencio, while describing John Philip, as one 'more committed to the well-being of the indigenous people than many other missionaries' (1995:59) nevertheless reports that Philip admitted that the missionaries were “extending British interests, British influence and British empire.” (Philip, J. 1820, Researches, Vol. 1, pp.ix-x; Villa-Vicencio, ibid.). Philip blatantly states that the task of the missionary was 'to teach them [Africans] industrious habits, and
create a demand for British manufactures.’ (Philip, op. cit., Vol. 2, p.227; Villa-Vicencio, 1995:50). The inculcation of industrious habits would be of service to the amaXhosa, but the declared motive is hardly a worthy one. When some of the missionaries openly and officially acted as agents of the colonial power, the impression was heightened still further.

Muller indicates the extent of British imperialism as it was practised in the years leading to the formation of the Union of South Africa in 1910 (1969:362). He quotes Alfred Milner as follows:

‘One of the strongest arguments why the white man must rule is because that is the only possible means of raising the black man, not to our level of civilization which it is doubtful whether he would ever attain – but to as much higher level than that which he at present occupies’ (ibid; Milner papers, II, p. 467)

Inasmuch as land is an important element in the social and political life of any nation, and impinges on its religious life as well, account must be taken of the acquisition of land by European settlers and the effect this had on relations between the missionaries and the AmaXhosa. Thiselton quotes Takatso Mofokeng’s poignant remark:

‘When the white man came to our country he had the Bible and we had the land....After the prayer, the white man had the land and we had the Bible.’ (Thiselton, 1992: 423-424)

On the one hand, a great measure of resentment was created, which translated into resistance to the gospel; and on the other, confusion and misunderstanding were created as to what actually constituted the religious message the white men were bringing.

When Joseph Williams became the resident missionary at the L.M.S. Mission station, he

‘s soon realized what the government expected of him. He was required to act in a dual capacity, as both missionary and government agent’ (Villa-Vicencio, 1995:50).

Villa-Vicencio adds that Williams was unwilling to do this, and thus became unpopular with the colonial
administration. Government expectations created a problem for some of the missionaries, who believed that attempting to act in a dual capacity would damage their credibility as spiritual workers. Villa-Vicencio quotes Selope Thema to the effect that there was little difference to be observed between the Boers and the British settlers, and between the government officials and the missionaries (:59). This political and socio-economic situation amounts to political imperialism.

It is interesting to note that the perception that the missionaries were politically reactionary is not held by all the historians of this period of South African history. M. S. Geen sees the missionaries as exponents of the new Liberalism that arose in England in the early nineteenth century, and comments :

"That the missionaries and colonists came into opposition was natural enough, for the former represented a European urban liberalism and the latter a rural conservatism. Moreover, the missionaries were guided only by the message of the New Testament, the colonists almost entirely by the patriarchal ideas of the Old" (1958:55)

This would apply particularly to the London Missionary Society missionaries, notably Van der Kemp and Philip; but even if Geen's assessment is correct, the fact remains that the 'urban liberalism' the missionaries brought was a European urban liberalism. Inasmuch as liberalism in this context is a political factor, the missionaries' stance goes beyond cultural imperialism and must at least be categorized as the imposition of a foreign ideology on the amaXhosa. Although Bishop Colenso was a controversial figure in theology, and his liberal political outlook was of British origin, he was an exception in that he held a genuine social passion and an awareness of the political and ideological imperialism in which his fellow missionaries were involved. De Gruchy expresses the opinion that Colenso was

'very advanced in his thinking about the relation between Christianity and indigenous culture. He had, in fact, demonstrated the significance of his views by establishing a strong missionary work amongst the Zulu, whose rights he also staunchly defended against British imperialism' (Prozesky and de Gruchy, 1995:34)

This can clearly be seen as a characteristic of his Christian witness, and as such was part of the contextualization he presented to the amaZulu. The issue of social witness will be revisited in Chapter Five,
where it is seen to be exemplified negatively in the builders and practitioners of *apartheid* and positively in its opponents.

### 4.1.3.2 Imperialism in missionary activity

Besides what has been termed “imperialism proper”, other types of imperialism are to be found in the missionary enterprise. A distinction must be made between the imperialism involved in the work which some of the missionaries performed, officially or otherwise, as agents of the British administration, and instances of a more subtle form of cultural imperialism to be detected even in their work as missionaries. These can be identified in at least two areas.

(i) Evangelism and Education

The policy of the Cape Governor, Sir George Grey, of “civilizing” the indigenous people by integrating them into frontier farms, proceeded on the assumption that the Western way of life was what the AmaXhosa desired, [or worse still, what was best for them]. Missionaries who acted as government officials were part of the ‘imperialism proper’; but even those who did not, were perceived to be supporting the policy because the English education provided at their schools served the process of “civilization” which Grey proposed. Civilizing was, in fact, actually Westernizing or Anglicizing. Du Plessis cites a typical case of a “hidden agenda” when he says of the Cape Governor, Sir George Grey:

> 'That sympathetic Governor, convinced that the best means of keeping the Kaffrarian natives in check was the multiplication of missionary agencies, induced the Imperial Government to vote 40 000 pounds sterling per annum during the three years 1855-57 in order to subsidize educational and industrial work among the natives.’ What was proposed and eventually effected, [for example at Lovedale] was admirable, though the motives were less so.” (1911/1965: 354)

R.H.W. Shepherd (1940:59) cites Rev. James Laing to the effect that

> 'The gospel encountered the jealousy of a people proud of their race, and instinctively feeling, *not without reason*, that their interests were seriously threatened by the encroachments of the nation that was bringing the gospel to them.’ (Laing J. *Memorials*, p. 12; R.H.W. Shepherd (1940:59) italics MJH).
Shepherd (ibid) offers a more specific reference when he cites the G.M.S. Quarterly Paper VI, p. 2 [date not provided], which claimed that 'So early as 1830, a Native declared that as the schools increased the country was taken from them.'

(ii) Church Affairs

It must be noted that an aboriginal African, Jacob Links, was ordained into the Methodist ministry in South Africa as early as 1822. Rev. Robert Lamplough earned himself the title of Vulindlela [Opener of the Way] for his efforts in securing African candidates for the ministry, having them received on trial and assisting their passage to ordination. In 1866 four African men were appointed as “Native Assistant Missionaries” and in 1867 the first four African students were admitted to the newly-established Native Theological Institution at Healdtown. (Clark, 1923:22f).

It has been claimed, however, that the nineteenth century missionaries and their successors held on to leadership positions long after indigenous potential leaders had been identified. When the secretary of the Wesleyan Missionary Society in England, John Kilner, visited South Africa in 1880, he found quite a number of African young men who were, in his view, ready to be ordained. He met with opposition, however, from the missionaries in the field, who 'felt that the action was too hasty and there were serious misgivings on the part of some' (Sundkler, 1961:30).

Against this stands the testimony of Clark concerning Kilner's visit (1923:23). Clark confirms Kilner's positive attitude towards the young black evangelists and agrees that Kilner 'urged that many of them be received on trial for [our] ministry' (ibid). Clark, however, reports (ibid) the opposite result to that of Sundkler.

'His advice was followed, and some fifty of them were received on trial: the majority of them eventually received ordination, and rendered most efficient service as Native ministers'

Despite the conservative sentiment, and in response to the positive effects of Kilner's remarks, the Kilnerton...
Institution was opened in 1886 as a school, (Millard Jackson, 2008:37).

The perceived tendency of some missionaries to hamper the progress of promising African potential ordinands led them to seek or create alternative avenues of pastoral service. The rise of the African Independent Churches is a gauge of the extent to which the conscious or unconscious imperialism of the missionaries was effective. It is also part of the reaction to the imposition of British authority in general. The case of Nehemiah Tile and that of Pambani Mzimba are subsumed under 4.4.4 (Political activity in early Xhosa Christianity).

Millard Jackson reports that a year after Rev. G. Underwood had arrived in Mahamba, Swaziland in 1895, he wrote to the Methodist Missionary Society in England (2008:38), in which he stated: 'It is my intention is to make a Circuit as near as possible to the English model.' (Wesleyan Missionary Notices, June-July 1885, p. 178). Millard Jackson proceeds to outline the results of this imperialistic attitude.

'When Underwood was sent to Mahamba the Rev. Daniel Msimang had been successfully working there for some time but his methods were African rather than English. Seniority of young white ministers over older African ministers who had been in the ministry longer was one of the reasons for the formation of the African Independent Churches.' (ibid)

Imperialism on the mission stations was not confined to clergy affairs. Black church members felt that they were not afforded any responsibility in the church's affairs, in respect, for example, of the administration of money. Mzimba claimed the right to allocate the funds he had collected in Scotland, and Dr. Stewart's insistence that the Lovedale Presbytery should be consulted led to Mzimba's break with the Scottish mission church. (Sundkler, 1961:42; Shepherd, 1940:245f).

A more serious accusation was that made by S.J. Brander, that the African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E) missionaries who came from America took back to America all funds collected in Africa, thus failing to apply them to the needs of the work for which they were intended. (Sundkler, ibid).
4.1.3.3 Racism as a form of imperialism

Although “imperialism” refers specifically to actions in the interests of establishing and expanding an empire, the concept is popularly broadened to include actions in the interests of any ethnic or language group. In the case of the British settlers, the racial imperialism was imperialism in the proper sense. In the case of the Dutch settlers, it is perhaps ironic that racism should be characteristic of a group which, in its own struggle against British hegemony would regard itself not only as anti-imperialist but also the victims of imperialism.

It seems that the administration of justice by the British authorities after they reoccupied the Cape in 1806 can be called into question. Here, some of the missionaries stand out as champions of the oppressed. Dr. John Philip chronicled many instances of harsh treatment of slaves by farmers, with which the British authorities do not appear to have dealt effectively or even-handedly. It was at the instigation of James Read, for example, that in 1812 the Circuit Court, known as the “Black Circuit” convened at Graaff-Reinet, to hear charges against colonists, some of whom were convicted, (Du Plessis, 1911/1965:132-136). It is possible that some of the charges were dismissed because the victims were intimidated into refusing to give evidence.

Grassow criticises William Shaw's support of the settlers against the amaXhosa at the time of the Sixth Frontier War of 1834. He says that 'Shaw's weakness' was that 'his desire for inclusivity left him unable to challenge the rulers of the colony' (2008:24). Grassow contrasts this stance against that of Dr Philip, who opposed the authorities and the Dutch farmers, by taking the side of the amaXhosa.

It seems to have escaped Grassow's notice that while Shaw is accused of being blind to the faults of the authorities, Philip's desire to include the indigenous people may have been a weakness on his part, which may have tended to blind him to their faults. Philip's stance is usually illustrated by his attitude to the Black Circuit, [which convened before the period of Shaw's influence]; but records of this and other court action appear to be inconclusive. Nevertheless there seems to be evidence that there were grounds for criminal prosecution against some of the indigenes as well as against the settlers. This suggests that Philip's stance was somewhat one-sided. After 1814, when the Cape became officially a British colony, it was given a
distinctively British character as a matter of policy.

Shaw had the difficult dual role of missionary on the frontier and pastor to the settlers in Grahamstown. This was a complicating factor with which Philip did not have to contend. From this it is clear that the personal circumstances of a missionary need to be taken into consideration in assessing the quality of his work. If siding with one's immediate constituency clouds one's judgment, one's contextualization in total context can be distorted. The writer sees this as applying to both Philip and Shaw.

The respective stances of Philip and Shaw indicate that the issue was very complicated, and the weight of historiographical opinion does not lie decisively on either side. The position which Villa-Vicencio espouses towards the total situation seems, therefore, to be somewhat simplistic and extreme:

'The defeat of African chiefs, the shattered morale of the people, the loss of land, the confiscation of cattle and the collapse of African culture created a milieu within which missionary attempts to lure Africans into their missions became much easier. (1990:22)

While Villa-Vicencio does not state categorically that the missionaries deliberately created the situation he describes, the phrase 'missionary attempts to lure Africans into their missions' could be construed as impugning the motives of those missionaries who honestly believed that salvation is found only in the Lord Jesus Christ, and desired Xhosa people to come into fellowship with Him. It would be unfair to suggest that the missionaries consciously took advantage of the effects of colonisation. Announcing this salvation was never seen by these missionaries as “attempts to lure Africans into their missions”. Villa-Vicencio appears also to disregard the efforts of Philip and others to contextualize their faith in practical terms. The paragraph appears to betray a total misunderstanding of the gospel, and to attribute sub-Christian motives to these missionaries.

If, however, these insinuations are discounted, the facts Villa-Vicencio lists are both substantial and relevant. The 'defeat of the African chiefs' might well have been the deliberate policy of the British authorities and those missionaries who were openly their agents. The 'loss of land' has already been referred to (pp. 146ff),
and this would readily lead to 'the shattered morale of the people'. The “confiscation of cattle” must be viewed in the light of counter-claims by colonists concerning the stock theft they allegedly suffered at the hands of marauding African tribes. It should also be noted that in at least one case, the cattle in question had been confiscated by the authorities in response to an appeal from an aggrieved chief (Hodgson, 1982:72).

These possible explanations notwithstanding, in respect of the ‘collapse of the African culture’, the missionaries must take a large measure of responsibility. Inasmuch as they did what they thought was right, and their intentions were good, the word “guilty” might be somewhat harsh. Although probably not guilty of unworthy imperialistic intentions, they were nevertheless guilty of errors of judgement and lack of insight. This needs to be taken seriously if theologians are to understand one another in twenty-first century South Africa; just as the political charges need to be taken seriously in the political debate.

Sir George Grey’s “civilizing” policy (p.155) of settling black people together with whites on the farms which had been granted to white people in the 1850's proved unsuccessful, which is not surprising as long as the land was regarded as belonging to the whites. Owing largely to the relative immobility of the indigenous people in comparison with their settler counterparts, and the fact that the settlers used more advanced methods and equipment in their farming, the races developed, or maintained, their separate ways of life. It is interesting to note that, according to Thom's account of the report by John Campbell and John Philip to the directors of the L.M.S., 'carpenters' tools and some valuable machinery sent to the Institution [Bethelsdorp] ... were left to consume in their own rust' (Du Plessis:140). This situation may in part be attributable to the fact that the amaXhosa had not been encouraged to take ownership either of the equipment or of the method of farming it represented.

4.2 Traditional Xhosa Culture and Missionary reaction

It was noted on page 98 above, that 'Paul recognised that Hellenism was basically cultural rather than religious, and that cultural trappings are, to use a popular metaphor, the “bathwater” rather than the “baby”.' Very few of the nineteenth century missionaries appear to have been quite as venturesome in this regard. Most of them tended to see Western culture as “the baby”. In consequence, they tended to ignore the Xhosa
culture when they contextualized the gospel in the Eastern Cape.

While much worthwhile and laudable work was done in this area by missionaries such as Kropf and others, there were many who adopted a negative attitude towards the *res indigenae* of the amaXhosa. They tended to demonstrate the characteristic which Friedhelm Jung observed in the absolutist stance of Christian fundamentalists - 'a tendency to absolutize their own standpoint, with the result that in their eyes all those who think otherwise are not true Christians.' (1992:22). When Sanneh's diffusion / translation principles (p. 2) are applied to the interaction between Western Christianity and the amaXhosa, it is seen to be diffusive. Sanneh warns:

>'Any absolutizing force is an offense to the gospel, and a cultural tradition that arrogates to itself a deifying prerogative can expect nothing but implacable opposition from Christians.' (1989:33)

Against such absolutist positions, Bernhardt (1994:115ff) develops a more contingent approach, drawing implications for the attitude of Christians towards other religions, (pp.20f). His assertions will inform the introduction to the discourse of Chapter Eight.

The very fact that the amaXhosa have their own cultural context clearly belies the strict definition of *tabula rasa* (p.38f). With regard to the question whether, amongst all the content of the Xhosa “tabula” there was 'nothing....... on which the Christian missionary can build' (p.38) this thesis contends that there was much, and that some missionaries built on it.

However, the missionary use of the term *tabula rasa* as Hiebert reports it (p. 38) implies or assumes that the slate ought to be wiped clean. The implication involves what philosophers of ethics used to call the “naturalistic fallacy”, in that it ascribes factual status to a value-judgment. It is the stance of this thesis that if the missionary application of the expression *tabula rasa* to the amaXhosa implies a factual statement it is untrue, and if a value-judgment it is unwarranted.
J.H. Bavinck uses the term “elenetics” [Gk ‘ἐλεγχειν = to rebuke], as a theological discipline which ‘unmasks to heathendom all false religions as sin against God and calls heathendom to a knowledge of the only true God.’ (1960:222; Pretorius, 1987/1996: 113). G. van der Merwe, finds this term unsuitable because it suggests intolerance. (Pretorius, 1987/1996:114). He prefers the term “dialogue”. Van der Merwe refers (ibid) to Verkuyl's three types of dialogue (Verkuyl, 1978:363): [i] for better mutual understanding, [ii] for co-operation in dealing with urgent societal problems and [iii] to aid missionary communication. The first two could be understood to affirm that all religions have equal validity, whereas in the third, the sender religion is clearly definitive for the dialogue process. This thesis recognizes all three possibilities, but, as a confessional position, would include the proviso that Christianity is definitive. Sanchez's distinction between “dialectical” [in which both are equal partners] and “dialogical” [in which the modern context is willing to be questioned and modified] (p.74) is of relevance at this point. If it were possible, in practice, to separate the gospel from its cultural setting, the principle could be established that in respect of the gospel all dialogue would be dialogical in Sanchez's sense, and in respect of cultures it would be dialectical.

When the missionaries arrived, they found a people who traditionally dressed in red-ochre garments, which they associated with their cult of ancestor veneration and also covered their bodies with red-ochre clay, which gave them the name “Red People” (Broster, 1981: 17). The religion the “Red People” practised was a version of A.T.R. The title “School People” was given to those Xhosas who responded to the missionaries by settling on mission stations and attending the mission schools.

It is the stance of this thesis that those missionaries who rejected any a-scriptural elements of the indigenous culture of the amaXhosa were not justified in doing so. The host culture's indigenous world-view has to be taken into serious consideration if the gospel is to be made meaningful to its members. The fact that the forbears of the missionaries themselves were not *tabulae rasaee* when they received the gospel, has also to be borne in mind. It cannot be denied that in most cases the Western contextualization to the amaXhosa left no room for Xhosa non-cardinal elements.

There is no doubt that the missionary presentation of the gospel brought it into basic conflict with the accepted standards and norms of Xhosa tradition. This had a double effect. Many of the missionaries failed
to understand the Xhosa culture and therefore rejected a great deal of it with contempt; and as a result, the amaXhosa rejected the message of those missionaries. It was tragic that in many cases the missionaries rejected the Xhosa culture on the basis of their own cultural predispositions rather than of the gospel (as revealed in the Scriptures). This will become clear in the course of 4.2.2. The missionary contextualization was thus largely culture-bound and culture-driven. Western culture, for the missionaries and the amaXhosa, was once again confused with Christianity. It must be conceded that many of the missionaries acted in good faith, and were unaware of the need for cultural neutrality.

In terms of Lederle's findings (pp.45f), the nineteenth century missionaries in many cases failed to understand the *proprium* of Xhosa spirituality and conceived a caricature of it. The limited extent to which dynamic equivalents and effective symbolism were found in the Xhosa culture, which resonated with the cardinal elements of a derived contextualization, is the limited extent to which the Christian gospel was presented effectively and received clearly and genuinely. If a more adequate situation can be created in the present, the major hypothesis of this thesis - that cultural and denominational differences need not be a problem to the communication of the gospel, as long as they are identified as secondary to it - will have been verified.

On the basis of their cultural assumptions, the missionaries disallowed many elements of traditional African folk-lore which could legitimately, and helpfully, have been included in the Xhosa conceptualization. Examples will be given in 4.2.2. Failure to recognize relevant instances, or to mention them in proclamation, resulted in many lost opportunities of making the gospel relevant to the receptor culture. There is no point in proclaiming the true message if, in the process, the particular content and the attitude of the proclaimer predispose the hearer to reject it. When one rejects all anti-scriptural elements in ATR, there remain a-scriptural, non-cardinal elements which could serve as genuine *praeparatio evangelica*.

Fortunately, there were missionaries whose stance towards the culture they discovered on arrival in the Eastern Cape was insightful and positive. It is to be noted that before the missionaries arrived, the Xhosa tradition could be communicated only orally. The provision of a written form of isiXhosa is a debt owed to
Kropf, Appleyard, Benny and others. To a large extent they managed to incorporate idiomatic language into their translations, as the Kropf-Godfrey dictionary testifies. Some of the contributions of Rev. A. Kropf have already been mentioned (p.131). Kropf also produced an impressive translation of the Bible into isiXhosa (1887-89), which, as Holt says ‘holds its own as the best and most accurate rendering of the Word of God which the Kafir nation possesses’ (1976:352).

A short account is now offered of the most significant elements of the Xhosa culture. The traditional Xhosa cultus will be reviewed in terms of conceptualization of God (4.2.1.1), names of God (4.2.1.2) and cultic beliefs and practices (4.2.2). At appropriate points the stance of the missionaries will be described; and at each point, the implications for a contextualization of Christianity will be drawn out.

4.2.1 The Being of God

4.2.1.1 Conceptualization of God

The conviction that the amaXhosa had a definite theistic conception is expressed by the Xhosa anthropologist, J.H.Soga: 'the amaXhosa ... have a conception of a Supreme Being clearly defined: a God who is the creator of all things, who controls and governs all, and as such is the rewarder of good and the punisher of evil' (Soga, 1931:194; Mtuze, 2003:44). In this sense, Ntsikana's “Great Hymn” (Hodgson, 1985:249) would not be bringing concepts which were completely new to the amaXhosa. This hymn will be considered in 4.4.2.

V. Light asserts that 'ATR ... has a belief in God/Supreme Being as Creator.' (2009:151). He adds, however, that there is no 'close, daily communion with him' and that 'there is far more contact with the ancestors, evil spirits, life-force, and traditional healers and diviners' (ibid). The crucial question at this point is the relation between these lesser spirits and the Supreme being, and specifically whether these lesser spirits have divine status.

According to Mtuze (2003:25) 'the amaXhosa, as far as can be ascertained, never really had any gods'. This is in no way inconsistent with Soga's claim, because it is clear that Mtuze is making a contradistinction
between pagan gods and the monotheistic Deity as such. This tends to be confirmed by Mtuze's references elsewhere (e.g. 2003:44) to Thixo and Qamata as God-names, (4.2.1.2). By implication, Mtuze is not prepared to accord divine status to the lesser spirits. The status of ancestors [ancestral spirits] is discussed in 4.2.2.5.

Mtuze (2003:44f) shows how Qamata was understood to be not only the one Supreme Being, but also the Creator. The spirit world of Xhosa traditional religion will be examined in 4.2.2.6, but it appears that the amaXhosa knew of no spiritual being which would occupy the place of the demiourgos (p.113).

James Kiernan supports the judgment of Alberti and Van der Kemp regarding the Xhosa's lack of a concept of God (1995:19ff). He believes that 'the commonly made assertion that the Bantu-speaking people recognized the existence of a variously-named Supreme Being' refers only to belief in a deistic being 'too peripheral to human affairs to merit much attention from anyone' (ibid). He believes that 'most portrayals of African religion' (ibid) are so far from recognizing God as Creator, that with the exception of the Zulu-Swazi versions, their so-called “creation myths” might be better described as “myths of origin”' (ibid). From this point of view, the question whether the amaXhosa had a concept of God would appear to depend on one's definition of God (deistic or theistic). Kiernan's finding is clearly at variance with that of J. H. Soga (p.165). Broster (1981:17) confirms that God in the conception of the “Red People” 'is not concerned with everyday affairs', but that 'He' is nevertheless 'the Supreme Being who made the world and all therein' (ibid).

The transcendence of Jahweh is constantly emphasized in the Old Testament, and in the New Testament Jesus enjoins us to pray in His name (e.g. Jn 15.16 and 16.23). This resonates with African tradition concerning mediating spirits including ancestral spirits. From the Christian perspective, however, the uniqueness of the Lord Jesus Christ, and His supremacy over prophets, (Heb. 1: 1-4), and angels (Heb. 1: 5 – 2:18) is to be insisted upon. The purpose of indicating this resonance would be to help Xhosas understand the nature of God and relations within the Trinity [“unknown”] by comparison with their own traditions [“known”]. Sanneh's conviction is that 't)he missionaries should have been pleased when they came upon evidence that God had preceded them ... (i)instead, the missionaries appear to have been surprised, even
antagonized, by examples of faithfulness, hospitality, and forgiveness, standards by which they were purporting to justify the whole enterprise of the mission itself' (1989:162).

Ntsikana's Great Hymn (below, 4.4.2) shows that this Xhosa prophet was able to conceptualize God in a way quite adequate as a basis for Christian teaching about Jahweh, which indicates the feasibility of a Xhosa contextualization of Christianity, especially in view of the fact that Ntsikana is held in high esteem by his people.

The doctrine of the Trinity is considered in 4.2.1.2 when the names of God are discussed.

4.2.1.2 Names of God.

D.T. Williams refers to the context in which University chaplains offered prayers at a certain graduation ceremony, and asks: 'Were they ... addressing the deities of various religions' (or) '...saying that there is one God, but that he is known by a variety of names?' (1997:112). He points out that there are two possibilities (117). 'The first possibility is that ... (t)here are ... several independent deities ... The second possibility is that there is one deity, but the manifestation of the monotheistic nature of God, and the worship of God are conditioned by the various historical and cultural situations of the world.' (ibid).

As Williams points out, recognizing cultural and religious diversity by juxtaposing the names of various deities in a prayer 'does not really reflect an approach to truth that should be characteristic of a university.' (118).

More fundamental than differences in names, are differences in what is predicated of the god /God in question. No god, for example, who is not the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, can be regarded as One with the God of Christianity [or of Judaism]. Whether the amaXhosa refer to God as uThixo, Qamata or Ndikhoyo, a full Christian expression of God's nature requires the Christian predicates given in the New Testament. The converse of this is that predicates applied to the gods of other faiths cannot always be applied to the God of Christianity. Williams makes this point as follows:

'It may .. be acceptable to apply names from other faiths to Christ.
To give one example, it would be appropriate to refer to him as Buddha, insofar as the name means "enlightened one". The problem is that this is not all that the name means; it is not possible that all the beliefs about Buddha could simply be transferred....' (ibid).

This was precisely the problem to which Latourette drew attention in connection with adoptions from Greek in the hellenistic contextualization (p.94f).

According to Curnick's account, Africans believe in the “Divine Being” variously named Nkulunkulu and Qamata, and such spirits as Mpundulu the supposed creator of lightning (1923: 5). Curnick does not mention uThixo. Mtuze states that, in common with many tribes in Africa, the amaXhosa referred to the Supreme Being under a number of different names, but that the 'standard appellation is Thixo' (2003:43). He further claims that Thixo is 'a borrowing from Koisain', quoting Hodgson to the effect that it was 'regarded as having been foisted on (the amaXhosa) by the missionaries'. (2003:44; Hodgson, 1982:104). The G.D.Xh. lists uQamata as 'the traditional supreme being of the Xhosas', but 'now also God (kuThixo) of the Bible (Pahl, 1989:10).

Sanneh relates an encounter between George Schmidt and some Khoi-Khoi people in 1737 (1989:160). They told Schmidt that God was called “Tui-qua”. It is significant that Schmidt 'observed the customs of the people to understand what place “Tui-qua” occupied in their lives' (Sanneh, ibid). Sanneh says, significantly, that Schmidt was learning from those he had come to teach (:161). The G.D.Xh. confirms that the derivation of Thixo is Koisain, and expresses it as 'tui//khoa-b' (Pahl, 1989:305). Sanneh records that the amaXhosa were already using the name “uThikxo” when Van der Kemp arrived amongst them, and that he, like Schmidt, allowed his hearers to prescribe the name by which God would be known in the missionary presentation (ibid).

The Kropf-Godfrey Xhosa dictionary (1905:347, 413), lists “uQamata” as 'a name for God' and “uTixo” as 'God'. This suggests that “uTixo” [or “uThixo”] should be understood as the generic or class name for God and “uQamata” as the personal name of God. However, although IEksodus 20: 1 Ndingu Yehovah, uThixo wakho' (Izibhalo Ezingcwele, 1967: 5), confirms this use of uThixo, the personal name of God is not
“uQamata” but the original Old Testament name Yehovah. It is significant that, by implication, the translators rejected the name “uQamata”. The 1996 Xhosa translation uses the expression Ndikhoyo uThixo wakho. Since Ndikhoyo translates into English as “[I am the] Present One”, it is an extremely apt rendering of the Hebrew Jahweh. The word “uThixo” is used in Yeziqalo [Igenesis]1: 1. Eyemfuduko [Ieksodus] 3:14 uses the name Ndikhoyo, thus obviating the use of Ndinye uEndinguyze as in the 1967 translation.

The G.D.Xh. lists approximately thirty names by which God [uThixo] is known in isiXhosa, including both Qamata and Ndikhoyo as well as iNkosi yeenkosi [Lord of lords] and uKumkani kakumkani [King of kings] (Pahl, 1989:305).

It is noteworthy that in Xhosa Christian hymnology, the name uYehovah is constantly used, ‘uYehovah’ as the name by which God is addressed, and ‘uThixo’ as the term for God in a heading. In translating a hymn from English into isiXhosa, W.S.Davis imported the word Yehovah directly. On page 7 of the Xhosa Methodist Hymn Book (1926), under the heading 'Awokudumisa uThixo' there is a doxology beginning: 'Dumisani uYehovah'.

It is significant for this thesis that in the Septuagint JHWH is not transliterated, but is translated 'Κυριος' in preference to Jahweh. Most English translations of the Old Testament, use the term ‘the LORD’ where the Septuagint has Κυριος [Old Testament JHWH]; where the 1996 Xhosa translation uses ‘Ndikhoyo’. In the New Testament, however, the word Κυριος used in quotations from the Old Testament is translated Nkosi (for example at Mt. 4:10). Where 'God' appears in the English Old Testament and New Testament it is translated 'uThixo' in the Xhosa Bible, including the 1996 translation. It would appear then that in the hellenization revealed in the Septuagint the term ‘the LORD’ has replaced the personal name Jahweh. Sanneh (1989:171) claims that the Methodists 'coined the unwieldy term uJehovah'. Whether this is so or not, the fact remains that this term was adopted by the Bible Society of South Africa in its 1967 Xhosa translation, and thus enjoyed a wider acceptance than that of one denomination.

Mtuze claims that
'Ntsikana's Great Hymn and doxology is Trinitarian. The three Godheads (sic) are blended perfectly. It starts with God the Father and moves to God the Son and the Holy Spirit who is seen as a leader who has led his people and then as a blanket which is wrapped around the people.' (2003:47)

The term “Trinity” is not biblical, having been coined by Theophilus of Antioch in the second century (Whitham, 1954:93). The term Τριαδι is used by Athanasius (Con. Ar., 1.18; Torrance:1988:302). The reference to 'the Father, the Word and the Holy Ghost' in the Authorised Version of 1 John 5:7, came in by way of the Vulgate, but it is not found in any Greek manuscript before the sixteenth century (N.I.V. (1983) footnote). The Authorised Version was, however, the version which the nineteenth century missionaries used, and out of which the earliest translations into isiXhosa were produced. The commonly used Xhosa translation of "the Trinity": uThixo, uneziqhu ezithathu, when literally translated into English, may convey the meaning: "God with three bodies". This is, of course, totally unacceptable unless the word “bodies” is understood figuratively. However, the usual Xhosa word for body is umzimba, rather than uneziqhu, which suggests that the latter is being used in a special way. Umzimba is used of the physical body of Jesus in the Methodist service of Holy Communion, (Incwadi Yombede...o lamawesile aseSouth Africa, p. 250). The problem with uThixo, uneziqhu ezithathu is that it begs the old question of the vestigia trinitatis in which the terms 'ουσιας' 'υποστασις and προσωπον were manipulated, and to which uneziqhu would have to relate. The term ubuthathunjye bukaThixo (threefold God) would appear to be a much more suitable expression. In the G.D.Xh, 'uMtriniti' is included under the names of Thixo.

It is conceded that these changes in nomenclature would be extremely difficult to implement since they would involve an extensive revision of the biblical text. A start has been made, however, in the introduction of the name Ndikhoyo in the 1996 Xhosa Bible (p.162). The significance of such changes would be that the monotheistic principle inherent in Judaism and Christianity and the doctrine of the Trinity can both be adequately expressed in the Xhosa names for God.

It has become evident that Sanneh's term “translatability” is complicated and perhaps controversial. Particularly where the names of God are concerned, there is a danger that translatability in the cultural sense
could militate against translation principles in the linguistic sense.

The name “Jahweh” was given to Israel for two reasons: to establish the Mosaic covenant and to differentiate Israel's God from the gods of surrounding nations. It is arguable that since these conditions do not apply in the case of the majority of Western Christians and of the amaXhosa, it would be more appropriate to use the names LORD / Nkosi [personal name] and God / uThixo [generic name] as the standard appellations. In contexts where the Judaistic connection is important, Ndikhoyo would be more appropriate than Nkosi.]

Here the translatability issue is seen to involve a historico-theological aspect in addition to those of culture and linguistics.

In this thesis, the guide-line for an assessment of the use of uThixo and uQamata as names for God among the amaXhosa is that the name given by the amaXhosa as the personal name should refer specifically to Jahweh with all that is predicated of Jahweh in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments; and with nothing that is not so predicated. In the spirit of African Renaissance, the ascription to God of the personal name uQamata might be acceptable as symbolic of recognition by the amaXhosa of the One Whom Israel was taught to call Jahweh, as long as the danger to which D. T. Williams drew attention regarding Christ and Buddha (p.167) is recognized and avoided. The names given to God in particular conceptualizations have deep implications for an acceptable contextualization, particularly when the selected name includes or implies the predication of certain attributes. In principle, the use of a culture-specific name is non-cardinal, but the implied ascription of attributes would be cardinal.

4.2.2 Xhosa religion and spirituality

Religion was defined in 1.2.6 and considered further in 2.2.8. In order to provide a basis for a discussion of African religion, the concept must be revisited. Broster (1981:113) provides the following definition of religion in the context of African tradition:

'Religion has been defined as belief in a superior power or powers governing the world, the aim of religion being to promote good behaviour and to maintain a stable and happy society. This
definition is fully exemplified in the ancestral cult where the ancestral spirits are recognized as the superior body delegated by God to govern and control their descendants.

Hinchliffe points out that 'religion and culture are intertwined in African Tradition to the extent that it is impossible to separate them' (1972:402). It follows, then, that cultural elements can be powerful tools by means of which to establish Christian faith in the members of any ethnic group.

S. Dwane quotes from a report by William Shaw, a Wesleyan missionary, that 'the Kaffir nation cannot be said to possess any religion, but they practice (sic) a complicated system of superstition' (Mtuze, 2003:62).

At this point, the debate concerning the precise meaning of δεισιδαιµονεστερους (Ac.17:22; above pp.114f) comes into play. The question needs to be applied specifically: Is A.T.R to be categorized as religion, or superstition? Apart from the distinctions made on page 114 regarding respective English translations, the extent to which the claims of postmodernism would consider this distinction irrelevant needs also to be assessed, (8.1), in order to provide an adequate contemporary contextualization for the traditional Xhosa culture. Such an assessment would also have to take into account the extent to which the tenets of postmodernism can be regarded as valid.

Mtuze's comparison between Celtic and Xhosa spirituality (4.3.2) could well inform a contextualization for traditional Xhosas today; but the question is the extent to which all the beliefs are still held and the customs still observed.

One of John Philip's biographers offers a helpful description of the world-view of the amaXhosa in 1819, as follows:

'Basic to the Xhosa way of life was an undergirding religious understanding of reality... a total world view encompassing all aspects of life...markedly different from the understanding of reality among Western Europeans in the nineteenth century.' (Ross, 1986:14f)

James Kiernan explores the religions of the Bantu-speaking African people (1995:19ff). After giving a brief account of ancestors, witches and sorcerers, comes to the conclusion that:

'there can be little doubt that this religion is an expression of humanism, in the sense of emphasizing human or this-worldly concerns.........
there is no suggestion in it that religion transcends the level of purely human engagement or that it is subsumed within a design conceived by a deity, or negotiated between several deities, out of time and out of this world.’ (: 25).

The conception of the strong interaction between sacred and secular is typified in the way in which ‘political leaders’ are said to have competed with ‘homestead heads...rainmakers and diviners...for the ownership of sacred power.’ (Hodgson, 1982:104). This tends to support Hinchliffe's view (above, p. 187).

In this section, elements of the Xhosa culture-in-practice will be described, and the missionary reaction indicated. These interactions will be tested against the interaction between Christianity and Hellenism [especially Hellenistic Judaism] in the New Testament (4.3.1), and against the interaction between Christian missionaries and pre-Christian Celts (4.3.2). The particular cultic elements will appear again in 7.2.1.5 when the theological stance of the African Initiated Churches (A.I.C’s) will be added, and in Chapter Eight when guidelines for the shape of the best contemporary Xhosa contextualization will be sought.

Peter Grassow (2008:19) reports that Chief Hintza 'was concerned about the challenge posed by the missionaries to ancient cultural practices'. Hammond-Tooke reports a reticence on Hintza's part to admit missionaries to his territory. In an explanatory footnote in his edition of Shaw's Journal, he writes:

'Shaw visited Hintsa in April 1825 and later with Revs W.J. Shrewsbury and Stephen Kay in December 1826... Hintsa declined to give his consent to a missionary until he had consulted his chiefs and councillors. He was also much concerned as to what Ngqika, Ndlambe and Phato said.' (1972:196)

Curnick (1923:1-10), writing on the occasion of the centenary of William Shaw's departure from Grahamstown to establish his chain of mission stations in Kaffraria, describes the amaXhosa as the Wesleyan missionaries encountered them. This material will be considered together with Donovan Williams' edited journal of Tiyo Soga, Hammond Tooke's biography of William Shaw and the work of a few other historians of the period.
Broster refers to 'the tantalizing enigma of similarities between [Xhosa] customs and certain passages in the Old Testament.' (1981:116). Specific instances mentioned by Broster will be referred to in the course of the following review. Elements of the Xhosa culture which exhibit what today would be called resonance, and the attitude of the missionaries towards them will be included seriatim, rather than in subsections devoted to each missionary.

4.2.2.1 Initiation rites

Tiyo Soga suffered a great deal of opposition and indignity on account of the fact that his father, “Old Soga” did not allow him to be circumcised (Williams, 1983: 1). In 1863, at the age of thirty-four, he was confronted by a number of abakweta. Williams reports:

’They were supported by the elders of the church – an illustration of the thin dividing line between the two worlds of Christianity and Western civilization on the one hand, and traditional native religion and values on the other.’ (1983: 4)

Curnick’s evaluation of some of the Xhosa rites is significant and probably definitive for both his own period and that of the pioneers. He says:

’When the girl has grown and has reached the age of puberty the 'Intonjane' rites are observed to commemorate her coming of age, and this is attended by many evil and repulsive customs.’ (1923:2, Underlining MJH).

On the following page, he continues:

’In the case of the son of the kraal, when he arrives at about the age of eighteen, he has to submit to the rite of circumcision. This, too, is connected with many evil and revolting customs. A kind of school is formed....... and many lessons are imparted, some of which cannot be considered as conducive to the moral uplift of the novitiate.’ (Underlining MJH).

Circumcision is recognized as very much a part of Jahweh's covenant with Israel. Broster lists it as a point of resonance with Xhosa traditional culture (1981:116). In qualification of the acceptance of this resonance, it must be pointed out that in the New Testament, particularly in the Pauline corpus, circumcision is not mandatory. It was conspicuously absent from the Jerusalem Quadrilateral (Acts 15:29). Thus circumcision
would appear to be a non-cardinal issue. Mtuze is totally justified, therefore, in remarking that 'it was grossly incorrect for the early missionaries to discourage Xhosa males from undergoing this ritual', [unless Curnick's assessment of the moral value of the “lessons ... imparted” at the circumcision school is deserved]. Mtuze states that circumcision 'formed the basis of the Xhosa social structure'. Discouraging it was inappropriate and damaging because it undermined the fabric of Xhosa society. It is clearly a Xhosa ritual, and just as it should not have been forbidden, neither should it be forced upon the young men. In view of these considerations, while circumcision is a perfectly acceptable tradition in Judaio-Christian as well as traditional African communities, it could not form an adequate initiation into the Christian faith.

Curnick asserts that 'in spite of the gross superstition and cruelty bound up with the religion of Africa, there are many things that are “broken lights” of God.' (1923: 5). This would imply that even in the area which Curnick would categorize as “the religion of Africa” there are aspects which are superstitious and cruel. The expression “broken lights”, however, holds promise of some notion of resonance.

Holt records (1954:107) that Ntsikana plunged into a river in order to wash off the imbola [red ochre] which covered his body according to his African tradition. Although this was not a formal baptism, since the church was not present, it suggests that for Ntsikana a symbolic cleansing was an appropriate step at the beginning of a life of discipleship, and that involved abandoning at least one element of his traditional past.

On the basis of the argument and evidence provided on page 167, the observation at this stage is that:

_although the missionaries were repelled by the aesthetical aspects of the initiation rites, and this may have influenced their judgement, they were not justified in condemning circumcision as such._

### 4.2.2.2 Rituals and ritual sacrifices.

(i) Sacrifices and other ritual slaughterings. Broster (1981:116) expresses the opinion that 'the most marked likenesses between Xhosa and Old Testament traditions are to be seen in the sacrifices.' She points out that the two-day stipulation regarding the eating of sacrificial meat in Xhosa tradition resonates with Leviticus VII:16, and that the umshawamo [meat reserved for the immediate family] resonates with Leviticus VII:34. Broster shows how the prohibition regarding the icongwane [a certain thigh muscle] resonates with Jacob's
experience at Jabbok (Gen. 32:32).

The Old Testament sacrificial system, although it resonates with African tradition is non-cardinal. The same status would logically apply to the African traditional sacrifices. Curnick points out (1923:7) that 'these are spoken of in the Bible as shadows of the real and supreme Sacrifice'. He point out that

'(b)y those who understand the sacrificial customs of the natives
it is noticed how some of them seem to resemble the old Jewish sacrifices.' (ibid).

Old Testament sacrifices were instituted by Jahweh and each had a distinct place in the sacrificial system. Their object was to remove sin, which gave offence to Jahweh. In a similar way, Broster asserts that '(t)he sacrifice of an animal is a symbolic act that washes away sin' (1981:17). The difference between Jewish and Xhosa sacrifices is that, according to Broster the latter are offered as 'a propitiatory sacrifice to' (ibid) [usually] the deceased father or grandfather, who, Broster says 'hold the spiritual authority' (ibid). These African traditional sacrifices are to be classed as praeparatio evangelica; just as the Old Testament sacrifices are; but this does not appear to have been apparent to the nineteenth century missionaries.

Mention has already been made (p.118f) of the classical doctrine of the Atonement and Anselm's contribution to it. No non-cardinal elements were detected in it, and scriptural support can be found for it, (Jn. 1:29); Rom. 5: 8; Gal. 1:13; Col. 1:19ff; 1Pet. 1:18 etc) More specifically, sacrifices other than that of the Lord Jesus Christ are expressly discounted, as a means of eternal redemption, (Heb. 9:12). This is cardinal. Such other sacrifices are declared inferior in respect of outward purification (Heb. 9:13-14). In themselves they would be judged to be a-scriptural, but if a claim is made that they are propitiatory, such a claim would be anti-scriptural.

(ii) Ritual symbolism. Many of the missionaries adopted an iconelastic attitude towards the ritual use by the amaXhosa of physical symbols. They inherited this indirectly from the influence of Calvin and Zwingli, at the time of the English Reformation. The Royal Injunctions of 1536, together with the Calvinistic influence of John Knox on the Edwardian Church of England (1540's), became institutionalized in the Book of Common Prayer of the Church of England. This, in turn, became part of the Wesleyan heritage. In addition
to this, it must be remembered that a measure of puritanism was contributed to Wesley's roots by his maternal grandfather, Dr Samuel Annesley, a leader of the Dissenters, (Lean, 1964: 6ff). The question whether a distinction can be made between idols and aids to worship might profitably be revisited, especially in light of the many multimedia presentations which are available in the modern church.

The practice of drinking from a communal cup, a practice common to Xhosa tradition, Celtic tradition and Christian tradition is a resonating factor in the midst of a great deal of dissonance. In respect of the preChristian Celtic and Xhosa tradition it would be *praeparatio evangelica*; in Christian Celtic, Christian Xhosa and Western Christian practice it bears a fulfilled significance. Its position in this sub-section, however, indicates the writer's conviction that the Eucharist is not, in itself, a sacrifice.

The observation at this stage is that:

*the missionaries tended to be rather rigid in their attitude towards rituals and ritual symbols, applying the standards that would have been appropriate in Britain.*

4.2.2.3 Moral Code.

Tiyo Soga records an incident concerning two men who had been murdered for having allegedly bewitched Chief Kreli's cattle. Maki, a counsellor, sought Soga's advice, saying that he [Maki] was 'already accused of leaning too much in (my) ideas to the English side' (Williams, 1983:134). In reply Soga said: 'There is but one side for me, and not two: “Thou shalt not kill”' (Williams, ibid). Soga continues:

'I told him that he should strongly advise the chief, since he of course believes in witchcraft, rather to expel the accused from his country, than shed innocent blood.' (Williams, ibid)

The record of this incident introduces a number of interesting factors. It shows that Soga was firmly on the side of biblical morality. It is significant that he quotes Scripture instead of referring to Western 'civilization', although his reference to 'one side' suggests that he recognized that the latter was derived from the former. Maki, on the other hand, seems to think that action against the murderers of these men, involving as it did an allegation of witchcraft, would strengthen the reputation he had gained for being on 'the English side'. Soga took it for granted that Kreli believed in witchcraft and that he would have expected that the alleged
warlocks should be put to death. From this it appears that there were differences between the missionary understanding and that of traditional Africans on moral issues.

The word “moral” in the heading of this subsection covers a wider field than ethics as such. It is used in its relation to customs (*mores*). This is important because, as the following quotation shows, Curnick did not make that distinction between ethical and moral issues.

> 'The fact that they observe some code indicates that they know what is right and what is wrong... Since customs have been given them to keep, the transgressor must be punished. God is the author of law and man is accountable to Him'. (Curnick, 1923:8)

This is reminiscent of Kant's “categorical imperative”, and is acceptable as a general principle; but it still leaves open the ethical value of the specific 'customs' which 'have been given them to keep'.

The distinction between “moral” and “ethical” is important because it highlights the central issue in the polygamy debate. Hammond-Tooke records William Shaw's reaction to an unprofitable discussion upon the origins and evils of polygamy” with Chief Ngaika (1955:73). Grassow reports that '(t)he latter had requested Shaw to procure a white English wife to add to his family – something Shaw refused, calling this an 'obscenity' (2008:19).

The use of the word “evils” indicates that Shaw considered that the actions were ethically wrong. It seems that the amaXhosa of his time did not. If Curnick's perception that the amaXhosa had a moral code is correct, it is a question of what the respective moral codes of the amaXhosa and of Shaw contained. Colenso, who was to a large extent ahead of his time, found it difficult to refuse church membership to polygamists (Mtuze 2003:35). The issue of polygamy itself is discussed in 7.2.2.3. It is to be noticed that Ntsikana honoured the principle of monogamy when he took the step of putting away his second wife on adopting Christianity (Holt, 1954:107).

In line with the connotation of “moral” as referring to *mores*, mention must also be made of other cultural practices to which the missionaries objected. Grassow refers to 'the ululating of women, the traditional dancing of circumcised youth, and drumming’, which the missionaries described as 'horrible' (2008:19;
Light is thrown on this issue by Ntsikana's prohibition of 'heathen dances' in his death-bed instructions to his children.

'Do not, after I die, go back to heathenism ... have nothing to do with heathen dances, but keep a firm hold of the word of God ... don't allow my children to return to red clay and heathenism.' (Holt, 1954:122)

Kiernan notes the association of dancing and drumming with divining (1995:75). This will be revisited in 4.2.2.6.

The context in which women were ululating in Shaw's presence might well have been divination, even if the women in question were not sangomas. The reference to 'circumcised youth' also suggests that the ceremony could have been associated with a “coming out” ceremony associated with the abakweta rituals. If there were anti-Christian elements in any of these things, they should have been identified clearly and the objections motivated. The word “horrible” would suggest that this was an aesthetic or ethical issue rather than a doctrinal one. Grassow implies this sort of categorisation when he says: 'The missionaries ... struggled with cultural community expression.' (2008:19, underlining MJH).

Shaw regarded the Western concept of “civilisation” to be the standard for all cultures. This is revealed when Grassow records that 'Shaw's desire was that the African people, who he saw as “living in the lowest state of mental, moral and social degradation” should be “washed, decently clothed, and in other respects elevated in the social scale”' (ibid) The phrases “social degradation” and “social scale” in the context of washing and being decently clothed show quite clearly that Shaw did not regard his work as a Christian missionary as having been completed until the standards of Western civilisation had been reached. Grassow tends to support this interpretation of Shaw's stance with his own comment:

'The missionaries were all persuaded that their culture was superior to anything Africa could offer. It was imposed on the missionised as an inseparable part of the gospel.' (ibid)

Stephen Kay's comment betrays a hint of dualism when he asserts: 'our grand object ... is to civilise as well

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as evangelise the tribes.' (Fast, 1991:19, underlining MJH). The underlined phrase suggests that 'to civilise' and to 'evangelise' are separate entities in that they can be added together. Kay is using “evangelise” in the narrow meaning of salvation; whereas his 'grand design' is “salvation in the broad sense.

Kiernan tends to be rather cavalier in his criticism of missionary activity. Presumably this is because, as a social anthropologist he is not in tune with the “missionary heart”. He is presumably unaware of the parameters of the Christian ethics which the missionaries saw it as their duty to propound. He says:

'And as they gained a secure foothold, the missionaries, true to their “civilising” impulse set about deliberately to destroy essential institutions of African society such as polygamy, bridewealth, leviratic marriage, circumcision, sorcery, rain-making, drinking and even festive dancing.'

Some of Kiernan's criticisms, however, have substance, and deserve to be considered. It is difficult, in the absence of specific proof, to decide the question as to how deliberate the policy of social destruction was.

(i) The issue of polygamy was mentioned on page 178f and will be examined in 7.2.2.3.

(ii) It is difficult to understand, even on a “civilising” level, the objection to 'bridewealth' in view of the fact that a similar practice was in place in British society at the time, namely the presenting of a dowry by the bride's parents to the bridegroom.

(iii) Leviratic marriage has Old Testament warrant (Deut. 25: 5ff), but is not incumbent upon Gentiles or Christian Jews. Even under the Mosaic law, the brother had the right to refuse. This issue is therefore non-cardinal but not to be prohibited.

(iv) The issue of circumcision was discussed on pages 167f.

(v) A sorcerer was condemned by the apostle, Paul, as an 'enemy of all that is good' (Ac.13:10 N.I.V.). Others became so convinced that their practises had been evil that they publicly confessed and destroyed their 'magic' books. (Ac.19:18ff). In these circumstances, a Christian missionary would not see opposition to sorcery as a ploy to destroy a culture but rather as their plain duty as those sent out by Christ.

(vi) It is difficult to determine the context and the underlying theological presuppositions attending the missionaries' condemnation of the 'drinking and even “festive” dancing'. The issue is whether any pagan motive or intention was involved.
A social anthropologist could not be expected to view these issues in the same light as a theologian would. The point here, as far as this thesis is concerned, is that when one investigates the effect of the Christian gospel on a non-Christian culture, one needs clearly to distinguish between non-cardinal aspects [which the missionaries ought to have respected] and anti-scriptural aspects [which the missionaries were in duty bound to identify and denounce].

The observation at this stage is that:

*the missionaries sometimes failed to distinguish between aesthetic and ethical issues in their reaction to the mores of Xhosa tradition, and failed to make this distinction clear in their contextualization.*

### 4.2.2.4 Belief in life after death.

Curnick points to the difference between the Xhosa expression referring to the death of a human being *[Upumile umpefumlo = the soul, or spirit has gone out]* and that referring to the death of an animal *[ifile = it is dead]* (1923: 8).

Broster asserts that in Xhosa belief:

>'(p)hysical death, when it comes at the correct time in life is regarded as a natural continuation of man’s existence... (d)eath does not complete the cycle, for immediately after death the spirit is isolated in a state of transition, called in Xhosa esithubeni. *(1981:20)*

According to Broster, the ceremony of *ukubuyisa uTata*, by means of which the spirit is brought back home after an introductory visit to the ancestors, takes place 'after a period of mourning or as soon as it is possible for all the male members of the family to be present' (ibid). Mtuze, however, specifies 'after a few years' (2003:25). Broster does not mention the *ukukhapha* by means of which the deceased was sent on his way to meet the ancestors immediately after death.

The observation at this stage is that:

*while the missionaries rightly judged the pre-Christian nature of Xhosa tradition in respect of belief in*
4.2.2.5 Ancestor cult

In 3.1.3.1 reference was made to euhemerism and ancestor veneration in the classical Roman empire. The immortalization of heroes resonates in certain respects with the African tradition in terms of which ancestral spirits are recognized and accorded status. The patristic condemnation of euhemerism, (p.106f) implies condemnation of ancestor veneration. It would appear, then, that the attitude of the nineteenth century missionaries in opposition to ancestor traditions, has patristic support.

In the Roman Empire ancestor veneration, associated as it was with emperor worship, had clear political overtones. Although the political structure of the amaXhosa in the eighteenth century was not as developed as that of ancient Rome, the Nongqawuse cattle-killing (4.2.2.6) involves tribal consciousness in the face of political oppression.

Broster (1981:17) states that traditional Xhosas believe in God as the Supreme Being who delegates mundane duties to 'the ancestral spirits of each family'. The spirits of the ancestors are subject to God, and contact with God is made through them, usually by means of an animal sacrifice. Divination is effected by an igqirha who 'operates wholly through the ancestral spirit and divines through the power of that spirit.' (Broster, 1981:22).

Maboea affirms that '(t)he ancestors are regarded as the source of a community's well-being and prosperity.' (2002:18). He states that '(i)f the relationship with the ancestors is disturbed, nothing the person does will be a success' (2002:19). A good relationship with the ancestors is maintained by means of 'sacrifice and veneration' (ibid).

This confirms the conviction which Curnick expressed, that ritual slaughtering of beasts was directed towards the ancestors.
'In the killing of these beasts there are certain customs to be observed, many of which are in the nature of propitiating the departed spirits, in case any displeasure has been incurred.' (1923: 4)

Kiernan ascribes an ulterior motive to ancestor veneration in that 'ancestors are recollected and honoured to the extent that they serve the dominant interests of the living...' (1995:20). He further explains that 'the religious rememberance of ancestors is a way of extending authoritative roles beyond the grave in such a way as to support a social order which rests simultaneously on the distinctiveness of small groups and on their combination to form broader social and political units'. (1995:21)

This demonstrates how devastating the missionaries' attitude towards ancestor beliefs must have been and how much more appropriate their presentation of the gospel would have been if they had dealt with it more sensitively.

The position of this thesis is that in terms of textual evidence the Bible appears to be ambivalent on the issue of ancestor veneration. The Decalogue (Ex. 20:12) enjoins 'respect' (GNB) and even 'honour' (NIV) for 'father and mother'. In Matthew 15: 4, the generally accepted English translation of τιµα is 'honour'. The crux of this matter is whether “veneration” as conceived of in Xhosa tradition amounts to more than the Old Testament concept of “honour”

The writer is aware of nothing in scripture which would resonate with appeasing the ancestors, or support the implication that ancestors can punish their living descendants. The observation at this stage is that: the missionaries were right to recognize what according to the scriptural standard are excesses in ascription of power to the ancestors and the necessity to appease them; but that they failed to understand the complexity of the nature of ancestor veneration and to react to it responsibly and with sensitivity.

4.2.2.6 The spirit world and divination

It is customary to describe primitive spirituality as animism, which is the belief that inanimate objects are indwelt by spirits. Alan Richardson sees a remnant of animism in Genesis 28:22, in which God is thought to dwell in a pillar (1969: 9). This does not appear to have characterized Xhosa traditional religion, even at its earliest recorded period. In fact, referring to the early nineteenth century [1819] Ross makes the confident
[and rather surprising] statement that

'Nguni religion then was not a magical animism, but a logical and consistent system which saw God and man as the only actors in life.' (1986: 9)

Curnick (1923: 6) produces evidence according to which Ross's claim would appear to be an oversimplification. At the head of the spirit world is the supreme God, whose name Curnick records as 'Nkulunkulu' ['Great One']. Curnick describes an element in the Xhosa culture called Isivivane, which could be viewed as a primitive form of the concept of providence, but which would be regarded by modernists as superstition.

'The Native, as he travels on foot, sees a mound of stones, and picks one up and throws it on the heap with the muttered prayer, "that Nkulunkulu may prosper him on his journey and in the purpose for which he is travelling."' (ibid)

A point of resonance between this and the story of Jacob in Genesis 28 is fairly obvious, not only because of the reference to stones but also since the motif in both cases is supernatural provision.

The vision which reportedly came to Nongqawuse in 1856 and the disastrous cattle-killing to which it led, would therefore need to be taken seriously; but the writer sees this as parallel to the activity of the young girl in Acts 16 before the demon was driven out. The question whether manifested spirits are always evil is crucial. It is difficult to imagine a good spirit urging people to slaughter their cattle recklessly in a racially motivated project. The translation of 1 John 4:1 is interesting in this connection. The Authorised Version ('...believe not every spirit...') and the New International Version ('...do not believe every spirit...') imply that some spirits are from God and others not. This means at the very least that non-Xhosa people need to examine the claims of Xhosa spirituality carefully, with scientific detachment from their own cultural preconceptions, and an openness to the Scriptures.

Discernment is clearly needed in cases of alleged divination. Kiernan refers to:

'divining intuitively by means of direct spiritual contact with the ancestors. A general tendency has also been noted
of adopting medium divination by female practitioners. Even the name for such divining mediums retains the same root, -goma (meaning drum), across all Bantu-speaking societies in which the divining dance is accompanied by drumming.’ (1995:75)

Discernment, however, does not necessarily mean discarding. Molnar makes the insightful comment that ‘Christian doctrine ... prepared the way for an exclusively rationalist explanation of the mysteries of humanity and nature’ and that ‘(t)his rational system ... resulted in the drying up of the souls of modern people.’ (1987: 5). He goes on to claim that

‘Christianity ... dedaemonized the cosmos: it denied the existence of the supernatural daemons between gods and humans and left a vast rift between the realms of the human and the divine. Humanity thus lost its moorings in a cosmic hierarchy ...’ (:8)

Although Molnar's context is the Graeco-Roman world, what he says applies quite aptly to the nineteenth century missionary situation. The difference between the conception of spirituality held by the nineteenth century missionaries and the Xhosa conception is an issue which requires consideration. The influence of nineteenth century modernism led to a denial by liberal theologians of the existence of spirits either benevolent or malevolent. The references to evil spirits and specifically to their exorcism by Jesus and His disciples (e.g. Mk 5: 1ff, 6: 7, 14:25 etc.) were dismissed as pre-scientific superstition.

Therefore, when Mtuze asserts that 't)he Western Church has simply behaved as if all these African realities do not exist' (2003:79), he is actually pointing [whether he is aware of it or not] not to a failure of the Western Church as a whole, but to the failure of its liberal theologians to take the Scriptural record seriously. The observation at this stage is that:

*in the main, the missionaries failed to establish a link between the spirit-world of Scripture and the spirit-world of African Traditional Religion, such as might have made it easier for the amaXhosa to understand and accept Christian pneumatology.*

It needs to be noted at this point, that there is a significant difference between Christian and African spirituality, in that in the latter, the perceived work of the occupants of the spirit world is to affect the
material situation of human beings for good or ill; whereas in the former the realm is predominantly spiritual rather than material and the concept is dualistic. It is recognized and conceded that this is a distinction which the amaXhosa do not make because for them material and spiritual are strongly inter-related. However, it needs to be made in order to identify the anti-scriptural teaching of, for example, the so-called prosperity sects in the West, that following Christ always produces material benefits. It might be a useful exercise to research whether the prosperity cult has made any impact upon the traditional Xhosa, and, if so, whether it has resonated with traditional beliefs; but this lies beyond the scope of the present thesis.

The specific issue of Christian spiritual gifts, particularly glossolalia, is examined in section 6.2 below.

4.2.2.7 The concept of Ubuntu.

The celebrated African concept of Ubuntu, which has been mentioned in several places in this thesis is, perhaps the classic example of a cultural element which could have been harnessed by the missionaries. Besides resonating with the Old Testament principle of corporate personality (p.156), it resonates with the teaching of Jesus in, for example, the parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk. 10:27 from Lev.19:18). It is also a concretization of Paul's injunction to “carry each other's burdens” (Gal. 6:2).

The relation between the “narrow” understanding of salvation and the “broad” understanding (p. 33f) is pertinent at this point. The danger can be discerned of an imbalance in the preaching of individual salvation [even though individual salvation is biblical], if, in the process, the corporate wellbeing of the community is lost sight of.

One of the major motifs of the Old Testament is Israel's identity as the People of God. At the time of his call to leave Ur, Abram was promised a line of descendants who would make his name great and whom Jahweh would bless, (Gen. 12:2). Jahweh addressed them by the title “Israel” (N.I.V. “Israelites”) and called them “My people” (Exod. 6:6-7). This implies that the identity of each Israelite is primarily corporate.

Ubuntu is the social theory which the amaXhosa share with other African nations, and it resonates in some respects with the Old Testament concept of “corporate personality”.
Deist defines “corporate personality” as:

'(t)he spirit, experience and morals – in short, the “personality”
- of a community as embodied in any one of its members ...
the individual is responsible for the well-being of the entire
community of which he is a member ... the offences
of the individual, and the putting to rights of these offences,
always involve all the members of the group to which he belongs.’ (1984:36)

It will be recognized that Deist's definition is very close to that of *ubuntu*. The definition covers individual responsibility for corporate well-being (Lev. 19:18) and corporate guilt for individual sin, (Jos. 7:24-26). The complementary converse of the latter is that just as individual sin has a corporate effect, Christ's individual vicarious suffering is effective for all who will believe (Rom. 5:18).

However, the writer believes Deist's definition of corporate personality does not cover the Old Testament concept adequately. The ontological aspect of Israel's identity as Jahweh's covenant people holds more than ethical implications. Israel stands corporately before Jahweh in all respects as Jahweh's people. Circumcision was the badge, not only of Israelite identity, but specifically of the covenant, (Gen. 17:10).

In terms of Matthew 25:31ff, *Ubuntu* is extended so that those to whom we have a duty are identified with Christ. This means that *Ubuntu* can be seen to be supported by dominical injunction, especially when read together with Matthew 22:39. Therefore, far from being an element that might need to be replaced, it is an element which, by Christ's own teaching needs to be incorporated into all conceptualizations of the gospel, including that of the West. Expressed negatively, the Western concept of [or tendency towards] individualism is an element which has not been identified as secondary to the gospel, and therefore has presented and continues to present a problem for the communication of the gospel to the amaXhosa.

It was noted on page 146 that '(t)he amaXhosa appear to find difficulty with the concept of individualism'. Perhaps this is the most fundamental barrier to their conceptualization of the Christian gospel in terms of the Western contextualization, and particularly of “conversion” as “personal salvation”. *Ubuntu* is thus seen to relate more easily to the “broad” understanding of salvation as *soteria/shalom* (pp.33ff).
Mtuze comments on a significant underlying aspect of Western individualism by quoting Comaroff and Comaroff to the effect that the missionary concept of “conversion” tends to conflate changes in the individual spiritual identity with cultural transformation, thereby muddying the historical relationship between subjective experience and collective existence (Mtuze, 2003:69). The point which Comaroff and Comaroff make is deeper than merely the resonance between the Old Testament concept of “corporate personality” and Ubuntu. It goes right to the root of Christian experience, which is both individualistic and corporate in nature.

Comaroff and Comaroff’s implied allegation that missionary Christianity sometimes failed to find an adequate balance between soteriology and ecclesiology is acknowledged. Perhaps it was not so much that they neglected ecclesiology but rather that they failed to enable the amaXhosa to understand its nature and importance, as they might have done had they recognized Ubuntu as a manifestation of the Christian way of life.

The tendency of the amaXhosa to identify themselves in terms of the group is often perceived as a problem, mainly because it could give rise to a false understanding that nominal allegiance to the Lord Jesus Christ on the part of rank-and-file tribe members when a Chief became a believer would count as Christian living. This phenomenon is found in many so-called “Christian” countries where a nominal acknowledgement of the Christian faith is viewed as part of one’s national identity. The issue will be addressed in 8.3.2.1.

There can be no doubt that, even if the “Jerusalem experiment”, (Ac. 2:44-47; 4:32-37) is disqualified on the grounds that it met a special situation, the New Testament standard for the life of the Church is community in the sense of Ubuntu (2 Cor. 8:7-15; Phil. 2: 2-5; 1 Pet. 2: 9-10).

The observation at this point is that:

there does not appear to be any evidence that the missionaries had any problems with the principle of

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Ubuntu, although they do not appear to have pointed out the resonance between Ubuntu and either the Hebrew concept of corporate personality or the New Testament principle of Koinonia.

4.3 Comparative conceptualizations

In 1.2.6 religion was defined in the following terms:

>'When a contextualization/conceptualization transaction takes place, religious content is offered by members of one culture to another culture, comprising “credal” statements about God (the gods) which guide the formation of the moral structure of the way of life of the community and provide a framework within which perceived reality (world-view) can be interpreted’.

It follows that since religion, [in terms of this thesis, Christianity] takes on the role of a paradigm, its formative function is crucial to the transaction whereby it is communicated from one culture [Western] to another, [Xhosa].

This section of the chapter will compare the Xhosa culture with the Hellenistic culture as receptor cultures (4.3.1) and the Xhosa culture and the Celtic culture in terms of their respective traditions (4.3.2). The religious paradigms will be Christian in both cases.

4.3.1 Xhosa tradition and Hellenism as receptor cultures

It is instructive to compare the way in which Christianity was presented to and received by the Hellenistic culture with the missionary/Xhosa transaction.

Latourette compares the relationship between Christianity and the Graeco-Roman world with that between Christianity and Judaism.

>'If Christianity was radically different from Judaism, the religion which to some degree was its parent, the gulf which separated it from the Graeco-Roman world into which it was born was still wider.’ (1953/2000:20)

What Latourette says about the Graeco-Roman world in this observation could just as easily be applied to the world of the amaXhosa [or any other non-Jewish world]. From this comparison, and from what has been
described in this thesis thus far, it would seem that the prospects for a genuine conceptualization by the amaXhosa from the Western contextualization should be judged to be quite slim. The use of the word “tradition” in this sub-heading indicates that the receptor community referred to is not only the individual traditional Xhosas to whom the Western missionaries came, but the complex Xhosa community of the time, as receptor culture.

The fact that Christianity was communicated to the Hellenistic world from a Jewish foundation means that what was communicated was not what Mtuze would call “pure” Christianity [which, as he rightly says, has never existed]. The contextualizing agent in the New Testament period and later was *Judaean*-Christianity. The Christianization of the Greek world was a multifaceted process involving three cultural groups: Jewish Christians bringing the gospel to hellenized Jews and to Hellenes [pagan Greeks], (p. 95ff). Jewish Christians and hellenized Jews interacted theologically and culturally. They had Judaism in common, but the Jewish Christians had in a sense modified it *theologically* by claiming that Jesus was Messiah; the hellenised Jews had modified their Judaism *culturally* by accepting the Greek way of life. When hellenized Jews became Christians and started to present the gospel to other hellenized Jews, the cultural barrier was removed.

The evangelization of the Hellenes was initially a double divide (theological and cultural) in that Judaism did not feature in the world-view of the Hellenes. When hellenized Christians began to present the gospel to Hellenes, there was no significant cultural distance. The following diagram will illustrate the situation.

**Figure (3)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religious Affinity</th>
<th>Cultural Affinity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Judaism</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish Christian Presenter</td>
<td>Hellenistic Jewish Host</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hellenistic Jewish Host</td>
<td>Christianity was received ambivalently in the Eastern Cape <em>vis-a-vis</em> the effects of Western culture on the amaXhosa. It is to be noted that eventually three cultural groups emerged from the transaction: Western</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>None</th>
<th>Hellenistic Jewish Presenter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Pure/Pagan” Hellenistic Host</td>
<td>Hellenism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Christians bringing the gospel to the amaXhosa, producing “School People” alongside the traditional “Red People” (pp.156f). Again, when Xhosa Christians, such as Tiyo Soga started to evangelize their communities, the cultural distance was less than in the case of the Western missionaries. The difference between the Hellenistic situation and the Xhosa situation is that in the former case the [cultural] transaction took place before the evangelization, whereas in the latter case, the [religious] transaction was contemporaneous with, and a direct result of the evangelization.

When referring to the unique South African culture which has resulted from the interaction of Westerners and indigenous Africans, such that both cultures have been irretrievably lost in a certain community, the word “hybrid” will be used. Thus, Xhosa, Western and hybrid communities are perceived to exist in South Africa today. When referring to variations within a single culture, such as, for example, the various degrees of Westernization experienced in Xhosa communities, the word “ambiguous” and the expression “degrees of ambiguity” will be applied to the culture concerned. Thus, the term 'hybrid' will apply to individual communities or groups of people in respect of different cultures existing interacting within them, and 'ambiguous' will refer to the nature of a particular culture as a whole. The degree of ambiguity will depend on the number of hybrid communities.

It is hoped that in contrasting the two-way transaction between Hellenism and Christianity, against the presentation of Western Christianity to the amaXhosa guide-lines will be produced in terms of which a genuine two-way transaction between Western and Xhosa Christianity might still take place in the Eastern Cape.

In presenting the gospel to Greeks, the Jewish Christians did not bring Judaism, or Jewish culture into conflict with Hellenism per se, but only with anti-Christian elements in it. This stands in contrast to the attitude of the missionaries to the amaXhosa, who tended to absolutize their own cultural system in its entirety (p.155). A number of points of comparison will now be considered.

(i) The nature of the transaction each case.

The Hellenistic culture into which Judaeo-Christianity was introduced was diverse in the sense that it
included Hellenistic Jews and Hellenes. It must be recognized that the gospel has its roots in Judaism in a way which makes the Judaistic element far more fundamental than the Hellenistic influence. Peter Mtuze seems to have failed to recognize that the nexic relation between Judaism and Christianity is not only sequential but also *consequent*ial. He says, (2003:12): 'A classical (sic) example [of Christianity taking over symbols, rituals and festivals of non-Christian origin] is the pre-Christian *Passover*, which has its roots in pre-Christian Judaism' (emphasis Mtuze). The implication seems to be that this example is on a par with borrowings from paganism.

Against this, it must be insisted that Christianity is a classic example of an unfolding revelation from Judaism. Hellenistic Jews would be expected to receive Christianity more easily than Hellenes, on account of the Judaism which they shared with the Judaeo-Christians who brought them the message. It is clear that the distance between Judaeo-Christanity as presenter and Hellenic Judaism as receptor was not as great as that between Judaeo-Christanity as presenter and the Hellenes as receptor, in a pre-existent diverse situation. The diversity was in existence before Christianity arrived.

By contrast, the hybridisation of the Xhosa community developed only after the missionaries had arrived, and was, in fact, a consequence of their work. Even “school” people who had not fully embraced the faith would find it easier to understand it than the “red” people who had not availed themselves of the benefits of the mission school.

In the case of Western Christianity and the amaXhosa, the missionaries had first to remove the distance by bringing education. This had the effect of producing hybridity. Thereafter, the distance between Western Christianity as presenter and the “School People” as receptor was not so great as that between Western Christianity as presenter and the “Red People” as receptor.

(ii) The by-product of imperialism

The Greek-speaking inhabitants of Asia Minor were a by-product of imperialism, namely the expansion of the Greek Empire under Alexander the Great. Latourette describes this sociological change:

*The times brought with them much of insecurity. In the comprehensive*
political unity, many individuals were uprooted from their accustomed
environment... the old city states which had characterized the
Mediterranean world and which gave their free citizens a sense of community
were basically weakened, absorbed in the large impersonal Empire.’ (1953/2000:22)

Alexander the Great completely changed the political face of Greece. Although the city-states were not
small-scale in the sense of being characterized by magicality and idiosyncratic cultures, the effect of
Alexander's reorganization was to draw small politically intact entities into a large-scale political structure.
The irruption of the Roman empire into this situation made it even more unsettling. At the time Christianity
came to Asia Minor the cultural power was Greece and the political power was Rome.

The amaXhosa also had a direct experience of imperialism, namely the expansion of the British Empire in
South Africa. Xhosa-speaking tribes were absorbed into the British Empire in the same way that old Greek
city states had been absorbed into the empire of Alexander the Great. The stance of the early Christians
towards the Romans resonates with the stance of the amaXhosa towards the British colonial authorities. The
effects of British imperialism were studied in 4.1.3.1.

At the time of the Western irruption into the Eastern Cape, the amaXhosa were culturally traditional.
Politically they had been under the influence of European powers since 1652. From 1795 onwards, what
had previously been only influence became domination. Whereas in the New Testament context the cultural
power and the political power were separate, in the Eastern Cape the new political power had been a cultural
influence for some time. The gospel was presented by English-speaking Westerners, who themselves
translated it into isiXhosa.

(iii) The changing fortunes of the oppressor.
The historical records reveal how, after the death of Alexander, the changing fortunes of the Ptolemies and
the Seleucids together with the rise of Rome affected the hellenization process.

In the case of the Westernization of the amaXhosa, the fortunes of the successive dominating powers
changed in a similar way. A brief outline was offered in 1.1.1. In the light of this history, it would seem
appropriate to compare the British Empire with the Empire of Alexander and the Afrikaners with the Seleucids who followed, [there would be no Ptolemies in this analogy]. The Afrikaners are the descendants of Europeans who came from Holland and gained power when their fellow-Europeans from Britain relinquished authority. The Seleucids were Syrians who had been conquered by Alexander and incorporated into the Greek Empire. They came to power after Alexander's death. In such a case the overthrow of the Seleucids by the Roman Empire and the ending of the horrors of the Maccabean period would have their counterpart in the overthrow of apartheid and the establishment of the New South Africa.

There is, however, one important difference. In the case of the overthrow of the Seleucids by the Roman Empire the result was still foreign oppression, whereas in the South African saga the result is the ongoing deliverance, by the indigenous peoples themselves, from foreign control. The context of the New South Africa is thus different in many ways from that of the Acts.

iv) Development of cultural entities.

In the history of Greek empire, three distinct cultural groups appeared in Asia Minor. It becomes necessary at this point to make a further important linguistic distinction. The word “Hellenistic” will be used to refer to Jews who voluntarily adopted the Greek culture. The word “hellenized” will refer to Jews who came under the influence of the Greek culture by force of circumstances, but did not willingly embrace it. The three groups, therefore, were: (a) devotees of the Greek gods (Hellenes), (b) Hellenistic Jews with no religious interests and (c) Jews who, although hellenized, remained staunch worshippers of Jahweh. The traditional amaXhosa whom the missionaries encountered could be regarded as a counterpart to the Hellenes. With the passage of time, many of the Xhosa people became westernized and would compare with the Hellenistic Jews. There appears to be no counterpart to the hellenized Jews, but the amaXhosa have come to display degrees of ambiguity in their relation to the Western culture, varying in their positions on a scale of which one pole corresponds to the “Red People” who resisted it, and the other pole to the “School People” who embraced it in varying degrees. A diagram will clarify the concept.

Figure (4)
The cultural entities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hellenes</th>
<th>Hellenistic Jews</th>
<th>Hellenized Jews</th>
<th>“Pure” Jews</th>
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<tbody>
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</table>

Trad. amaXhosa  
Westerners

(“Red”.......................................................... “School”)

( degrees of ambiguity )

The degrees of ambiguity in the hellenistic scenario are not as significant for this thesis as those in the Xhosa scenario. The situation of the traditional Xhosa was outlined in 4.2. Contextualizations for them and for the ambiguous group will be discussed in 8.1 and 8.2 respectively. A contemporary contextualization for Xhosa Christians will be discussed in 8.3.

4.3.2 Xhosa and Celtic traditions

Celtic myths have been preserved concerning the creation of Ireland [that is, the Irish nation]. Fee brings evidence which suggests that 'by the time [these stories] were written down they were somewhat Christianized' (2001:142) A magician named Cesair, who was reputed to be the granddaughter of Noah, arrived on Irish soil together with her father, Bith, in an ark like Noah's, in which they had spent seven years. Bith had been instructed to build this ark by an idol he had created. Cesair's husband, Fintan, 'avoided death in the Great Flood by turning himself into a salmon' (Fee, ibid). The writer sees in Fintan a garbled version of the biblical saga of Jonah.

An interesting incidence of accommodation is cited by Fee (2001:66-67). When the Romans invaded Britain, they attempted to identify deities in the Graeco-Roman pantheon corresponding to counterparts in the Celtic pantheon. Mercury seems to be identified as Lugh, the 'master of all arts and crafts' (Fee, :67). Fee continues:

'Lugh is also the David-like hero who destroyed his evil one-eyed Cyclopean grandfather Balar. This killing had long been prophesied, and Lugh had been rescued as a baby from Balar, who had intended to kill the child to prevent the fulfillment of the prophecy.' (ibid)

Garbled elements of the biblical stories of David and Goliath, Moses and the infant Jesus are clearly discernible here.
These are cases of biblical elements belonging to the Christian religion being incorporated into the written forms of pre-Christian mythology. The principle involved in such transactions will be looked at again in 4.4.1, when Nxele's contextualization is compared with that of Ntsikana.

It will be useful to compare the pre-Christian amaXhosa with the pre-Christian Celts, in order to compare the respective conceptualizations of the gospel. There are remarkable similarities in the two pre-Christian cultures, and a comparison of the two conceptualizations of Christianity will not only draw attention to lost missionary opportunities in the nineteenth century but also point a way forward for the presentation of the gospel to the amaXhosa in the modern era.

Peter Mtuze (2003: 19ff) has produced an extensive comparison of Celtic and Xhosa spirituality. His focus is on borrowings from other cultures, and his thesis is that the missionaries who came to the amaXhosa did not allow to their converts the freedom their own forbears had enjoyed when Christianity came from Rome to Ireland and thence to Scotland and England. It is the position of this thesis that the freedom granted to early Britain did not produce perfect results, because Scripture was not always the defining factor. What is envisaged is that the amaXhosa should have been able to hear the gospel with their own contextual “ears” and not through the Western filter; but that it should be the biblical gospel which they conceptualize.

Mtuze's presentation is somewhat confusing to a Western theologian who tends to think of Christians as members of an institutionalized church. He uses the expression 'Celtic church' and the expression 'pagan Celts' in the same paragraph, (2003:20-21) the point of which seems to require that the terms be understood as having the same referent. It is clear that he does not share the Western understanding, that although sacred and secular are one, a clear division between Christian and pre-Christian (Church and pagan society) needs nevertheless to be drawn. There are a number of interesting parallels between Celtic and Xhosa spirituality.

(i) Naming places and children.

The Celts tended to name places in terms of events. A parallel is found in the Xhosa practice of naming
children after events or circumstances at the time of their birth, (Mtuze, 2003:24). This similarity within
Xhosa and Celtic spirituality resonates with elements to be found in the life of Israel and Judah as described
in the Old Testament. For example, the tendency of naming places (Celtic) and children (Xhosa) in
celebration of events, resonates with the naming of the monument, Ebenezer (1 Sam. 4:12); and the naming
of Moses (Exod. 2: 10), respectively.

(ii) Societal structure.
Another point of comparison which is found in a triangular comparison of Old Testament society, Xhosa
society and Celtic society is that all of them are 'strongly tribal', (Mtuze, 2003:21). This is clearly illustrated
in Uyoshuwa 7:16-18, where the standard Xhosa terms are used,

(iii) Kingship.
In Celtic tradition, kingship was regarded as sacred and this parallels the situation in ancient Israel.
Frequent mention of the king as 'the Lord's anointed' is to be found in the Old Testament (e.g. 2 Sam. 1:14,
16). However, unlike Celtic kingship, the monarchy in Israel and Judah was national rather than tribal.
Mtuze equates the tribal system of the amaXhosa with the Celtic system of small kingdoms and lesser
chiefdomships. Mtuze appears to equate chiefdomship with kingship when he describes the feudal-type
system of the amaXhosa, noting that '(t)he different levels of chiefs ruled over particular tribes as kingship
contributed to tribal cohesion.' (2003:21-22)

(iv) Attitude towards missionaries.
Mtuze also compares the African chiefs' receptivity to the missionaries with that of the Irish kings (2003:
22). Generally speaking, the Celtic rulers allowed Christian missionaries to move through their territories,
baptizing converts, confirming disciples and even ordaining clergy. Sometimes land was granted for the
erection of church buildings. In most cases, the same can be said of the Xhosa chiefs, although some had
reservations (p.166).

(v) Polytheism.
One important respect in which Celtic spirituality differs from Xhosa spirituality is that the Celts believed in many gods, (Mtuze, 2003:25), who operated in various spheres of the life of human beings. As has already been noted (p.159) Mtuze denies that the amaXhosa ever were polytheistic. They were, however, aware of the existence of polytheism, as indicated by the listing of the plural izithixo in the G.D.Xh (Pahl, 1989:305).

(vi) Sense of sin.

When Mtuze compares Celts and Xhosas in respect of a sense of sin, his confusion in terminology reappears (2003:34). He compares 'Celtic Christianity' with the amaXhosa [presumably pre-Christian], claiming that the former had 'a discernible sense of sin' and the latter 'had no perception of sin in the Western theological sense' (ibid). This begs the question of the stance of pre-Christian Celts. One suspects that they would be in a similar position to that of pre-Christian Xhosas. The distinction between pre-Christian and Christian Xhosas is crucial for this thesis in that, if it is not made, no hypothesis about the outcome of the process of missionary communication could be tested. Furthermore, a comparison of the missionary methods applied to the pre-Christian Celts with that applied to the pre-Christian Xhosas is beclouded by lack of clear information.

The confessorial function of the ikhankatha at the circumcision school (Mtuze, 2003:34), which resonates with the function of Job's companions in the Old Testament, suggests a degree of awareness of sin even before the missionaries arrived. This would tend to suggest that awareness of sin inculcated by the missionaries did not come to the amaXhosa as something totally unfamiliar, but was in fact an element in their culture which the missionaries could have used as a point of reference, but did not. On the other hand, it could be argued that when the newly circumcised initiate was 'told to confess the wrong that he might have done to some member of the family' (Mtuze 2003:34), what was envisaged fell short of the Christian conception of sin. In fact, it would seem to be more closely related to offending the ancestors than to offending Almighty God as revealed in Scripture. Nevertheless, it could have been taken by the missionaries as a praeparatio evangelica.

(vii) The spirit world
Pauw quotes C.M. Arensberg, concerning the Irish belief in “the good people”, the pisherogues or fairies, who bring prosperity if given their due, but can also be dangerous.’ (Pauw, 1975: 57-58). This tends to confirm Mtuze's finding regarding Celtic beliefs (2003: 27ff), and would aptly describe certain Xhosa beliefs concerning the ancestor spirits, (Mtuze, 2003:52).

Broster defines the aim of Xhosa religion as 'being to promote good behaviour and to maintain a stable and happy society' (1981:113). She explains that 'the ancestral spirits are recognized as the superior body delegated by God to govern and control their descendants' (ibid). This is clearly an extension of God-given parenting responsibilities into the spirit world.

Mtuze cites belief in malevolent spirits as another common feature of Celtic and Xhosa spirituality (2003:27ff). He quotes I. Bradley (1993:45) to the effect that Celtic Christianity recognized the existence of good and evil forces' (Mtuze, 2003:28, emphasis Mtuze). Bradley mentions significantly that 'their view derived from pre-Christian belief in a world ... which is so clearly found in the Bible'(ibid).

Mtuze regards 'openness about the presence of malevolent spirits' to be 'one of the strongest resemblances between Celtic and African spirituality', (2003:29, emphasis Mtuze). This area will be revisited in Chapter Six, where modernism and postmodernism will dialogue with African spirituality.

(viii) The common cup.

The communal cup was mentioned briefly on page 177. Mtuze draws attention to 'the Celtic practice of drinking from a common cup (2003:23 emphasis Mtuze) and to the fact that 'this practice is still prevalent in African societies' (ibid). He makes the point that '(t)he amaXhosa, therefore, found the chalice and the communal drinking of the holy eucharistic wine something they could easily relate to.' (ibid). The implication is that the use of individual communion glasses in some Protestant churches would be an indication of Western individualism (p.181), and thus a stumbling-block to the amaXhosa, unless recognized as non-cardinal.
(ix) Polygamy.
Polygamy is the last of the instances of comparison which Mtuze lists. Hughes indicates that the Irish (Celtic) society was both polyandrous and polygamous, but not permissive (1979:47; Mtuze, 2003:34-35). Marriages were carefully arranged and illicit unions deterred by severe penalties. Mtuze quotes J.H. Soga to the effect that polygamy can be regarded as having been universal among Bantu peoples (1931:136) and remarks that 't)he custom bore the brunt of missionary wrath.' (2003:35). The issue will be revisited in 7.2.2.3.

4.4 Xhosa reaction and proaction
The best gauge of the effectiveness of the missionary presentation and the Western irruption as a whole, is to be found in the reaction of the Xhosa recipients.

The attitude of the indigenous people to the missionaries varied from the proud resistance displayed by Ngqika on leaving Williams' mission station in 1817 to the appreciation shown by Gqoba in 1885. Having 'given over for a little while to listen to [Williams'] “word” ', Ngqika asserted: 'I shall begin now to dance and praise my beasts, and shall let all see who is the head of this land' (Opland, 2003:9). Gqoba proclaimed: 'These white men, have out of love and obedience to their Lord and Master and His cause, faced death, being content to count all those things as nothing, provided only they may win the souls of us black men and women for Christ'. He spoke of the 'advantages of Christian teaching' and looked for the day when 'we natives of this country shall have altogether been freed from the power of heathenism' (Opland, 2003:18). Could it be that during the almost seventy years between Ngqika's reaction and that of Gqoba, the message of the missionaries had become more intelligible and more acceptable?

The nature of the nineteenth century Xhosa response to the missionaries is exemplified in a comparative study of the responses of two Xhosa prophets, Nxele and Ntsikana (4.4.1), followed by a more detailed study of the responses of Ntsikana (4.4.2) and Tiyo Soga (4.4.3)
4.4.1 Ntsikana and Nxele as representative of differing approaches

Ntsikana and Nxele are the two prophets whom Mtuze highlights (2003:72), and Mtuze describes them (ibid) as 'two major figures among the amaXhosa'. Furthermore, they represent, respectively, two approaches to the reality of cultural imperialism in the Western contextualization of Christianity. They have been selected because, in different ways, they represent an ambiguous culture, and exemplify opposite stances towards assimilation. Nxele wanted to remain 'rooted in ancestor ritual'. Ntsikana did not, but neither did he acquiesce in the missionaries' policy of Westernization. As Hodgson remarks,

'(t)hroughout the century these two models dominated the response
to the missionary presence, among the Xhosa who neither remained
rooted in ancestor ritual nor acquiesced in the missionaries' scheme
of total cultural reconstruction.' (1997:19)

Hodgson (1997:71ff) explains how during the nineteenth century, the Xhosa response to British imperialism and missionary activity became focused in these two prophets. Between them, they symbolize the two basic options open to the amaXhosa at the time. Hodgson says:

'They appropriated and mobilized Christian symbols: Nxele for militant resistance, Ntsikana in an evolutionary model, that allowed black people to direct their own transformation.' (1997:71)

They were rivals in that Nxele lived under the protection of chief Ndlambe and Ntsikana under chief Ngqika, whom his father served as an advisor. Hodgson describes Nxele's conceptualization in the following terms:

'Early on, Nxele showed signs of being a diviner. Contact with whites allowed him to incorporate Christian concepts into his teaching, warning people to forsake witchcraft and bloodshed........ In addition to preaching orthodox Biblical themes such as the Fall, the Flood, Christ's crucifixion and resurrection, and the concept of salvation versus eternal punishment, he spoke of Mdalidephu, creator of the deep, and his son Tayi, and claimed to have the same mother as Christ. (1997:71)

Hodgson's source here is a report by James Reid dated 31 May 1816. Wallace Mills comments significantly that although Nxele 'incorporated elements of Christianity', he nevertheless remained 'firmly rooted in African religion and cosmology' (1997:342). Reference to Nxele's showing signs of being a diviner suggests that he was clairvoyant. This means that his teaching must be examined with extreme caution. It is
noteworthy that his method was to incorporate 'Christian concepts into his teaching'. This suggests that for him, Christian concepts were secondary to his pre-Christian theology. It is the position of this thesis that Christianity, [stripped of its particular Western contextualization], is primary. The concept of Mdalidephu is reminiscent of Plato's *demiourgos* and of the Gnostic concept of an evil creator-god set against the Supreme Deity. To ascribe the creation to any being other than God [*Yahweh; Ndikhoyo*] is clearly anti-scriptural. Nxele's claim to have the same mother as Christ is ludicrous, unless he claimed to be a reincarnation of some kind. Holt reports that Ntsikana objected to Nxele's use of the names Dalidipu [variant of “Mdalidephu”] (1954:115).

Nxele was known also by the name Makanda. Holt reports that he claimed that he had been 'sent by the Chief of Heaven and Earth' (1954:115) and that he called his people to '(p)ut away evil' (Holt, ibid.). He asked for cattle as a gift (Holt, ibid.). He excluded Ngqika from his message by saying 'Ngqika is not to hear this news, for he is a sinner' (Holt, ibid.). He encouraged people to battle by saying he would make the heavens fall down upon the heads of their enemies (Holt, 1954:117). This gives the impression that Nxele was a deluded, vindictive charlatan.

Ntsikana's brand of contextualization was more accommodating than that of Nxele. The statement that Ntsikana 'maintained cultural continuity by filling elements of the Xhosa tradition with Christian content' (Hodgson, 1997:72) sounds very much like Nxele's incorporation of Christian concepts into his teaching. It should be observed, however, that the Christian content in Ntsikana's case was much sounder and purer than that of Nxele. On a deeper and more significant level, the writer believes it would be fair to say that whereas Nxele incorporated Christian elements into a traditional religion, Ntsikana presented Christianity in traditional terms. The transactions were working in opposite directions. A more detailed account of Ntsikana's teaching is offered in support of this assessment.

4.4.2 Ntsikana's response in greater detail

Hodgson describes Ntsikana's contribution to Christianity, which she calls 'The beginnings of an Indigenous Theology', (1980:3).
According to Hodgson, '(t)he primary source material on Ntsikana is largely taken from the oral tradition of the Xhosa as set down by his disciples and descendants' (1980:12). Ntsikana was born in or around 1782. As a teen-age herd-boy he heard the preaching of Van der Kemp and possibly of James Read. Immediately after his conversion, Ntsikana 'incorporated the relation to “God” rather than the ancestors' (Hodgson, 1980:4). Note has already been taken (p.187) of Ntsikana's removal of the imbola. Whether he had a fully Christian understanding of God or whether his understanding was still dominated by the Xhosa tradition, is uncertain.

After Joseph Williams had established his mission station, Ntsikana visited it regularly for religious instruction. Hodgson notes that '(h)is more biblical teaching clearly dates from this period' (ibid). An analysis of this 'more biblical teaching' will indicate the extent to which his theological understanding was transferred from Qamata to uThixo and more especially to God-in-Christ.

It is significant that in his writing Ntsikana used the name uThixo. The differences between God understood as Qamata, God understood as uThixo and God understood as Jahweh were discussed in 4.2.1.2.

Ntsikana's message was recognized by the amaXhosa as distinctly Christian by comparison with African tradition. This is attested by the fact that “Old Soga” (father of Tiyo Soga) was sent by Ngqika to listen to Ntsikana's teaching. Old Soga himself 'almost became a Christian... and introduced family prayers at his kraal' (Holt, 1954:114). His chief wife, Nosutu and her eldest son, Festile, did accept the faith.' (Holt, ibid).

Joseph Williams died in 1818 at an early age, and Ntsikana became the recognised leader of the Kat River Christian community at that point (Holt, 1954:112). Ntsikana's greatest contribution to the contextualization of the Christian gospel was arguably the hymns he wrote. Hodgson records:

'Ntsikana's hymns were the first to be composed in the vernacular and provided an outlet for the expression of the new language of faith through music. In this way he was able to reach beyond the level of the intellect to gain the emotional level of
his people's consciousness, the level where cultural values are
expressed most meaningfully.’ (1980:5)

Holt (1954:113) has provided a translation of Ntsikana's famous hymn *Ulo Thixo Omkulu, ngosezulwini*. It
is reproduced here. Lines in square brackets are those variant translations by Callaway\(^{14}\) (Sanneh :170f),

The great God is He Who dwells in the Heavens
Thou in Thyself of Truth art the Buckler        [Thom: Thou art the only true shield]
Thou in Thyself of Truth art the Fortress
Thou in Thyself of Truth art the Refuge        [Thom: ...true bush (hiding place)] [Opland, 'thicket']
Thou in Thyself in the Highest that dwellest.

Life from above it was He Who created
Maker of stars was He and the Pleiades
Truth like a star serenely flashed on us     [Thom: A star fell from heaven and brought us the message]\(^{15}\)
                                          [Callaway: The shooting stars declare it unto us]
Blind as we were by the will of our Maker   [Callaway: The Maker of the blind, of thine own will didst thou
make us]
Truth like a trumpet sounded and summoned. [Callaway: The trumpet speaks – for us it calls.]

He the Pursuer that hunteth for souls
He the Uniter of tribes that are warring    [Thom: He gathers together the warring flocks]\(^{16}\) [Opland,
                                           'amalgamates flocks']

He the Trail-blazer that leads on before us [Opland, 'leader']
He the great robe which around us is folded. [Thom uses "Kaross" for "-Gub' inkul" the great robe]
[Callaway: Thou the great mantle that covers us] [Opland, 'blanket']
Thou Who hast hands in which there are wounds
Feet too, hast Thou in which Thou art wounded
Wherefore Thy blood does it stream like a fountain?
Twas for us men that Thy blood was outpoured
Priceless, O treasure! did we deserve it?   [Callaway: For this great price we call]
                                          [Opland 'have we called for it]
Home over yonder! dared we demand it.  [Thom: The people of Khonwana (Old Soga) did we call them?
(to follow Thee)?]                                [Callaway: For thine
own place we call.]

Ntsikana wanted to protect his flock from heathenism after his death, by expressing the wish that they would
'go to Buluneli at Gwali.' The reference is to Rev. John Brownlee, who had settled at Tyumie (Chumie) in

\(^{14}\) The Religious System of the Amazulu, London: Trubner, pp 63ff, 105
\(^{15}\) Thom conjectures that this is a reference to Van Der Kemp
\(^{16}\) Thom conjectures that this is a reference to Ndlambe and Ngqika
June 1820, 'not long before the death of Ntsikana' (Shepherd, 1940:22). Shepherd confirms the report concerning Ntsikana's wish for the children to be educated at Brownlee's mission (ibid). Gwali was an alternative name for Chumie (Shepherd, ibid). Holt confirms that Ntsikana's wish was granted, in that 'Brownlee was joined by all the followers of Ntsikana' (1976:21).

4.4.3 The contribution of Tiyo Soga

Donovan Williams tells the story of Tiyo Soga, and provides quotations from his journal and selected writings from newspapers and journals. Accounts are also given of some of his more significant speeches. He reports that

'Tiyo Soga lived in a periodically dangerous but constantly stimulating area. During the first half of the 19th century recurring frontier wars disrupted both traditional life as well as the life and work of Christian missionaries.' (1983: 1)

The following information is based on the record provided by Williams (ibid). Soga was born into Ngqika's tribe in 1829. Tiyo was educated at the Tyumie Mission under Rev. William Chalmers; and baptised in John Street Presbyterian Church Glasgow, Scotland in 1848. He was prepared for the ministry at the Glasgow Free Church Seminary and ordained in the John Street Church in 1858, having spent the years 1848 to 1851 back in the Eastern Cape. While in Scotland, he married a Scots bride and returned to the Eastern Cape finally to labour at Emgwali and Tutura.

One of his notable means of communication was the contribution he made from time to time to the Lovedale newspaper, *Iindaba*. [Sometimes the singular form, *Indaba*, is used.] His pen-name was *Unonjiba waseluhlangeni*, which is variously translated as 'dove of the nation' [Opland, 1998:237] and as 'an enthusiastic enquirer into cultural origins' (Williams, 1983:221). Soga wrote articles on such subjects as respect for traditional chiefs and the differences between converts [Christians] and traditionalists. At the same time, as Opland notes, Soga had high expectations of a nationalism that transcends ethnic divisions (1998:238).

Du Plessis reports that 'Soga translated Pilgrim's Progress into fluent and idiomatic Kafir [Xosa]'
His use of an idiomatic style is significant for his contextualization, because it suggests that he recognised Bunyan's *genre* as non-cardinal in itself and was prepared to translate his thought appropriately. Du Plessis also states that 'Tiyo's mother was a Christian.' (:363).

The breadth of Soga's vision is seen in the following passage which Hammond-Tooke has preserved from Soga's writings.

>'One of the grandest arguments for the adaptation of the Gospel to the spiritual wants of all men is, that in the savage and the untutored it produces the same blessed fruits - faith, love, comfort, joy, and peace, that it produces in the civilised and the learned.' (1955:83)

This breadth of vision was counter-balanced by a direct and uncompromising exercising of his Christian principles. This was noted in 4.2.2.3 above.

Like Ntsikana, Tiyo Soga has contributed to the contextualization of Christianity for and by the amaXhosa largely by means of the rich treasure of his hymnody. The following eucharistic hymn was translated by Rev. M. A. Stofile of the University of Fort Hare, (Williams 1983: 198).

>This body of yours, Jesus
Because of whom was it broken?
That holy blood
Because of whom was it spilled?

Oh Oh My Lord
Oh your lovingkindness
Will I ever manage
To love as I should?

Do I have praises?
Do I have renewal?
Where is rejoicing?
Do I have patience?

All that which is weaknesses
In this heart of mine
I direct it to you
Lord of my liberation.

Today I must testify to
The power of new life
Sustain me you, Spirit
In the path of truth.

There is a marked similarity between this and Ntsikana's Great Hymn. Soga's use of the term 'uYesu' in the first stanza is significant. The fact that the term “Nkosi yam” is used in the second stanza indicates that there was no dualism in his Christology.

This impression is confirmed in his hymn: Sinesipho esikhulu [We have a great gift] (Williams 1983:197). The Xhosa version used in the preparation of this thesis is: 1926, Namaculo LamaWesile aseSouthAfrica, (Cape Town: Methodist Publishing House). It is noticeable that in the second stanza when Soga describes the gift as precious, he uses the Zulu word singabile, which suggests that the Nguni languages were not as tightly compartmentalized into isiXhosa and isiZulu in respect of vocabulary as they are today. The third stanza proclaims that the gift is powerful. The fourth stanza proclaims: Eso sipho singuYesu [The gift is Jesus]. This represents Soga's affirmation that the Gospel is a Person (2.1.2.3) The fifth stanza brings Soga's conception of God and Christ together, in that he uses the terms uYehova, uThixo and uNyana waKhe [His Son] in close conjunction. This stands in sharp contrast to the theology of the African traditional religion which according to Maboea 'hold that the ancestors are the only mediators with God' (2002:11). It is not surprising that Soga should have a clear Western soteriology because, as has already been mentioned, his theological training took place under the Free Church of Scotland in a Scottish seminary. Ntsikana was also the product of Western missionaries, though not in an overseas institution.

4.4.4 Political activity in early Xhosa Christianity

Hodgson tells how, in 1909 the amaXhosa “canonized” Ntsikana in the establishment of the Saint Ntsikana Memorial Association [SNMA] (1997:86-87). Since Xhosa Christians of all denominations associate with this, the hypothesis made above on page 146, that 'differences based on doctrine are perceived by the amaXhosa as less significant than ethnic identity', has historical support. Hodgson says:

'A shift occurred from denominations inherited from the West to ethnicities defined by Africans, all within an essentially non-violent tradition of evolutionary change. SNMA office holders held executive posts simultaneously in successive national bodies – the South African Native Convention (1909) and the South African Native Congress (1912), which later became the African National
Congress. They saw Christianity as an integrating force in developing a supra-ethnic African nationalism. Ntsikana became a saint for all Africans.’ (ibid).

It is interesting to note that a form of *cujus regio ejus religio* seemed to be operating in the Eastern Cape at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, in that church groupings seemed to be characterised by ethnic identity according to their geographical location. When Mzimba seceded from the Free Church of Scotland in 1898, his following was 'principally Mfengu' (Hodgson, 1997:87). Rev. James Dwane, the son of a Ntinde ruler, established a Xhosa 'Order of Ethiopia' in 1900, and Ntsikana's great-grandson, Burnet Gaba (Ngqika's clan), founded the Ntsikana Memorial Church in 1911, (Hodgson, ibid).

These and other developments leading to the formation of African Initiated Churches had political overtones, not only in respect of the ethnicity of their leaders within the Xhosa structure, but also in the sense that they represented reaction to the attempts of white missionaries to retain ecclesiastical power in their own hands. The situation which the white missionaries sought to perpetuate reveals an important aspect of their conceptualization and contextualization of the gospel, namely that the gospel had to be presented within the Western structure, and implied that the Xhosa structure was not suitable.

Political activity was not restricted to the ecclesiastical domain. The failure of the British authorities from 1902 onwards to afford to black Africans the same rights as were granted to white Afrikaners was a setback for the missionaries. Black Christians felt that the missionaries [whom they came to perceive to be representatives of the oppressing power] had let them down. Sundkler describes, for example, the secession of Nehemiah Tile from the Wesleyan (Methodist) Church as follows:

'The cause of this important secession was not only opposition to European control but also a positive desire to adapt the message of the Church to the heritage of the Tembu tribe. As the Queen of England was the head of the English Church, so the Paramount Chief of the Tembu should be the *summus episcopus* of the new religious organization.' (1961:38)

Tile was related to a Tembu chief, and the motivation for his break with the Wesleyan (Methodist) mission in
1883 has been assessed as 'an effort to achieve political and religious liberation from colonial domination' (Hodgson, 1997:87). The desire to make Christianity more easily conceptualized by the Tembu in terms of their heritage is laudable, and the replacement of the British monarch with an African leader in an African context is a logical step; but recognizing a secular authority as head of the church is no more appropriate in Africa than it is in England, because it subordinates the unity of the Church to national or ethnic identity. On account, probably, of the fact that the African people of the period had not developed a sense of *national* identity, the church Tile formed was not a national church, but a tribal church. As Sundkler notes, Tile 'formed the “Tembu Church” in 1884, with Ngangelizwe, the Chief of the Tembu, as its visible head' (1961:38). The problems caused to the Church by having a political figure as its nominal head were compounded in this case by the fact that Rev Peter Hargreaves (Hagile) was once called upon to intervene when Ngangelizwe allegedly 'beat his wife nearly to death'. (Millard Jackson, 2008:36).

It is noteworthy that Mzimba's separatist church was similarly tribal. Sundkler notes that when Mzimba seceded, the Xhosa members of the Free Church of Scotland mission remained with Dr. Stewart at Lovedale (1961:43), thus subordinated tribal identity to the outward unity of the Church.

The stance of Tile and others reveals the contrary perception, namely, that if the gospel is to be meaningful to the amaXhosa, it must be presented within their structure, by their own theologians and religious leaders. With this latter sentiment, this thesis heartily concurs. The outward uniformity of the Church is not definitive for Christian unity as such. One needs to be aware, however, that Xhosa structures are dynamic rather than static. Political changes in this country in the present and the recent past have perforce produced changes in political structures. Xhosa thought-forms have undergone similar changes. The church needs to adapt its presentation [though not its essential message] to these changes, so as to produce a contextualization (or group of contextualizations) which will be meaningful to “the New South Africa”. This will be addressed in Chapters Seven and Eight.
CHAPTER FIVE

**APARTHEID IN A CONCEPTUALIZATION OF THE GOSPEL**

The second task of this thesis is to evaluate apartheid, its implications for the Afrikaner understanding and presentation of the gospel and its effects upon the amaXhosa (p.7).

5.1 Historical Overview

The official policy of *apartheid*, legally enforcing segregation and forbidding integration, was adopted in 1948, when the National Party came to power after the Second World War. Afrikaners who had been opposed to the war, and returned soldiers who found it difficult to obtain employment, looked to this predominantly Afrikaner party for a solution to their problems and to act in their interests.

However, Zolile Mbali saw the 'first steps' of *apartheid* in the dismantling of 'what few constitutional rights black people had' from 1936 onwards (1987:7). Many commentators are of the opinion that white people have been oppressing black people ever since the Dutch settlers arrived in 1652.

After 1948, the National Party government proceeded systematically to deprive all so-called “non-white” groups [Black and so-called 'Coloured' South Africans, together with the descendants of Indian and Malay settlers], of parliamentary representation by candidates of their own ethnic groups. They were permitted to elect white candidates to represent them, but eventually even this was taken away. Influx control and Pass Laws imposed on people of these groups were burdensome and demeaning. In 1960, a peaceful protest against the Pass Laws was savagely suppressed at Sharpeville, resulting in the loss of the lives of sixty-eight women and children (Elphick and Davenport, 1997:148).

According to David Bosch, the Dutch Reformed Church (D.R.C.) gave ecclesiastical support to the emerging policy when, in 1951, the Church's Natal Synod 'resolved to establish a separate Church for Indians' (1983:31ff).

Sharpeville produced what could be described as a “wake-up call”, in that it demonstrated that the implementation of *apartheid* had become brutal in the extreme, and called forth firm denunciation by the
Christian community. It was asserted that ethnic identity was not an appropriate criterion for the discrimination practised in *apartheid* legislation. Archbishop de Blank [Anglican] felt so deeply about the situation, and in particular what he perceived to be the stance of the Afrikaans churches, that he wrote a strongly-worded letter to the World Council of Churches (W.C.C.) threatening to withdraw from the world body if the D.R.C. were not expelled (de Gruchy, 1979:63).

Takatso Mofokeng, whose work is discussed in 5.3.2, testifies to the grim realities of the darkest days of *apartheid*.

>'Large-scale indiscriminate detentions of black leaders and activists of all ages; the tear-gassing of people in churches and at funeral services and the brutal shootings of unarmed school children provide irrefutable concrete evidence of ... desperation and intransigence. The entire black South Africa has been forced to retreat to a low level of resistance because of increasing and deepening repression and harassment.' (1990:37)

In December 1960, a W.C.C.-sponsored consultation was held at Cottesloe. Mbali reports that the vast majority of participants at this consultation were white, and that the prevailing attitude seemed to be paternalistic (1987:42-43). What is perhaps significant is that the D.R.C. was represented at the consultation, although it was the last time that that denomination would appear at such a gathering.

Cottesloe proved in to be a critical event for the D.R.C. Its delegates had agreed to the joint statement of the consultation, but this was repudiated by their synods and the D.R.C. withdrew from the W.C.C.

This was a turning point for Ds Beyers Naude. He and Prof. Albert Geyser became founder-members of the anti-*apartheid* Christian Institute in 1963. Geyser, a minister of the *Hervormde Kerk* was subjected to a heresy trial, and Naude was required to resign from the D.R.C. in order to maintain his connection with the Christian Institute. The rift had finally come, and the white D.R.C. together with her two white sister-churches (the *Hervormde Kerk* and the *Gereformeerde Kerk*) became the custodians, amongst white Christians of the pro-*apartheid* conceptualization of what they considered Christianity.

The 'white' D.R.C. [as distinct from its African and “coloured” sister-churches] made its position quite clear
when the General Synod of 1974 stated:

>'The existence of separate Dutch Reformed Church affiliations
for the various population groups is recognized as being in
accordance with the plurality of church affiliations described
in the Bible.' (Landman, 1975:82; Bosch, 1983:32-33).

The Soweto riots in the same year constituted a second “wake-up call”, the first having been Sharpeville (above, p.226f). In the D.R.C., this led to a revisiting of the Landman report which resulted in a revised edition under the title ‘Church and State’ in 1986. In pro-apartheid reaction to this revision, several D.R.C ministers seceded to form the Afrikaans Protestante Kerk, and others formed a pressure group within the D.R.C against the 1986 document.

5.2 General Assessment of Apartheid
(i) Some Afrikaner theologians attempted to justify apartheid on scriptural grounds, and many Christians, [English-speaking and Afrikaans-speaking] supported this position. Investigation would probably reveal, however, that in most of these cases, the pro-apartheid stance was initiated by politicians and slavishly followed by the theologians.

(ii) Some theologians, mostly English-speaking, but with the notable inclusion of Afrikaners such as Beyers Naude, opposed and attempted to do battle with apartheid. Their opposition was generally based on broad theological principles, (image of God, love, compassion, justice etc), rather than on specific texts of Scripture. Douglas Bax, who answered the apartheid theologians on the basis of the Scriptures they quoted, (De Gruchy, J. and Villa-Vicencio, C.(Eds), 1983), is a notable exception. These theologians had a relatively small following among the rank-and-file of their mainly English-speaking churches.

(iii) The English-speaking churches experienced a fairly strong white backlash against this anti-apartheid stance. In many cases the backlash attitude was fueled by an aversion to black people and a fear of associating with them socially. Those who chose to adopt this attitude attempted to rationalize the underlying aversion, on the pretext that apartheid was purely political.
(iv) The majority of white people accepted apartheid as their way of life without a great deal of thought. This unthinking attitude was also a negative factor in the black conceptualization of Christianity, because many black people assumed that all white people were Christians. Christians were thus seen as those who did not care about their fellow human beings or about the poverty, deprivation and pain those fellow human beings were experiencing.

(v) Many black theologians reacted radically to their own and their fellow blacks' daily experiences of apartheid. Others reacted in a more moderate way. Black theology was produced in various degrees of radicality, and these have to a large extent moulded the theology of South Africa into the twenty-first century. The various black stances will be examined in section 5.3.

(vi) Sadly, many people of colour have, because of their apartheid experiences, rejected the Christianity they formerly espoused. One of the tasks of contemporary Christianity in South Africa, including the Eastern Cape, is to proclaim the gospel in such a way as to co-operate with the Holy Spirit in bringing them back to faith in Christ.

Apartheid cannot be classified as a cultural element in any contextualization of the gospel, because it cannot exist alongside any competing ideology. Cultural differences per se can be recognized and respected if they are relativized, [for example, Maoz's multicultural church, below, 9.1.1]; but it is logically impossible for one racial group in the Christian Church to practise apartheid and another group to be racially inclusive. In multicultural churches, members need to justify their ideological convictions in the light of the gospel. This thesis submits that in the case of apartheid this cannot be done. It is not appropriate to recognize apartheid as 'secondary to the gospel', since it is totally contrary to it.

Apartheid was an ideology which, in attempts to justify it theologically, produced in its proponents a faulty conceptualization of the gospel and a faulty implied contextualization. It cannot be accommodated in or assimilated into the Christian gospel and qualifies for further consideration in this thesis only in respect of the legacy which it has brought to Christianity in the present and the effects which may still be experienced
5.3 Xhosa and other black African responses.

The nature of apartheid made it inevitable that the battlefield on which the culture war between the West and Africa, which started with Missionary/Colonialist irruption, should extend from the “theological” into the “ideological” arena. In urban areas particularly, it is no longer a question of God and the ancestral spirits, as much as it is a question of capitalism and socialism. These political/ideological factors are seen as contexts in which Christianity - or what is reckoned to be Christianity - is expressed. Although many of the comments recorded in this prologue are couched in theological language, they address what is basically a socio-political experience.

5.3.1 Simon Maimela

Simon Maimela describes the ideological/theological basis which gave rise to this practical situation. He refers to apartheid as an “anthropological heresy” (1983:48ff). He outlines ‘(t)he theory of man in white theology’ and declares it to be ‘thoroughly biblical and positive’ (:49). He proceeds to show that in practice, white anthropology has not conformed to this theology. He exclaims:

> one is startled to discover that at its core the white Christian concept of the human self is not informed and shaped by biblical principles, but by principles that are decidedly heathen and unchristian, ... the white Christian's view of the human self portrays man as a creature who is dominated by self-centred social drives, seeking to acquire as much wealth, power and prestige as he can for himself or his group or class, and caring for no others except as they are necessary tools for his personal gratification.’ (:51).

These are sweeping statements. Maimela is describing the apartheid experience. The quoted passage is a completely just and fair reflection of the attitude of white officialdom throughout the period of white hegemony, being most obvious in the apartheid era, when ordinary white people were placed by law in a position some would not have chosen for themselves or their black compatriots. It needs to be pointed out, however, that in the lives of many of the nineteenth century missionaries, and even of a few ordinary white
Christians of more recent times, the selfishness which Maimela has detected in the 'white Christian concept' was not evident. Missionaries and ordinary settlers endured hardship in many forms, even at the hands of British colonial officials. On the other hand, it must also be conceded that because the majority of white people failed to speak out, and to use the ballot-box against apartheid, [which they alone could], they share the guilt.

The significance of Maimela's observation for this thesis is that the 'impact of the Western conceptualization of the Christian gospel on its communication in a non-Western environment', needs to be assessed not only in terms of what Christians say, but more particularly of what they do.

Maimela makes a valuable positive contribution to address the problems of the apartheid situation which he experienced. In 1987, he defined the task of theology in the South Africa of his experience as, 'a total system which negates by (sic. “my”?) being as a person, a system that threatens my life and the life of all people of colour.' (1987:144). He says that 'the task of theology should be the promotion of the process of individual and social transformation.' (:145). It should also include the 'relativization of all absolutes which enslave the people of God.' (:146). He draws the implication that apartheid should not be regarded as 'an inviolable creature of God nor something to which South Africans are pre-determined by fate or providence to succumb,' (:148). Another task of theology in Maimela's thinking is to assist fellow human beings in 'our primary responsibility to construct, nurture and change social structures so that they might serve human needs better and better.' (:149). Maimela concludes by asserting that '(t)he task of theology in South Africa today should be the construction of a picture of a humane world.....which will mobilize people to action and make them creative agents in the repudiation of things as they are' (:152).

5.3.2 Takatso Mofokeng

Mofokeng declares quite strongly that Black theology cannot be linked with European theologies, as he claims white theologians have attempted to do, (1990:39). He finds common cause with James Cone, who undertook a parallel struggle against Euro-American theology (ibid). Mofokeng says that some black
Theologians must share the blame for allowing the link to be made, because:

"They did not make the distinction between their Theology and others sufficiently clear. They also continued to use the dominant theological categories which are household categories in European Theology, without explaining the difference that emerges when the same categories are used in their Theology. Neither did they break epistemologically with European Theology". (ibid).

The position of the black theologians appears to be that Scripture is to be conceptualized within the concrete situations of the (receptor) culture. This is basically a hermeneutical issue.

Mofokeng's concern with other political issues, is clearly discernible in the following extract from his paper:

'Black theologians recognized that racism is not the sole problem facing blacks and that capitalism posed a serious problem and that it has to be addressed theologically, combated socially as well as politically and eradicated simultaneously with racism.' (1990:41)

This is basically a political statement which anyone is entitled to make in his/her private capacity; but which seems to be inappropriately prescriptive from the pen of a theologian writing a theological paper. According to Osborne's criteria, which this thesis has adopted, if capitalism is 'to be addressed theologically', it becomes necessary to show that capitalism per se has a status with regard to scripturality [specifically, whether it is anti-scriptural]; or at least that in the unique situation of apartheid capitalism was indispensable to the oppressor for the perpetration of deeds which clearly are anti-scriptural.

Bonganjalo Goba's mature reaction to the tendency Mofokeng exemplifies at this point is interesting.

'Unfortunately, there is a tendency amongst some of our young black radicals to underestimate this problem [racism] by emphasizing the problem of class' (1984:97, emphasis MJH)

Goba concedes that 'this is a topic that requires an in-depth analysis of its own and all the issues that are involved' (ibid).

Mofokeng refers to the Marxist view that religion is 'a negative factor in the life of oppressed peoples, that is, as an ideological instrument that is used by the dominant classes against the dominated' (1990:41). His reply is highly significant.

'Oppressed black people continuously remould religious ideas which are imposed upon them and produce a religion that is capable of functioning as a defensive as well as combative ideological weapon' (ibid).
It is recognized that the circumstances pertaining when Mofokeng wrote this paper would give a degree of justification to the language he used. The term 'ideological weapon' would not be as appropriate in post-apartheid South Africa as it was when Mofokeng wrote. His statement nevertheless functions as an exceptionally apposite definition of the ideal conceptualization, in the sense that the task of conceptualization is precisely to 'remould religious ideas which are imposed', and 'produce a religion that is capable of functioning' in the receptor's context. When this general principle is applied specifically to Christianity, it expresses the motivation of this thesis. The Western contextualization can rightly be described as 'religious ideas which are imposed' and the ideal is to 'produce a [Christian conceptualization] that is capable of functioning' in the Xhosa context. It would be important to ensure that such a conceptualization did not contain any political or ideological prescriptions.

5.3.3 Itumeleng Mosala

According to West, Mosala limits the admissible use of the Bible in African hermeneutics in terms of what he perceives its ideological starting point to be (2001:92). West represents Mosala as saying that because the Bible was written by the ruling class, for the ruling class, it makes very little reference to the plight of the poor (ibid). The Bible must therefore be read in Africa not for what it says, but bearing in mind what it allegedly does not say.

In reply, this thesis would point to the message of the book of Amos (p.64). It needs further to be pointed out that by His incarnation, the eternal Son of God, in becoming human, entered a specific culture. By His incarnation, the God-man lived in a concrete situation, and made statements that were clearly political, (e.g. Mt. 21:22) and ideological (e.g. Mt. 19:21; Lk. 4:18). His post-ascension self-revelation through the Holy Spirit addresses all concrete situations in ways appropriate to them, within the same principles. The nature of the written Word and the incarnate Word are seen to be parallel in this respect.

Since the eternal Son of God is for all, it follows that God is not indifferent to the cry of the poor. However, God does not become aligned with any particular political persuasion or ideology per se. Even in human history, in the person of Jesus of Nazareth God did not do that.
The christological issue also emerges in connection with the funeral service of Black Consciousness leader, Steve Biko, who died while in the custody of the South Africa police on account of his opposition to apartheid. M. Gideon Khabela reports that in approving Desmond Tutu's setting of the death of Biko in the context of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, Mosala criticizes Tutu for failing 'to distinguish between all the “Jesuses” of the New Testament' (1997:98). Khabela interprets Mosala as claiming that the Lukan story of Jesus is ideologically constituted within the discursive practice of racial discrimination and domination of one race by another' (ibid). The reference is to the Roman occupation of Palestine and to the fact that Luke does not record any radical sayings of Jesus condemning the situation. Mosala evinces a Bultmannian approach to Scripture which tends to relativize its truth and validity by making it contingent upon the historical situation of the human writer by whom, or the church tradition from which the text was written.

This treatment of the sayings of Jesus has serious implications for christology in that one is faced with either a denial of the hypostatic union within the Person of Christ or a criticism of God as siding with oppressors, or at the very least failing to condemn oppression.

Mosala claims that the hermeneut needs to “get underneath the biblical text” (2001:93) in order to reach the struggles of the oppressed which are implied rather than actually described and addressed.

Reference has already been made (p. 213) to Mofokeng's account of the realities of the apartheid situation. This is significant in view of the fact that he aligns himself with Goba, who asserts that 'black theological reflection as a communal praxis cannot be separated from the ongoing commitment to political change in South Africa' (1980:25ff) and Mosala, who asserts that 'black Theology has to be a theoretical weapon in the hands of the exploited black masses' (1986:175ff). Mosala elaborates his position by saying that

> the black experience of oppression and exploitation provides the epistemological lens through which to perceive the God of the Bible as the God of liberation. ... Scripture, in its status as the Word of God "establishes the limits to white people’s use of Jesus Christ as a confirmation of black oppression"' (1989:15)

17The quotation within this passage is from James Cone (1975, *God of the Oppressed*, New York: Seabury Press, p. 8).
Mosala's socialist stance is clarified when he identifies Goba, Buthelezi and Tutu as theologians who regarded the whole black community as the acting subject in the struggle for liberation, whereas Mofokeng, Tlhagale and [by implication], Mosala, himself identify the acting subject as black workers (1989:40 – emphasis MJH).

Mosala's account of the development of black theology might be perceived from the Western dualistic viewpoint to be an inappropriate transition from “religion” via “ethnicity” to “politics”.

He explains that

'(t)o speak of a people's religion is to speak of their history and to speak of their history is to speak of their culture. African traditional religions reflect the point at which the historical development of the Africans was arrested and halted.' (:98)

The writer understands this to mean that the development of African history 'was arrested and halted' by the destructive effect of the missionary irrruption on the traditional religion. In terms of the title of this thesis, Mosala's claim would be that 'the impact of the Western conceptualization' was that it produced a communication of the Christian gospel which robbed black Africans not only of their traditional religion but also of their historical development. This impression tends to be confirmed when Mosala goes on to reveal a symbiotic relationship between theology, culture and politics.

'A Black Theology of liberation must draw its cultural hermeneutics of struggle from a critical reappropriation of black culture just as an African Theology must arm itself with the political hermeneutics that arise from the contemporary struggles of black people under apartheid capitalism.' (:99)

Nyamiti, who is not a South African, issues a warning which is appropriate to the discourse at this point:

'African liberation christologists should shun reductionism - a vice shared by many liberation theologians. What is required is integral liberation, with particular stress on liberation from sin as the root cause of all oppression.' (1994:73)

At the risk of over-simplification, the confrontational position of Maimela, Mofokeng, and Mosala, following James Cone, could be reckoned to be [in principle] comparable with that of Nxele, (4.4.1), and that the more moderate approach of Sigqibo Dwane (7.2.1.1), Manas Buthelezi (7.2.1.2), Allan Boesak (7.2.1.3)
and Peter Mtuze (7.2.1.4) could be compared with Ntsikana's approach (4.4.1). The point of the comparison would be that Maimela and like-minded theologians tend to incorporate Christian elements into their ideology just as Nxele incorporated Christian elements into his traditional religion. The opposite approach – bringing one's ideological questions to the Scriptures – would seem to be sounder. This would resonate with Ntsikana's practice of presenting the Christian gospel and in African cultural terms, which the writer sees as Dwane's starting point and that of those who share his stance. In all cases, elements concerning which Scripture does not prescribe should be recognized as secondary to the gospel.

5.3.4 Evangelical Response
The reactive ideological stance of the theologians reviewed above is understood and respected; but is to the credit of many black South African Christians in the apartheid era that they were able to maintain and develop a more positive faith in spite of oppression and hardship [caused to them by a regime which professed to be Christian]. They refused to recognize Christianity as their enemy or Marxism as their indispensable ally.

Anti-apartheid sentiment is generally and typically associated with liberal theologians. Evangelicals are perceived to be conservative and anxious to avoid “contamination” from involvement in politics. Many Black conservative Christians were considered, both by the proponents of apartheid and its opponents, as supporting the regime. The document “Evangelical Witness in South Africa” is a report of meetings of the “Concerned Evangelicals” held between September 1985 and June 1986, and constitutes a position paper compiled by the group as an outcome of these meetings. It is included in this section because many of the participants were black. No editor is mentioned and the preface is anonymous. It gives a painfully vivid account of events which took place near the venue of the meetings at the time they were in progress.

\footnote{Whilst this group of concerned evangelicals was meeting in one of the Churches in Orlando, Soweto, the security forces stormed into the school next to the Church and kids were seen breaking window-panes and escaping through windows. After that the security forces attacked the second school some two hundred metres from where the Church was. Some children were arrested there. The group felt helpless and could not do much}
about the brutal acts of the security forces. They were heavily armed and entitled to do whatever without question from anybody let alone the courts on the basis of the emergency regulations.’ (1986:1)

The preface goes on to ask what evangelical Christians were supposed to do when the security forces were taking such extreme measures on the one hand, and the African National Congress (ANC) was calling for a people's war on the other (: 1). It claimed that their theology as evangelicals 'was inadequate to address the crisis [they were] facing' (: 2).

The document proceeds to offer a critique of evangelicalism and conservatism (:7ff). It charges evangelicals with lack of social concern, and with condoning oppression on the grounds that opposing it would amount to 'occupying oneself with earthly things” (: 7). The point is rightly made that such a view “differs radically with (sic) the approach of Christ and ... [is] actually closer to the Essenes...' 

This attitude has a dualistic basis which is Greek rather than Judaeo-Christian. It is an instance of the way in which the Western contextualization was formed in the Hellenistic culture, (3.1.2 and 3.1.3). The document outlines the way in which this dualism operated in the apartheid era.

'What this dualism has done is that one can live a pietistic “spiritual” life and still continue to oppress, exploit and dehumanize people. And those who are victims of this oppression, exploitation and dehumanization are prohibited from complaining or resisting it because this would amount to worrying about material things that have nothing to do with one's spirituality. Actually trying to engage in a struggle to get rid of this oppression is seen as having "fallen” from grace. ’ (:9)

After enunciating the principle that 'reconciliation goes hand in hand with repentance' (:13), the document goes on to list the sins of whites: 'racism', 'undermining other people as if they were not made in the very image of God', 'discriminating against people', suppressing them to stop them from exhausting their potential', 'dispossessing people of their land', 'accumulation of riches at the expense of vulnerable humans by so doing impoverishing them', 'classism and sexism' (:13).

The document also lists the sins of blacks: 'complacence and permissiveness in the face of sin that reduced
The image of God in them to nothingness', 'failure to minister to white South Africans to repent from their sin of racism', 'the sin of bottling up with anger and bitterness without opening up to be used by God', 'the sin of fear', (:13). Quite naturally, the comment is that '(i)t is clear that reconciliation will not happen without sacrifice and pain', (ibid).

The document takes the issues of mission theology into the mid-twentieth century in its critique of the motives for preaching the gospel in the apartheid era. Its claims would appear to be rather sweeping generalizations. 'Many evangelical Churches and evangelistic groups, especially those organized by whites........ preach the gospel to blacks to make them submissive to the oppressive apartheid system' (:30 italics original). Defence against communism and terrorism are also cited as pretexts for preaching the gospel. The question as to whether these are pretexts or genuine needs is an open one.

Here an interesting aspect of the development of the issue of culture arises. The document claims that the Churches and groups mentioned in the previous paragraph 'are convinced that the Western capitalist culture is a Christian culture and that all forms of socialism which they call communism are atheistic and therefore anti-Christian,' (: 31). The document points to the irony in this, when it applies to capitalism the Western critique of socialism.

> 'For us who are brutalized by white Christians in South Africa, with the western tradition of oppression and exploitation, for us who are oppressed and exploited by white Christians who are supported by the so-called Christian West ... for us this motive can only be seen to be coming from the devil.' '(:31).

At this point a categorical shift to ideology becomes quite clear, in the sense that ideological phenomena involved in the interaction between South Africa and the West are applied to the debate under religious aspects. The West is perceived to count socialism as anti-Christian. [Donald Soper, a prominent Christian socialist and Methodist minister in England in the mid-twentieth century, was a notable exception]. Africa sees apartheid [linked to Capitalism] and all other Western manifestations of brutality, greed and oppression as demonic.
Two comments need to be made regarding these perceptions. Firstly, Westerners react to and condemn ideological labels [socialism and communism] without providing substantial evidence to justify the condemnation except the charge of atheism. Secondly, the “Concerned Evangelicals” appear to have concrete evidence on which to base their categorization of Western activity as 'demonic'. On the principle that deeds speak louder than words, the contextualization of Christianity which apartheid implies is to be rejected, deeply regretted and sincerely repented of.
CHAPTER SIX

THE WESTERN CONTEXTUALIZATION IN THE TWENTIETH AND TWENTY-FIRST CENTURIES

This thesis has so far surveyed the contextualization presented by the nineteenth century missionaries to the Eastern Cape and attempted to assess the Xhosa response. Apartheid as an implied conceptualization of the gospel has also been outlined and examined.

Although developments in the twentieth century did not influence the missionary presentation, they are nevertheless an important part of this thesis because they form a significant contribution to the on-going contextualization of Christianity, in the interactive process which characterises contemporary South Africa. Since the contemporary Western contextualization is one of the 'contemporary theological stances' referred to in the third task (p. 8), consideration must be given to a number of twentieth century movements and schools of thought.

The drastic changes in theological position and the uncertainty in respect of the content of the gospel which emerged in the course of the twentieth century have served to obfuscate the gospel for congregants, theological students [and theologians!] still further.

The main elements of the twentieth century Western conceptualization will be outlined in Chapter Six, and those of the contemporary African conceptualization in Chapter Seven. The two conceptualizations will be brought into the dialogue of this thesis in Chapter Eight, when the requirements of a contemporary contextualization will be considered.

In defence of the incorporation of the Western material into a thesis dealing with South Africa, it is pointed out that a contemporary Western theological conceptualization is as much a part of the 'Western conceptualization' referred to in the thesis title as were the conceptualizations of any earlier period of history, because '(the Christian gospel's) communication... with special reference to the amaXhosa' is an ongoing process. While the principle that Xhosa contextualizations must be done by Xhosa theologians is accepted, it
is nevertheless true that the nature of life in the “global village” is such that Western thought will still influence them and vice versa. Theological thought from non-Western countries outside Africa has not been included, because the scope of this thesis specifies 'the Western conceptualization'.

6.1 Modernist Philosophical Theology

Schaeffer (1968:passim) critiques the intellectual and cultural climate of what was then the contemporary West. He traces what he calls a line of despair through Philosophy, Art, Music and General Culture. By "despair" Schaeffer means the recognition that 'a rational unified answer to knowledge and life' (: 28) could not be found.

While recognizing that art and music are effective aids in communicating the gospel, the writer will discuss only the philosophical basis of the “new theology” because this is the main focus of contextualization as referred to in the thesis title. This new theology also falls in the despair of being unable to find a unified world-view, having effectively rejected the Biblical paradigm.

Schaeffer (:20ff) shows how Hegel (1770-1831) altered the direction of philosophical thought by postulating a dialectic in which synthesis rather than simply antithesis [cause and effect] is the key to the advancement of knowledge. Kierkegaard (1813-55) found that syntheses could not be arrived at by reason, but required a “leap of faith”. In this way, the door was opened into despair.

Schaeffer proceeds (:22ff) to show how various existentialist philosophers [notably Jaspers, Sartre, Camus and Heidegger] emphasized the failure of reason and the impossibility of an objective unified field of knowledge. In this they were working out the implications of Kierkegaard's principle of “truth in subjectivity”, and saying that as such, truth is not communicable.

The main philosophical movements in this area of discourse are all forms of reductionism. Secularism denies or at least disregards anything that might be above the “grace-nature” line. Demythologization seeks to empty the “grace” area by removing all the mythological elements. Existentialism serves to link
secularism and demythologization, being a characteristic which they both share. Together, this reductionist theology/philosophy has paved the way for a postmodern theological understanding.

John Caputo (2001:42ff) traces the diachronic change in meaning of the terms “religious” and “secular”. Pre-modern [mediaeval] Christians understood “religious” to describe one's total attitude of devotion towards God and God's world; and no sphere labelled “religion”, separate from everything modernity came to know as “secular” existed, (:43). In Schaeffer's terms, there was no line of demarcation between nature and grace. This resonates strongly with African traditional theology. “Religion” came to refer to a body of doctrine only when the process of secularization began in modern times. “True” religion was distinguished from “false” religion. Kant (1724-1804) wanted to derive all statements about God from pure reason rather than from spiritual experience. The Enlightenment academic came to see himself as 'a sovereign, self-possessed, dispassionate “thinking thing” ' (Caputo, :42). as distinct from the “sinful, self-questioning, passionate, prayerful, weepy being” of the Augustinian culture (Caputo, ibid). Cochrane (1957:449f) presents a similar picture of Augustine's concept of fallen human weakness. The struggle between Copernicus (1473-1534) and the pre-modern Church is an example of the emergence of modern thinking, as a Renaissance expression of confidence in humanity and its ability to discover the realities of nature in place of a blind acceptance of a world-view of earlier times, even though it is recorded in biblical history.

Van Buren's secularist understanding of miracle is displayed in his statements concerning the resurrection.

'As historians ... we would prefer not to speak of the Easter event as a “fact” at all ... We can say something about the situation before Easter, and we can say other things about the consequences of the Easter event, but the resurrection does not lend itself to being spoken of as a “fact”, for it cannot be described.' (1963:132-133)

Against this, it needs to be pointed out that Van Buren is prepared to refer to Easter as an 'event', and to speak of its 'consequences'. What is the status of an “event” which can produce consequences for a factual situation without being itself factual? Can there be such an entity as a “non-factual event”?
Van Buren's secular outlook precludes him from recognising anything in the nature of Jesus which could not have been found in an ordinary, if outstanding, human being. In describing the accounts of the miracles of Jesus as mythological, he effectively removes them from the realm of fact. As he himself puts it: 'Having spoken of him as an exceptionally liberated individual, we should point out that we might well say this of other men' (1963:30).

It will be difficult for a traditional Xhosa to understand or accept secularism. Her/his world-view is diametrically opposed to it. Secularism says, in effect, that there is no “sacred” reality; in fact, no reality at all outside the secular realm: the traditional Xhosa says there is no realm which is purely secular since there is no demarcation line between sacred and secular. Christian Xhosas together with their Western counterparts, would agree with traditional Xhosas that every aspect of life is sacred, though understanding this principle in terms of eternal/temporal [cognate with grace/nature] rather than sacred/secular. While being aware of a strong inter-relationship between the eternal and the temporal, Christians recognize a distinction (1 Cor. 13:12; 2 Cor. 4:18). Secularism challenges cardinal elements in the gospel, such as the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. In the process of constructing a genuine Christian conceptualization, this stance needs to be identified and addressed.

The gospel records of the resurrection do not seem to differ in any way from the records of other historical events in the New Testament. The Gospel writers offer descriptions of the resurrection, and make it clear that they regarded it as a “fact” of the same kind as the crucifixion. It is the write's conviction that the resurrection should be categorized as an historical event with mythological/eschatological qualities, and that it should be presented as such in all contextualizations of the gospel.

Existentialism could arguably be regarded as the precursor of postmodernism in that it is a reaction against the tendency of modernist philosophers and historians to objectify truth. In the study of history, for example, Enlightenment philosophers would hold that historical data has authority within itself [in proportion to its credibility] by virtue of being factual. Existentialists would counter this by contending that the value of an historical fact is not locked up in the fact itself, but resides in the effect, if any, which that fact has upon one's
Van Buren stresses the freedom which characterized the life of Jesus. He describes this freedom as follows:

'He followed the religious rites and obligations of his people, but he also felt free to disregard them. In miracle stories he is even presented mythologically as being free from the limitations of natural forces. He was called rabbi, teacher, but his teaching broke down the limitations of this title...' (1963:126-7)

This freedom comes close to the existentialist concept of “authentic existence”, thus implying that slavish acceptance of the “rites and obligations” of one's culture would amount to inauthentic existence. This is typical of the link between Van Buren and Bultmann. In terms of this thesis, the point needs to be made that if the demands and expectations of one's own culture militate against authentic existence how much more would this be the case in respect of an imposed foreign culture!

This becomes a problem for traditional Xhosas who become Christians, and for nominal Christian Xhosas seeking an appropriate authenticity. It would also concern westernized secular Xhosas who are assailed by the competing claims of Africa and Europe, even if not specifically on the grounds of the Christian religion. Clearly, the total acceptance of the Western enculturation of Christianity by Xhosa believers has already amounted to inauthentic existence. This would be a short-form description of the 'impact of the Western conceptualization...' as referred to in the thesis title. The question then becomes: What is the content of an authentic Xhosa Christian conceptualization and resultant contextualization?

Having concluded that a partial answer to this question might be “An authentic Xhosa Christian will be
different from an authentic Western Christian”, a new direction should be taken by asking: In what ways does an authentic Xhosa Christian differ from an authentic traditional Xhosa?

As an approach to the answer, authentic existence could be said to result from a genuine relation between a Xhosa believer and the Lord Jesus Christ, his conceptualization of the gospel, all the cultural elements having been recognized and classified as secondary in it, but not excluded. To follow the Xhosa culture slavishly, failing to recognize the cultural elements as such, would be no more authentic than slavishly following the Western culture as was expected in the nineteenth century.

Another approach might be to turn from the theoretical consideration of theological and philosophical principles to practical issues of personal character, remembering that the Gospel is “a Person”, or a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ which moulds character (pp. 47ff). Van Buren points out that Jesus’ freedom was not only freedom from the limitations of inauthentic existence; but freedom possessing a positive character, in terms of which he ‘was free to be compassionate for his neighbor (sic), whoever that neighbor might be, without regard to himself’ (:127). Africans will recognize this as Ubuntu.

Van Buren's method is to apply linguistic analysis to the language of faith. In this way, theological statements take on an existential / anthropological meaning. This leads directly to Bultmann.

Bultmann is a little more explicit than Van Buren in his treatment of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. He claims that '(c)ross and resurrection form a single, indivisible cosmic event which brings judgment to the world and opens up for men the possibility of authentic life' (1953:36-39). He uses the term “authentic life” in a way slightly different from Van Buren's “authentic existence”. In Bultmann, “authentic life” appears to be the existentialist equivalent of “eternal life” in Western Christian theology. Bultmann argues against the validity of historical knowledge as a criterion for faith. He sets out his argument in the following words:

'It would be wrong of us at this point to raise again the problem of how this preaching arose historically, as though that could vindicate its truth.
That would be to tie our faith in the word of God to the results
of historical research. ... Myth should be interpreted not cosmologically,
but anthropologically, or better still, existentially’ (1953:26)

This is another point at which the missionary reaction to Xhosa traditional religion is to be interrogated. The missionaries rejected Xhosa mythology precisely because they approached it cosmologically, judging it as though it purported to be factual and historical.

Although Bultmann's process of demythologization might help traditional Xhosas to understand their own mythology, the blurring of sacred and secular would extend for them to a blurring of myth and history. One of the tasks of contemporary Xhosa Christian theology is to discover how Xhosa mythology can engage with the Christian gospel in its “mythical” [existential / formative] aspect without compromising Christianity's factual and historical claims. If such a process is possible, it would consist of admitting Xhosa mythological elements into a Xhosa conception of Christianity, recognizing them as non-cardinal. These elements would be the counterparts of the non-cardinal elements admitted to the Western conceptualization in the course of its development (4.1.1.3) The writer, however, would not presume to speculate as to the outcome.

6.2 Charismatic Movement and Neo-Pentecostalism

It is customary to date the re-appearance of spiritual manifestations, especially glossolalia, to what J.T. Nichol refers to as '(t)he renowned Azusa Street revival' of 1906 in Los Angeles (1971:32). However, as Nichol records the re-appearance of the phenomenon of tongue-speaking was evidenced in Glasgow as early as 1830 and possibly even before (:22ff).

Nichol quotes Donald Gee, a British Pentecostalist, to the effect that 'Assemblies of God are entirely one with every true evangelical section of the Christian Church' (:3-4). The Statement of Faith drawn up in 1948 by the Pentecostal Fellowship of North America was taken from the 1943 Statement of Faith of the National Association of Evangelicals, the only addition being a reference to glossolalia as 'the initial evidence' of baptism in the Holy Spirit. (Nichol, :4). The phenomenon of glossolalia distinguishes Pentecostalist evangelicals from other evangelicals in South Africa as well as in Britain.
Kevin Roy relates how spiritual revival came to Boer prisoners of war in camps in India after the Anglo-Boer War in 1902 (2000:118ff). He asserts that one of the results of this was a facilitation of the process of reconstruction after the war, and another was ‘an openmess to new movements of Christian spirituality entering South Africa from the U.S.A.’ (:119). From the viewpoint of this thesis, the arrival in Africa of the Pentecostal message from Azusa Street, Los Angeles is regarded as an extension of the irruption of Western Christianity in the nineteenth century, and therefore a component of the Western contextualization. This extension is of great significance for this thesis on account of the question whether glossolalia is a cardinal element in the Christian contextualization. An exuberant form of worship can easily be recognized as cultural; but the practice of speaking in tongues would appear to be doctrinal in nature, especially when it is claimed to be ‘the initial evidence’ of baptism in the Holy Spirit. The writer finds no scriptural justification for this claim, and considers it, on those grounds, to be a non-cardinal issue. It would therefore be a situation of the type referred to on page 61 above, one group regarding it as cardinal and others as non-cardinal. In practical terms, this issue has not, in and of itself, constituted a problem to the conceptualizing of the gospel by the amaXhosa. This topic will be revisited in 7.2.2.6.

Roy outlines the historical origins of the Apostolic Faith Mission [A.F.M.] (:122ff) and the Full gospel Church of God (:125ff), and draws a connection between these Pentecostal churches and the Zion movement of John Alexander Dowie, which was brought to South Africa by Daniel Bryant in 1904 (Roy, :120).

Two remarkable phenomena are to be observed in connection with Pentecostalism in South Africa. Firstly, it received remarkably little mention in the writings of [mainly Western] theologians and South African church historians in the first half of the twentieth century, Secondly, African Christians responded more readily and more positively to Pentecostalist preachers than to missionaries of the main-line churches. This thesis takes this to indicate that generally speaking, Westerners were culturally less predisposed to Pentecostalism in the opening decade of the twentieth century than were Africans. The revival amongst the Boer prisoners of war should probably be regarded as exceptional, partly on account of the emotional effects of their incarceration.

However, it is to be noted that even after the A.F.M. became divided on racial lines as early as 1908 (Roy, :
the “white” section continued with a significant membership. This suggests that the distinctive elements of Pentecostalism are not entirely ethno-cultural. On the other hand, the Pentecostal churches of all racial groups began to distance themselves from the Zion Church (particularly the branch led by Eugenas Lekganyane), after the latter 'laid a strong emphasis on divine healing' and started the practice of blessing 'various objects such as strips of cloth, string, paper, needles and walking sticks' (Roy, :137).

It would seem that they were not confident that Lekganyane's practices were scriptural. There is a degree of New Testament warrant for the blessing of household objects in Acts 19:12, but this should be understood to be more in the nature of a simple narrative than a precedent, particularly in view of the fact that Luke describes the miracles in this verse as Δυναµεις ... ου τασ τυχουσας [not ordinary = special, unusual]. In any case, the miracles were probably associated with Paul's apostolic status. Whether Lekganyane would wish to claim such status for himself, and whether he had grounds for doing so are open questions.

The definitive question at this point is: Which, if any, of these distinctives are anti-scriptural, which, if any, are a-scriptural and which are cardinal?

To a large extent the answer to this question depends on the exegesis of the appropriate Scripture passages. It is noteworthy that Romans 12: 6- 8 lists various gifts of the Holy Spirit but does not mention glossolalia or healing. The context of the passage is the structure of the church and the nature of church membership. From this, it is to be concluded that neither glossolalia nor healing are considered basic in the gifting of the church. This would suggest that they are therefore not cardinal. In 1 Corinthians 12: 4-11, by contrast, healing and glossolalia are both mentioned. The context here is types of service (1Cor. 12: 5) and the phenomena are referred to as comprising 'the manifestation of the Spirit' (1 Cor. 12: 7). This suggests that glossolalia and healing were gifts in the early church by means of which the Holy Spirit could be manifested and the people served. The cardinal element in all this is the sovereignty of God (1 Cor. 12: 11). It is the stance of this thesis that the cardinality of the sovereignty of God should shape all Bible teaching and pastoral counselling with regard to these issues.

The difficulty in discerning the basic differences between Christian spirituality and traditional African
spirituality constitutes a great danger to the contextualization of Christianity. The guide-line should be: Whatever in African spirituality and worship practice in contrary to Scripture should be avoided; whatever is a-scriptural should be recognized as such and accepted as secondary to the gospel. Whatever elements resonate with Scripture are clearly to be practised. In African churches, particularly the A.I.C's, the gifting of the Holy Spirit is thought of in terms of healing, prophecy and power. These scriptural qualities resonate with the African tradition. It needs to be made clear that all the gifts are dispensed by the Holy Spirit under the Divine Sovereignty, and that their sole purpose is to witness to Christ and bring glory to God.

The major contemporary focus of the characteristics of neo-Pentecostalism amongst the amaXhosa is to be found in the A.I.C's. These will be examined in 7.2.2.6.

**6.3 Postmodernism**

Postmodernism is almost exclusive to America and Europe. A survey of the contemporary cultural situation in the Eastern Cape would, however, be incomplete without recognition of recent academic developments which impinge on the contemporary contextualization of Christianity, because this school of thought has influenced philosophers and theologians here.

The advent of postmodernism has produced in the West and in cultures influenced by the West, a paradigm shift from rationality, which is the basic *motif* of the Enlightenment, to a new perception of reality in which the physical universe is no longer a closed system imprisoned in infallible natural laws. If the contemporary Western position is postmodern, it would be pointless to attempt to find a means of presenting the gospel to contemporary traditional Africans in terms of a conceptualization of Christianity which accommodated itself to the Enlightenment. The Enlightenment world view is no longer seen to be infallible, but this does not mean that postmodernism is to be accepted uncritically. As Xhosa theologians attempt to come to terms with the challenges of the traditional beliefs held by their people, it would seem to be appropriate to invite theologians of Western orientation to travel with them and develop a theological response to the challenges of postmodernism. The infinite gradations to be found in a culture and the “fluidity” of postmodernism might well prove to be a meeting ground. It is conceded that little has been done in this area in the Eastern
An attempt to embark on a united journey in which Christian theologians of all cultures and contexts in South Africa take part would seem to be quite daunting; but the possible benefits would be immense. Such a venture would reinforce the multicultural nature of Christianity, more specifically South African Christianity and most specifically Christianity in the Eastern Cape.

Gavin Taylor has applied some of the categories of postmodernism to transformation issues in inner-city mission (2008:40ff), and Kevin Light gives an account of the “Labyrinth”, a mission in which he serves with a postmodern approach (2008:146ff).

Taylor's contribution is an approach to the practical situation of postmodernity, rather than a [theoretical] answer to the philosophical and theological viewpoint of postmodernism. He cites the demographic changes which have occurred in South Africa since 1994 as the direct cause of the unsettledness in inner city congregations. South African Black people have migrated to the city centres, together with Blacks immigrants. 'The transplantation model is not an option'; (Taylor, :43). The congregations affected 'have been forced into journeys of transition' (Taylor, ibid, italics Taylor). His immediate context is city mission, and amongst the challenges, he mentions are: 'an innate urban suspicion, a pervasive secularism, and a rootless and highly mobile population' (:44). Diversity has to be celebrated rather than overcome (:45) and 'becomes a symbol of the gospel, of the new humanity anticipated by the Kingdom of God. The postmodern nature of Taylor's City Mission is expressed in the conviction that the need to belong is greater than the need for 'an adherence to a particular creed or faith tradition' (:50). The postmodern situation also calls for a revisioning of the use of church buildings (:53). Closely associated with that is the development of strategic partnerships which will not only counteract the effects of declining financial support but also enable ministry in the postmodern situation to be more relevant and effective (:54f). Taylor identifies 'the pace of urbanisation' (:56) as a key factor in the contextual situation, which points to the lack of [appropriately trained] leadership and also a lack of vision. In Taylor's context the “hybrid” culture predominates, and what he says needs to be applied in the areas covered by 8.2.1 and relevant parts of Chapter Nine.
K. Light stresses the need for relevance in respect of vocabulary and outreach (2008:146) and shows how to a large extent the church is out of touch with daily life in its community (:147). Indicating the rigidity with which [relatively small] church meetings continue to clash with [majority planned] community events, he says that 'we have wandered far from the pulse of the human village and we may be further out of step with the essence of the life of our neighbours than we would like to think' (:149). The crux of the problem is that '(p)eople are spiritually contextual and experiential beyond the organisation of religion ... Can the Church look beyond the inherited and proven iconic brand by which it is known?' (K. Light, :152). The writer perceives that what is said here is that the structures and methodology of the church comprise a component of the modernist “straightjacket” which needs to be left behind. The postmodern community is looking for a postmodern presentation of the gospel.

Kevin Hart issues a timely warning against over-enthusiasm in this regard, when he distinguishes between 'religion, as practiced (sic) in postmodern times, and postmodern religion', (2004:107). He notes that although attendance at main-line churches has declined, interest in Christian fundamentalism in general and in the Pentecostal movement in particular has increased. He ascribes this to a search for difference [from “the world”] which the main-line churches appear not to be presenting. This stance appears to be diametrically opposed to that of K. Light. Hart defines postmodern religion in terms of its difference from fundamentalism. He says:

> 'Unlike fundamentalism, postmodern Christianity aims to be sophisticated with regard to literature and philosophy. If fundamentalism gives short shrift to the immense intellectual heritage of the faith, some postmodern Christians run the risk of reducing the faith to ethics with a few ancient stories attached.' (:111)

Although expressed as a contrast rather than a comparison, this quotation indicates that the two stances are both examples of reductionism (p.64), a key category in postmodernism. In the case of fundamentalism the reductionism with respect of literature and philosophy is perceived by postmodernists, but not by fundamentalists themselves. In the same way, fundamentalists [and other Christian believers] would recognize the reductionism of replacing faith with ethics, of which postmodernists are unaware.
A contemporary theological approach to postmodernism is that of N.T. Wright, who acknowledges that his approach to postmodernism oversimplifies the situation; but the depth and detail of his treatment are regarded as quite adequate in the context of this thesis. He identifies three areas in which postmodernism is significant.

Firstly, with regard to knowledge and truth, Wright says that whereas 'modernism thought it could know things objectively about the world, postmodernism has reminded us that there is no such thing as neutral knowledge' (2000:115). Secondly, 'postmodernity has deconstructed the self’ to a 'floating signifier' (ibid). Thirdly, postmodernity rejects as exclusively Western the eschatological metanarrative of modernity in terms of which evolving history is optimistically seen as an inevitable progression to 'a new era of blessing for all' (ibid). Wright sees that the 'modernist dream, translated into Theology, sustains a sort of Pelagianism: pull yourself up by your moral bootstraps.' (:116); but also that this has come across as 'a pure spiritual message, uncorrupted by political and social reflection' (ibid).

In any case, as Wright points out (:116-117) postmodernity has removed the relevance, and even the possibility of pulling oneself up by any means. Wright believes that the way ahead consists of reflecting 'on this moment of despair within our culture, and, reflecting biblically and Christianly, to see our way through the moment of despair and out on the other side' (ibid).

The writing of John Milbank is promising for this thesis. Hart summarises Milbank's position in this way:

'Here there can be no question of jettisoning Nicene orthodoxy.
On the contrary, that religious vision is to be preserved, and
we can best clear room for it by way of a withering critique
of modernity and its tireless will to secularism. The postmodern
offers us hope to the extent that it is post-secular, and religion
is no longer to be brought before the court of science.' (2004:112)

The term which Milbank has chosen to describe his position is 'radical orthodoxy' (Hart, :146). His orthodoxy would relate to the basic gospel as defined in this thesis in terms of Osborne's 'cardinal' elements,
(2.2.1). Milbank's radicality consists of both his going to the roots of the Christian tradition and his relating his theology to all the aspects, implications and manifestations of postmodernism in postmodern life. Hart writes:

'This address is radical in that it involves a stinging criticism of modernity ..... and a half-turn back to the premodern, especially to Augustine ....... A deep continuity runs between premodernity and postmodernity, Milbank thinks, ......The premodern cannot be retrieved but, if properly understood, can be inserted into postmodern thought.' (146)

Milbank's reference to Augustine is a significant way to relate postmodernism to the Christian faith. John Caputo (2001: 2) takes Augustine to be his hero, 'although with a certain postmodern and sometimes unorthodox twist that might at times have provoked his [i.e. Augustine's] episcopal wrath' (ibid).

Beginning with Augustine's famous question “what do I love when I love my God?”, Caputo claims that 'religion is for lovers' (: 2) citing 1 Cor. 13:13 and 1 John 4: 8. For Caputo, the opposite of “religious” is not “secular” but “loveless”. He states (: 3-4) that institutional religion must 'be tested to see how loyal it is to itself', since its vocation is the love of God.

The implications of Milbank's view of 'obscurity' and the inevitability of religion are highly significant for this thesis. He says:

'Religion will not depart, because all social phenomena are arbitrary and therefore 'religious'. Quite clearly these conclusions will tend to suggest affinities between postmodernism and those kinds of sacrality which lay stress on the wilfulness of God, the positivity of revelation, the total and absolute inaccessibility of the divine unity beyond the always divisive manifestations of this unity in time ... I find the issue validation versus non-validation of the sacred to be a more or less spurious and uninteresting one. What is more important is the mode of sacrality, the logic of a particular articulation.' (1992:31 Italics, Milbank).

In this passage Milbank mentions two factors which can readily be applied to the inadequacies of the nineteenth century missionary contextualization of the gospel. Firstly, the missionaries failed to see that their doctrinal corpus would appear to the amaXhosa and anyone else approaching Christianity ab extra to be
irrelevant. The suggested affinities between postmodernism and those sacralities which lay stress on the wilfulness of God holds promise of a new relevance for the Xhosa tradition. The missionaries' converts were attracted by perceived power: both the secular power which Western education provided, and the spiritual power available in the *charismata*. Their experience was shallow and they could not be expected to make a deep theological [or spiritually mature] response. Secondly, the missionaries rejected African traditional beliefs on the grounds of non-verifiability or non-validation – principles which would apply equally to a critique of Christianity. As Western categories, these principles would, in any case, be unduly prescriptive and even irrelevant to the amaXhosa.

Caputo applies a postmodern view of the theory of probability when he distinguishes between the “relative future” which is foreseeable, on account of its reasonable expectations, and the “absolute future” which is unforeseeable, and by which 'we are pushed to the limits of the possible' (2001: 8).

These categories are reminiscent of Moltmann's concept of the promise (1967:102ff; 329ff). Moltmann places the “absolute future” in the realm of eschatological hope based on God's reliable promise.

This is also the point at which one encounters 'what Jacques Derrida calls 'the impossible', meaning something whose possibility we did not and could not foresee' (Caputo, :10, no primary source cited). Here, the postmodern departure from Enlightenment modernism is clearly discernible – the concept of miracle once again appears to be recognized. Caputo argues (:11) that since the impossible [thus defined] confronts us unexpectedly in experience, it follows that 'experience itself, all experience, has a religious character'. This leads Caputo to Derrida's noted phrase “religion without religion”. This is significant in light of the fact that “modern” Western theology differentiates sacred from secular, in a way which African tradition has never done. The Western dualism appears to have been overcome.

Another point at which postmodern religion confronts the confidence of modernism is identified by Augustine's phrase “Quaestio mihi factus sum” (Caputo :18, no primary source cited), which Caputo takes to mean that our identity is to be found in questioning our identity. The question “what do I love when I love
“my God?” is inextricably bound up with the question “who am I?”, and the search for the answer to this double-pronged question is the meaning of life.

### 6.4 Globality

Of the three terms commonly used to describe this phenomenon - Globalism, Globalization and Globality - the last is to be preferred in the context of this thesis. The writer understands “Globalism” to refer to an abstract *theory* regarding the relation of ethnic units in the world to one another; globalization to refer to the *process* by which the ethnic units of the world unite to form a global whole and globality to refer to the *bare fact* that the world, made up of ethnic units, is taking on a global character, or to the character itself. It is this given condition of globality that Christianity has to address, rather than to be actively involved in globalism and globalization, [either for or against].

The changes that have come to the West over its long history, and the changes brought by the Western irruption into the Eastern Cape, together with general historical developments in the world as a whole have culminated in globality. Awareness of the contemporary state of the world and its cultures has, to a certain extent, come about as an effect of globality. Globality is a phenomenon with which the world is faced, rather than a philosophy which we could accept or reject.

Campbell acknowledges the fact that ‘(g)lobalization has become a major concern among social scientists, displacing the older paradigm of “modernity”, and progressively displacing also discussions about “postmodernity” (2000:288). It has little conscious impact on non-intellectuals in any culture, but it is receiving attention from Xhosa intellectuals, albeit in a way different from that of Western intellectuals.

Roland Robertson offers a definition of globalization which fits what this thesis has called globality (1992:53). He says it 'refers both to the compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole' (ibid; Campbell, :288).

Campbell identifies:
two broad ways in which we can and should address issues raised
by globalization (or globality, as it is more and more commonly called).
The first is by addressing the major challenges which globality poses
for the world at large, offering Christian solutions for the common good
and at the same time an apologetic for the value of Christian faith. The
second way we must face globality is by understanding and addressing
the challenges it poses for the integrity and effectiveness of the Christian faith.' (: 287)

The second way would seem to have significance for the present thesis, because its focus and starting-point
is Christianity, rather than the situation of globality. Appropriate questions would be: “What are we to
understand as the gospel revealed in Scripture in our global situation?” and “How are we to communicate
this to our target people-group?” An approach by means of the **via negativa** might reformulate these
questions more specifically: “What in globality does not conform to the gospel as revealed in Scripture?” and
“What aspects of globality would be inappropriate to a presentation of the gospel?”

Campbell warns that one of the implications of globality is that

’in the United States, tolerance has also often translated, for example,
into a growing public acceptance of neo-pagan religious practices
incompatible with Christian faith.’ (:290)

Most South Africans would recognize their own contemporary situation in Campbell's description of
contemporary America, which, he says,

‘is becoming more and more like that inhabited by the Christians
to whom Paul wrote, characterized by pluralism in regard to language,
religion, and culture.’ (ibid)

A relevant question at this point is whether pluralism can be modified by the discovery of universal values in
a pluralistic situation, along the lines suggested by Adeney (pp.68ff). Put more specifically, the question is
whether the Christian Church ‘can concern [itself] with facing and giving responses to common problems’
(Campbell, :287). Campbell recognizes the problems arising from plurality and globality in the modern
world. If his proposals were carried out, a double purpose would be served: the problems themselves would
have been addressed and the method of addressing them would offer commonality in the face of the plurality. His 'distinctive proposals' (:287) relate to 'the common good, the common man and the common voice.' (ibid).

One of the major effects of globalization, which brings religions and cultures into close proximity with one another is violence (:289). Campbell claims that 'globalization leads to pluralization, and pluralization often leads to violence worldwide', (ibid). He insightfully observes that '(r)eligious violence around the world has ... created worldwide suspicion of religions other than one's own.' (ibid). The significance of this for South Africa and the Eastern Cape is quite clear. Religious violence between Christians and Islamists, as well as between Christians and the devotees of A.T.R' (and of no religion) is a significant characteristic of the present generation. The settlement of Xhosa people in former “white” urban areas, for example, has resulted in white residents taking offence at traditional ceremonies (ritual slaughtering) performed by their neighbours. One approach to this problem is to educate the whites to appreciate the religious practices of their new neighbours; another might be for the Xhosa families to become aware that they are world citizens, and that modern residential areas are not suitable places to observe practices which violate their neighbours' right to what they consider hygienic conditions.

At this point, the first of Campbell's approaches to globality ['addressing the major challenges which globality poses for the world at large, offering Christian solutions for the common good'] (:287) needs to be brought into consideration. HIV/AIDS, poverty, domestic violence and abuse, which are all to some extent the results of globalization, need “Christian solutions”, and to provide them is an aspect of communicating the gospel. In this respect, globality itself could be called into service, in the sense that international forums could be convened at which the combined expertise of world-wide Christianity could be applied to the global problems.

Conversely, 'another effect of pluralization is the growth of tolerance' (Campbell, 2000:289), which has many consequences which are to be welcomed, such as 'the decline in the vituperative rhetoric which often attended discussions between Roman Catholics and Protestants in the past' (:290).
The crisis which plurality causes may be referred to as relativization, which Campbell defines as:

'...the generation, in a confrontation with an alien tradition, of a sense of threat and of insecurity about the assumptions people use to make sense of the world and of the self, calling into question such things as definitions, boundaries, categories, and conclusions through which they have understood the world and established their identity. This insecurity, in turn, generates secondary effects such as intellectual disorientation, bewilderment, doubt and fear.' (291)

Here Campbell interweaves the characteristics of postmodernism with the effects of globality to produce a combined effect. The irruption of New Age thought in America, Europe and Britain - the 'neo-pagan religious practices' to which Campbell referred (p.233) - is evident also in Africa, and this constitutes the serious threat of a relativization of Christianity amongst Western and African Christians in South Africa. Additionally, the religious practices of the African tradition [as distinct from the purely cultural practices] pose a particular problem for Xhosa Christians. This clearly needs to be addressed in the formulation of the task (9.1).

Richard Slimbach (2001:1 internet format) draws out the implications of globalization for Christian higher education. He uses the term “global Christian education”, which he defines as:

'...comprehensive efforts by Christian colleges, universities and seminaries to enhance the capacity of students and staff to function competently in an increasingly urban, multicultural and interconnected environment, and to make personal and public policy decisions that reflect the character and commitments of the kingdom of God.' (:2).

From what this thesis has discovered and argued, it has become clear that the description which Slimbach gives ought to apply to contemporary South Africa, to an extent which is constantly increasing as the “New South Africa” develops.

### 6.5 General Assessment of the contemporary Western Contextualization

Before proceeding to African responses and conceptualizations, a brief recapitulation and assessment of
Western Christian theology and Western philosophy is now offered.

The influence of the Enlightenment on Christian Theology in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and particularly the resultant basic hermeneutical assumptions concerning the nature of Scripture [a negative attitude towards the questions of authority, inerrancy, infallibility etc] is well known. In the twentieth century, the work of those scholars commonly referred to as Higher Critics [mainly in the fields of literary, form and source criticism], modified the perceived nature of the relevance, reliability and authority of Scripture in certain denominations. This reduced the status of Scripture in the presentation of a derived contextualization to such an extent that one can no longer simply refer to a doctrine as being "biblical" in order to justify it. The problem is two-fold:

(i) Scripture is no longer universally accepted as the final authority;

(ii) There is no agreement as to how Scripture should be interpreted.

Kant's attempt to derive all knowledge of God from reason was a clear rejection of Biblical revelation. The secularizing process advocated by Van Buren and Bultmann, involving as it did the rejection of miracles, increased the distance between the Bible and modern human beings.

Existentialism rejected the historicity of major Bible events, including the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, which, in the understanding of many Christians impacted on His status as Son of God. Ironically, insistence on historical (factual) truth is a product of modern (as distinct from pre-modern and postmodern) thinking. The orientation of the amaXhosa might well predispose a Xhosa person to an existential contextualization more easily than to a conservative-evangelical one. Perhaps a Xhosa person might accept that the Bible becomes the Word of God when it is applied in a specific situation, for example, in judgment upon the apartheid situation. The static concept of the conservative-evangelical would then be replaced by a more dynamic one.

Globality has the tendency to reject whatever is local and time-bound. This would involve a rejection of the Bible in terms of which it is categorized as the basic document of an exclusive religion recording events which took place specifically in Palestine, involving a very small nation in a specific period of history.
In each of the movements considered in this chapter, the Bible tends to be undermined. Since this thesis deals with the communication of the Christian Gospel, a number of questions arise at this point:

(i) To what extent have these movements modified the Western conceptualization of the Christian gospel?
(ii) To what extent has the modified Western Christian contextualization impacted the conceptualization of the Christian gospel by the amaXhosa?

On the basis of the definition of the gospel offered in 1.2.8 and in respect of the philosophical theologies examined in 6.1, the answer to the first question would be that they could be employed as tools to elucidate the gospel message to Western philosophical / academic minds; but their contribution would be categorized as non-cardinal.

In answer to the second question, the modified contextualization would probably not impact many of the amaXhosa because those with philosophic / academic interests would reject it as Western and those without such interests would probably not even be aware of it.

The impact of the charismatic movements and neo-pentecostalism would be received positively by the amaXhosa, given their propensity for exuberant forms of spiritual expression. Mention was made (p.251) of ‘(t)he difficulty in discerning the basic differences between Christian spirituality and traditional Africa spirituality’ and the impact would be valid only if the standards of the definition of the gospel, as set out in this thesis, were maintained.

The impact of postmodernism will be revisited at appropriate places in Chapter Seven, as part of the contemporary South African scene.
CHAPTER SEVEN
MODERN SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXTUALIZATIONS

'The third task of this thesis is to examine the major contemporary theological stances in South African Christianity and to consider inter alia the extent to which postmodernism aids or hinders the understanding of the Christian gospel by the amaXhosa.' (p. 8).

In the vein of Luke 24:26, Wright asks: 'Was it not necessary that modernist versions of Christianity should die in order that truth might be freshly glimpsed, not as a set of doctrines or theories but as a person, and as persons indwelt by that person' (2000:116-117). Wright applies this principle quite clearly.

'The radical hermeneutic of suspicion that characterizes all of postmodernity is essentially nihilistic, denying the very possibility of creative or healing love. In the cross and resurrection of Jesus we find the answer: the God who made the world is revealed in terms of a self-giving love that no hermeneutic of suspicion can ever touch, in a Self that found itself by giving itself away, in a Story that was never manipulative, but always healing and recreating, and in a Reality that can be truly known, indeed to know which is to discover a new dimension of knowledge, the dimension of loving and being loved.' (:131)

Thus Christian theologians with a Western background need to embark on the journey from modernist optimism, through postmodern despair into whatever God has ahead. It is a case of telling the historical story a different way.

Contemporary Xhosa Christian theologians need to take a parallel journey through 'the nuisance of cultural imperialism', to an appropriate conceptualization for the amaXhosa in the twenty-first century. They are confronted by two phenomena parallel to the Western postmodern hermeneutic of suspicion. The first, and more fundamental phenomenon is the missionary enterprise of the nineteenth century. Here the significant question would be: 'Was it not necessary that Western preachers should come and trash our culture, so that in the death of their arrogant miscontextualizations, truth might be freshly glimpsed, not as a set of incomprehensible foreign doctrines, but as a person, and as persons indwelt by that person?' This will be revisited in the course of Chapter Eight. Secondly, the scars of apartheid cry out for an explanation. At the risk of seeming to trivialize the enormity that apartheid was and the extent of the disruption, destruction and
pain that it caused, might it not be useful to ask: 'Was it not necessary that white people should come and enslave us in their racist greed, so that in the death of their mishapen policies, truth might be freshly glimpsed, not as an oppressive ideology, but as a person, and as persons indwelt by that person?'  This will be considered in the course of 9.1 and 9.2 in connection with the way forward in terms of pastor training and formation.

It is becoming apparent that the world-view formed by Xhosa Christian intellectuals in the postmodern paradigm will be different from that formed by Western Christian intellectuals. In other words, each culture continues to conceptualize and contextualize the gospel in its own way. A.S. Van Niekerk makes an insightful comment regarding the challenges which confront Christianity in post-apartheid South Africa. He says (1993: 7)

'I am deeply concerned that those whites who have been and continue to be anti-apartheid are not going to manage to get beyond anti-apartheid... then we ignore the more profound problem... the reality of our situation is that there are two worlds in South Africa, two spirit worlds, and we have not yet worked out how they are to be accommodated within the same living space.'

The stance of this thesis implies that such working out is needed and asserts that if non-cardinal elements on both sides are identified as such and recognized to be secondary to the gospel, an accommodation is possible. The question as to how “spiritual” the contemporary Western culture is, and how “spiritual” the contemporary Xhosa culture is, introduces a factor which needs to be taken into account.

Van Niekerk argues that the poetry of, for example, Oswald Joseph Mtshali, Mongane Wally Serote, Sidney Sipho Sepamla and Mafika Pascal Gwala has convinced him that the urban conception that Africa 'has become almost wholly westernised' is simplistic (1993: 8). As late as the early 1970's for example, Oswald Mtshali produced a work entitled 'Sounds of a Cowhide drum', and later in the decade Mafika Gwala, wrote 'Jol'iinkomo'. Xhosa traditional life clearly remains a major factor in contemporary Xhosa culture, and it is expected that it will become increasingly significant as the African Renaissance proceeds. Accommodation is imperative, therefore, if all cultures and the distinctives within those cultures are to be maintained in the
“Rainbow nation”.

Kato affirms African culture when he says:

'The search for authenticity through culture remains a desirable element in many African societies. The attitude of Christians toward cultural renaissance need not be negative.’ (1985:41)

7.1 Factors affecting accommodation

It is important that the difference between accommodation and assimilation be recognized at this point.

- In terms of this thesis, accommodation involves recognizing non-cardinal elements in contextualizations other than one's own as being acceptable, without necessarily adopting them for oneself. The multicultural church established by Maoz (9.1.1) would be an example.

- Assimilation has become a question of choosing to accept or to reject, the definitive elements of a contextualization other than one's own. In order to be assimilated, one culture must surrender its unique identity in favour of the other. The elements of the assimilating culture are accepted and adopted, and those of the assimilated culture rejected or replaced.

The first question concerns the nature and extent of the adjustments to be made in the process of accommodation. Mtuze believes that all 'vestiges of eurocentrism' should be removed (2003:94). This attitude would appear to be the same, in principle, as the arrogance of the missionaries who debarred all Xhosa elements. It depends on what Mtuze means by “eurocentrism”. He has not explicitly debarred all Western elements per se, but rightly wishes them not to be regarded as central in his Xhosa contextualization. The concept of eurocentrism approaches that of assimilation. This thesis stipulates that Western non-cardinal elements must clearly be recognized as such, and categorized as secondary to the gospel itself; but suggests that they might well be retained to enrich the presentation of the gospel in a predominantly Western environment, and for the Western minority in a non-Western environment. It is urged that precisely the same principles should be applied to non-cardinal elements in a Xhosa contextualization. This is what the writer understands as accommodation.
The issue of accommodation also involves the nature of any anti-Scriptural elements which are juxtaposed with Christianity. The principle which this thesis has applied consistently to each issue it has raised applies here. While it is heartily agreed that there is as much justification for the incorporation of a-scriptural pre-Christian Xhosa elements as there was for the incorporation of a-scriptural pre-Christian Western elements; elements that are anti-scriptural in any culture are to be rejected in any contextualization of the Christian gospel. Faithfulness to New Testament Christianity is seen in this thesis to be crucial.

Also crucial to a genuine contextualization is respect for, and faithfulness to, the culture being addressed. The Nigerian theologian, Justin Ukpong, uses an African conceptual framework, and points to four cultural assumptions which characterize it.

1. The unitary view of reality whereby the spiritual is not separated from the material.
2. A creation-oriented perspective whereby humanity is seen as embedded in creation and interacting with other creatures in a dialectical relationship.
3. Community consciousness whereby community well-being rather than individualism provides the hermeneutical perspective.

The writer has consulted a number of Xhosa Christians and is satisfied that the amaXhosa identify, in general terms, with Ukpong's principles. It appears also, that Ukpong's principles (see below, 7.2.1.4) are to a large endorsed by Mtuze, as will be demonstrated in the following paragraphs. Ukpong's four criteria are now used seriatim as a framework for Mtuze's input.

7.1.1 Unitary view of reality

This thesis has already noted the similarities between pre-Christian Celtic culture and pre-Christian Xhosa culture (4.3.2). One similarity is the absence of any demarcation between the spiritual and the secular.

Referring to the Graeco-Roman world, Molnar observes the same phenomenon.

'If we study the general significance of these myths from the point of view of the peoples' understanding of life, we find that they are concerned with everything important in human existence: birth and death, life in community,
the process of maturation, the genealogy of the gods, the fertility of nature and human beings, the relation of soul and body, and so on.’ (1987:12)

The situation which the missionaries to the Eastern Cape confronted was, therefore, basically the same as that confronted by the early Church and by the missionaries to the Celts.

Mtuze indicates his endorsement of the first of Ukpong's assumptions as follows:

'It cannot be gainsaid that the African experience of religion is closer to that of ancient Israel than it is to modern Westernism. The latter tends to enforce a rigid demarcation between the secular and the sacred realm, between the natural and the supernatural whereas in traditional African religion there is no clear line of demarcation between the spiritual and the secular.’ (2003: 7)

Although Mtuze rightly asserts that there is a 'rigid demarcation......between the natural and the supernatural', in 'modern Westernism', by which he is referring to what this thesis calls Western modernism, the effect of the arrival of postmodernism on the stance of Christian theologians [or, at least philosophers of religion] must not be discounted.

In his assessment of the difference between Western and African spirituality, Mtuze draws a parallel between Enlightenment mechanistic theory and Western spirituality, in that both are characterized by fragmentation. The inclusion of this thinking does not imply that the writer accepts it. It is presented to enable discourse to take place. This will be examined in 7.2.2.7, when the concept of Ubuntu is considered.

7.1.2 Humanity embedded in creation

With regard to the second of Ukpong's presuppositions, Mtuze quotes from Margaret Donaldson's list of features of the Celtic Church (1994:4), citing the 'harmonious relationship with nature' (Mtuze, 2003:32) and comments: 'There are several pointers to the fact that Africans too were closely related to nature, if not now, at least in the not so distant past.' (ibid). He proceeds to refer to uMajola, the snake, to Ndlovu, the elephant and to Taung, the lion, all of which where tribal totems which in some cases gave their names to the tribes
concerned.

Broster (1981:57ff) confirms that Xhosa mythology bears testimony to closeness to nature. She mentions mythical snakes named umamlambo, ichanti and inyoka yabafazi and a mythical baboon called simply imfene. The fact that Satan is portrayed as a serpent in Genesis 3 and elsewhere in the Bible would seem to be a point of resonance.

7.1.3 Community consciousness against individualism

Mtuze affirms Ukpong's third presupposition when he mentions tribal structure (2003:21). It is instructive to note that the structure of the Xhosa nation resonates with that of Old Testament Israel, which supports Mtuze's claim that the amaXhosa are closer to ancient Israel than to modern Westernism. The terms used in the Xhosa translation of Uyoshuwa 7:16-18, for example, (p.201) illustrate this point admirably.

Moltmann's understanding of the calling of Christians in society lends support to the view Western thinking is not exclusively individualistic.

'It is not enough to say that the kingdom of God has to do only with persons; for one thing, the righteousness and peace of the promised kingdom are terms of relationship and accordingly have to do also with the relationships of men to each other and to things, and secondly, the idea of an a-social human personality is an abstraction.' (1967:329ff)

The resonance between this and African traditional thought is quite clear. Both comply with the concept of soteria as defined on page 38 of this thesis.

The effect of Hoekendijk's stance equating the New Testament term soteria with the Old Testament term shalom (p.37) is to broaden the concept of soteria, and with it the content of the essential gospel, to extend beyond personal salvation, [“personal eternal life”, in terms of the distinctions made on page 34]. Such a broadening would extend the meaning of soteria beyond even the corporate spirituality of the Church. Another way of stating this principle would be: “shalom/soteria” applies to the total ontic situation of a

18 At this point Moltmann acknowledges P. Althaus, Evangelisches Kirchenlexikon, III. col. 1931
human being. The essential gospel proclaims reconciliation with God, which is not only spiritual, but embraces the redemption or liberation of the whole human being: body, mind and spirit. In these terms, the essential gospel is compelled to address such issues as poverty, violence and HIV/AIDS. An extreme conservative-evangelical comment, based on the narrow view of salvation (pp. 33f) might be that *soteria* refers to rightness with God rather than well-being as such. In contrast to this, a more moderate approach would affirm that *soteria* provides a right relationship with God which is broader than the forensic concept of rightness as such. [In the Hebrew understanding of *shalom*, rightness with Jahweh would be the basis of the well-being]. In view of the fact that each human being is sinful, reconciliation would be a necessary constituent element of redemption. Spiritual redemption is theologically prior to other forms of liberation and healing.

Sundermeier describes *shalom/soteria* as implying 'the transformation of a situation of danger and need into a situation of safety and wellbeing' (1990:206-207). He goes on to describe a needful process which the missionaries omitted from their contextualization:

'We must regain the profanity of these concepts if we do not want to be led astray into pseudo-spiritual irrelevancies. I say pseudo-spiritual because what is not existentially relevant is also not authentically spiritual ... Genuine wellbeing is comprehensive. If you have toothache, you are not well; if citizens do not have rights in the country of their birth, they are not well. If wellbeing is comprehensive, any specific need is a specific deficiency in overall wellbeing' (ibid).

### 7.1.4 Concrete thinking rather than abstract thinking

With regard to the fourth of Ukpong's stated characteristics, the fact that Xhosa tradition is largely informed by mythical stories set in practical contexts seems to bear out Ukpong's findings. The development of the Western tradition also includes the use of fables [such as those of Aesop, for example] and the literature mentioned in 3.2.1 above. The tendency of Black Theology to politicize the gospel may also be a manifestation of this tendency to concretize. This introduces a fifth characteristic which needs to be considered.
7.1.5 Political factors
Mtuze refers to the apparent rejection of the gospel by the amaXhosa and to the misgivings the amaXhosa had concerning the perceived collaboration between the missionaries and the colonial authorities (2003:70).

He identifies a positive aspect when he comments,

'It cannot be denied that it is an ill-wind that blows nobody any good. The spiritual transformation that ensued awakened the blacks to much that was of relevance to them in their struggle against the colonial oppressors, using the very tools that they had introduced to them via the missionaries. The early converts made use of whatever they could incarnate in their changing spirituality for their own liberation both spiritually and politically.' (ibid)

Human beings will always be political. It follows that the demise of apartheid in its official, legislated form could not be expected to remove politics as a factor in the world-view of South Africans, including the Christian community.

One of the effects of having a secular state is that legislation will inevitably be passed to which Christians will find themselves in opposition on conscientious grounds. While controversy surrounds such issues as abortion-on-demand and homosexuality, these are issues with which individual Christians and Christian groups will have to come to terms and which need to be addressed in any conceptualization and contextualization of Christianity. Such issues as admission of homosexuals to membership of any church, to leadership positions and to the clergy are clearly within the province of the church. These would seem to be issues which could be dealt with on the lines of Frances Adeney's project (p.68ff).

7.2 Black Christian Contextualizations

7.2.1 General Stances

Four Black South Africans, two of them Xhosas, are taken as representative of the proactive responses that have helped to shape the world-view of Black South Africans without being specifically associated with their apartheid history as such. The theologians will be introduced in terms of their general stances. To these will be added the stance of the A.I.C's. All five stances will then be placed in dialogue on specific issues.
7.2.1.1 Sigqibo Dwane

Dwane is committed to the process of liberating the African contextualization of Christianity from the effects of Western cultural imperialism, and does not major on the political struggle against *apartheid* as such. He says:

'We have been made ... to think, speak and behave European ...But we are beginning to realise that we are in captivity, and that we need to be liberated in order that we may be ourselves, the people whom God has made ... And as we “decolonise” ourselves, we are discovering that there are riches in our own heritage ... bypassed in previous attempts to bring the gospel to Africa ... Christianity must have a truly African character if it is to remain in Africa, and be the religion of Africa.' (1989:29)

Dwane presents three reasons for his opinion that the term “Contextual theology” is 'not a happy designation' (1989:17ff). These are:

(i) that it appears to refer to a special type of theology, whereas all theology is contextual;

(ii) that theology should, as Tillich saw, bring revelation 'to the face of the human situation' (1989:18 primary source not cited) and

(iii) because 'the pressures of human existence do invariably impinge upon the life of the church, and influence the direction of its teaching (ibid).

Dwane offers four theological principles which provide the framework for his contextualization.

(i) ‘God created the world and us human beings in it' (1989:31);

(ii) ‘God in Jesus Christ became flesh.......He becomes to us of Africa our flesh and blood' (1989:32);

(iii) ‘...the death and resurrection of Christ is the moment of truth for us [in] our culture .....The resurrection is the ultimate expression of God's sovereignty. God can sort out African culture just as He has sorted out so many others' (1989:33);

(iv) ‘...the principle of unity and fellowship in the spirit. Because Christianity is able to claim all cultures as God's gift while it is not the prerogative of any one of them, it follows that they all have a share in the common life of the body (ibid).

It will be seen in 7.2.2 how these principles work in practice.
7.2.1.2 Manas Buthelezi

Although Manas Buthelezi wrote during the apartheid era, like Dwane, he does not specifically confront apartheid as such. The writer considers Buthelezi's stance to be inculturationist.

Buthelezi, a bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of South Africa, delivered a paper at the Ecumenical Dialogue for Third World Theologians, in Dar es Salaam in 1976, (Buthelezi, 1978). The following brief summary of his paper is presented as a contribution to the dialogue of this thesis.

Buthelezi notes that 'the indigeneity of the church is the presupposition of its mission in the world' (1978:56) and that as an outworking of this, 'in Africa and Asia, the focus has been on the urgency of indigenous church structures and Theology' (ibid). This has resulted from a perceived “hermeneutical gap” between the Western contextualization of Christianity 'and the respective traditional thought patterns' of the receptor cultures, (:57). John V. Taylor, whom Buthelezi quotes with approval, defends the 'validity of the categories of thought in the African world view' (Buthelezi, :58). Taylor claims that the African world-view

'stands in the world as a living faith, whether in the residual
paganism of millions, or in the tacit assumptions of very many
African Christians, or in the neo-African culture of its
intellectual leaders.' (1963:16)

In this quotation, two expressions cause concern.

(i) To categorize any world view per se, as 'a living faith' implies a particularly wide definition of 'faith' which this thesis cannot accept. World views are epistemological rather than theological.

(ii) The reference to 'tacit assumptions' begs the question whether some of these assumptions might be anti-scriptural, and thereby bring the credal confession of these 'African Christians' into question, according to the standards adopted by this thesis.

This issue, as it affects the amaXhosa, is dealt with in 7.2.2 below, where specific issues in modern South African contextualization come into consideration. On the positive side, the reference to 'the neo-African culture of its intellectual leaders' suggests the possibility of an interesting interchange between contemporary
Christianity and the African Renaissance. A sub-hypothesis, emerges at this point:

A contemporary contextualization of Christianity is required to address the contemporary culture of Africa expressed in the African Renaissance, in such a way as to inform and guide a reformation parallel to the Protestant Reformation which, to a certain extent, helped to guide the progress of the European Renaissance.

Buthelezi is led, through the thought of Bengt Sundkler and Placide Tempels [both Western theologians] to an approach to indigenization which he calls “ethnographic” (1978:59). He refers to this approach in the following terms:

>'One of the elements of this approach...... is the belief that, by analyzing and characterizing cultural factors with regard to their historical development in the African church milieu, it becomes possible, by means of the “sifting” medium of the gospel to root out “un-Christian” practices and baptize those that are consonant with the gospel. Furthermore, by discovering those cultural factors and understanding them in the light of the totality of their worldview, it is possible to arrive at a hermeneutical principle by means of which one can translate the “Christian gospel” into a form congenial to the “African mind”, '(ibid).

The question now arises as to who should conduct the analyzing, characterizing, and sifting, and discover the hermeneutical principle referred to. Buthelezi quotes Taylor to the effect that 'a warning light flickers from the fact that the enthusiasts are mainly non-African.' (Taylor, 1963:15). Perhaps Buthelezi is being a little harsh in his ascription of motive in this instance

>'The missionary seems to be having a guilty conscience. Looming above the horizon of the sunset of the missionary era is the horrifying spectre of the question history seems to be posing to the missionary: How can a church which fidgets under trappings and aparaphernalia of a past colonial era survive in a post-colonial and revolutionary Africa? ... when the missionaries seem to be presumptuous in suggesting “indigenous Theology” to the African, they are strictly speaking looking for a solution to problems that stem from their own psychological “hang-ups”'.(1978:62-3)

Hoekendijk ascribes a similar presumption to the missionaries, when he says that they were driven by a 'romantic urge' to rebuild in Africa the “good old days” of Christian Europe, in the face of the demise of
Christianity on their native continent, (1964:85). This would appear to be an accusation that the attitude of the missionaries was an example of the intolerance and insensitivity which motivated the imposition of Western styles and standards upon the indigenous Africans. What Hoekendijk is describing would be a renaissance in Africa of European Christianity comparable to the revival of classical culture in Europe. This would run counter to the African renaissance, which is envisaged as a revival of the ancient culture of Africa. The question is whether this is really what the missionaries thought or simply what Hoekendyk imagined they thought. In either case, the source would be Western.

It seems, therefore, that the missionaries came under attack from two opposite points of view. Wanting to 'rebuild Christian Europe' would be arrogant; wanting to indigenize is deemed to be presumptuous.

Buthelezi appears to see 'the radical theological accents that grew out of the new secularist Europe' (1978:63) as a possible motive for the missionaries' desire to indigenize. The era in which Buthelezi was writing would suggest that the issue was between modernism and postmodernism.

These suppositions are interesting, but above and beyond them stands the fact that indigenization was being proposed, and this is more important than who proposed it and what the proposers' motives were. Even if it arose from a presumptuous suggestion from Western missionaries, it must surely be the best alternative to the Eurocentric contextualization of which indigenous theologians were complaining.

Buthelezi is, perhaps, less than gracious when he says 'it is not necessarily bad if missionaries seek cultural and theological shelter in Africa'; but he is totally justified in his contention that 'it is bad if they at the same time dictate what kind of a shelter we should make for them' (1978:64). The point has already been made at various places in this thesis that a meaningful Xhosa contextualization can only be made by Xhosa theologians. If non-Xhosas attempted it, they would indeed be presumptuous.

Buthelezi says that the ethnographical approach focuses on the African of the 'good old days', the so-called 'true African' (1978:64-65). He identifies its weaknesses as being
(i) its tendency towards cultural objectivism,
(ii) its presupposition that contemporary Africans will want to reconstruct their past
(iii) its prescription as to how much of it they will want to reconstruct.

To this the writer would add that it is questionable whether the past can actually be reconstructed at all.

Then he turns to what he terms the “anthropological” approach (:65ff). This appears to be a type of phenomenological approach in which the centre is 'African people themselves' (:65) as distinct from their ethnographic cultural heritage. Buthelezi is 'thinking of the person......as God's creature who was entrusted with “dominion” over the rest of creation', and specifically, 'a “post-colonial person” who has been liberated by Christ from all that dehumanizes.' (ibid). The context in which he writes presents the inescapable impression that Buthelezi's conception of “all that dehumanizes” limits liberation by Christ to the socio-political realm. If personal sin is accepted and included as a dehumanizing factor, it is by implication rather than explicit reference. It is the position of this thesis that Christ liberates human beings totally. The basic issue is not how a human being is regarded by other human beings, but how s/he stands in relation to God. By liberating a human being from her/his fallenness, Christ restores all that is required in the ultimate dimension, and dehumanization per se is no longer relevant to the victim. In Christ, a victim has an example and role model who, 'When they hurled insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats' (1 Pet. 2:23). Christ also enables a victim to refuse to allow oppression to dehumanize her/him. The perpetrator, however remains guilty and dehumanized.

Buthelezi claims as a pre-requisite for indigenization a recognition of 'the fact that we are dealing with a subject that belongs to the realm of human creativity.' He adds that '(t)here is a sense in which we can speak of scientific Theology as an art form and the theologian as an artist' (ibid). This could be understood to relativize the process of revelation by the Holy Spirit. It does, however, affirm the human side of contextualization. It might be preferable to replace the metaphor from art by one from journalism. Christianity is a message, and the theologian is a reporter, or at most an analyst.
However, the metaphor from art has this value that in a work of art [whether literal or figurative] the '(s)pecific cultural elements' which 'need not, in practice, be bracketed out of any context' (above, p. 9) emerge. These non-cardinal elements must be recognized as secondary to the gospel itself, that is, to the basic subject being portrayed. This thesis would insist that any contextualization of the Christian gospel, if it is to be authentic, must be grounded in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. There is a danger that Buthelezi's line of argument could lead to the total subjectivism of Stanley Fish (p. 61f).

The need to objectify the content of the gospel and focus on human activity, however, does not justify the tendency to regard res indigenae [characteristics of a particular culture] as the objects of indigenization. Buthelezi is justified in condemning this tendency to make African liturgical forms and issues such as polygamy, the focus in terms of which Christianity is to be indigenized. He is surely right to assert the importance of the human factor over against the perceptions of cultures as such.

'The virtually exclusive concern with res indigenae tends to locate the problems that indigenous Theology has to resolve at the point of the conflict between two world views: the European and the African. The human factor recedes to the background, if recognized at all. It then becomes a problem of epistemological entities .....' (:67)

Buthelezi takes as the point of departure for his “anthropological” approach 'the Africans' initiative in the context of their present existential situation' (:68). When he was writing, the existential situation was apartheid. This would mean that at that time, African Theology, together with secular forms of indigenization, would have had to be reactive by nature, since the political situation left Africans no room to be proactive. In effect, any meaningful indigenization was impossible, because, as Buthelezi points out: '[i]ndigenous Theology without freedom of thought is a contradiction in terms; freedom of thought without access to the material means of participating in the wholeness of life is like capacity without content.' (ibid).

There follows a brief but very interesting excursus into the meaning of the word αὐτερεσις. Buthelezi points out that the 'Christian concept of “heresy” issued from the new situation created by the historical introduction of the “Christian Church”' (:69). Before that, in Classical Greece, the word denoted the particular views of
an individual philosopher or of the school of philosophy which he represented. The root meaning was “choice”. Buthelezi asks for semantic indulgence when he says ‘ecclesiastical dogma is nothing but corporate “heresy” made from pre-existing sets of theologoumena’ (ibid). The reply of this thesis would be that the statement begs the question of the scripturality of the theologoumena. Deist defines the term theologoumenon as denoting ‘a theological doctrine or statement which, though it sheds light on the connections among different dogmas or theological pronouncements, neither represents a revealed truth nor admits of historical verification’ (1984:172). This definition, together with the original meaning of αἱρεσίς suggests the maxim: “These are the things the fathers said, pick out what you like and discard the rest”.

Buthelezi explains that 'hairesis did not have the technical meaning it later acquired, especially at the time of the crystallization of ecclesiastical dogma' (:69). He adds that 'by implication 2 Peter 2:1 discriminates between salutary and destructive “heresies”’ (ibid). Asking of Buthelezi the same semantic indulgence he asks of his reader, one could ask whether the nature of “ecclesiastical dogma” is such that one could differentiate between the cardinal elements of the gospel, [which according to the standards adopted by this thesis would need to be established from scripture] and the non-cardinal. Anti-scriptural distinctives of particular church groups or denominations would not be admissible. Non-cardinal elements would be categorized as “salutary heresies”. In that case the meaning of “heresy” in “ecclesiastical dogma” would be exactly equivalent to the classical Greek αἱρεσίς. From the stance of this thesis, a-scripturality and antiscripturality would determine what constitutes “salutary” and “destructive” heresies respectively. For example, the Church of Rome and some parts of the Anglican Communion hold as ecclesiastical dogma such doctrines as that of the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary, which this thesis is prepared to declare antiscriptural, (4.1.2.4). Here, when such elements of ecclesiastical dogma are set against doctrines which have been identified as cardinal, the technical meaning to which Buthelezi refers would apply; that is, the doctrine of the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary would be regarded as “destructive heresy”.

As a Lutheran, Buthelezi would be well acquainted with the term adiaphora, (above, 3.2.3.1), although the writer is not aware of any passage in which he uses it. Identifying adiaphoristic [non-cardinal] elements is as difficult in the twenty-first century as it was in the sixteenth. The importance of all this is that Buthelezi's
application of the notion of salutary heresies needs to be applied with extreme caution, having due regard to the \textit{content} of the gospel when indigenous \textit{forms} are constructed.

Finally, Buthelezi introduces the concept of blackness \textit{per se}. He says:

'\textit{The Word of God addresses me within the reality of the situation of my blackness... (T)radsional Christian Theology ... has left me with the impression that my blackness is a negative rather than a positive quality.}' (1978:74)

Many of the nineteenth century missionaries are to be held accountable for this conceptualization. Buthelezi's initial impression must surely have been reinforced when the ideology of \textit{apartheid} was applied. One senses here the agony of an \textit{apartheid} victim, and it would be totally inappropriate to attempt to take issue with Buthelezi at this point.

However, in spite of Buthelezi's experience and the way he has been led to interpret it, it is objectively true that the gospel addresses every human being in his/her particular existential situation. By the term \textit{'(T)radsional Christian Theology'} Buthelezi refers to the Western contextualization that has created the negative impression. Both the Old Testament and the New Testament exhibit solidarity with the poor and oppressed, and pronounce condemnation on the oppressor, (Am. 2:6ff; Lk.16:19ff; Jas. 5:1ff). Missionary contextualizations are to be criticised for not having made this clear.

It is not to be supposed that "traditional Christian theology" as a whole, or even Western Christian theology, deliberately intended to display characteristics which belittled black people or blackness \textit{per se}. The anti-slavery movement of the early nineteenth century was largely driven by evangelical Christians such as, for example, the Clapham Sect, whom Renwick describes as follows:

'\textit{What was known as the Clapham Sect furnishes us with a remarkable example of the deep spiritual devotion, missionary zeal and practical Christianity of Anglican Church evangelicals towards the end of the eighteenth century.}' (1975:178f)

Renwick particularly mentions William Wilberforce, a prominent British parliamentarian, and Zachary
Macaulay, the Governor of Sierra Leone. Both stood powerfully for the anti-slavery cause, and thus confirmed the inherent worth of black people. The Christian Church world-wide has condemned apartheid, and, although earlier white settlement also gave rise to the negative concept of blackness, it is mainly from apartheid that it has developed in South Africa. Apartheid has been condemned in this thesis, and the harm done to the contextualization of the gospel by apartheid and similar expressions of white racism is again acknowledged.

7.2.1.3 Allan Boesak

Boesak begins his paper with a succinct statement: 'black Theology is a Theology of liberation,' (1978:76). While account must be taken of the fact that he wrote during the apartheid era and in reaction to his experience of oppression, it is rather unfortunate that the accusation he makes in the following sentence is unqualified. He says: 'It [i.e. black theology] refuses to believe that the gospel of Jesus Christ is the narrow racist ideology white Christians made of it' (ibid). The nineteenth century missionaries left the comforts of their homeland to bring Christ to Southern Africa, precisely to include indigenous Africans. It is surely ungracious towards them, whatever the inadequacies of their methodology, to brand them, by implication, as narrow racists. Boesak's phrase “white Christians” would include the many white Christians overseas, and the few in South Africa, who opposed apartheid by word and deed. As was demonstrated in Chapter Five, active participation in apartheid by Christians merits condemnation; and this would apply to the actions of which Boesak's accuses [all] “white Christians”. It would have been gracious, and more accurate, if he had applied the qualification “some” (or even “most”) to the expression 'white Christians'.

This is mentioned as an example of how a situation can produce emotions which influence one's judgment and attitudes and mould one's reaction to it. Time does not alter facts, but it can modify perceptions and perspectives. It is also mentioned because it introduces an important principle. Boesak says that 'the content (of black Theology) is as old as the attempts of white Christians to bring the gospel to blacks' (:77). As an assessment of the outcome of the nineteenth century missionary contextualization in terms of missionary strategy, Boesak is unquestionably correct at this point. Despite the fact that, as he acknowledges: 'South Africans have almost no historical documents from the hands of blacks themselves with regard to black
history and black theology' (:79-80), the Xhosa recipients of the gospel from the missionaries made their own conceptualizations. Ntsikana and Tiyo Soga are outstanding examples which have been reviewed in 4.4.2 and 4.4.3 respectively. Boesak is correct also in the sense that Africans of later generations were able to recognize the inherent “whiteness” of the contextualization which the missionaries brought. He rightly judges that:

'(t)here is strong resentment that the African religious heritage was constantly discarded as “barbarism” and “heathenism”, while Christianity and Western culture were indissolubly linked to one another...' (:82)

Nevertheless, a clear distinction needs to be made between the intention of the missionaries on the one hand and the outcomes in terms of the perception of the host culture on the other. It would be unjust, for example, to put these various quotations together so as to imply that the missionaries deliberately preached a narrow, racist ideology of white supremacy and European imperialism.

When Boesak says '(t)he role of missionaries and missions is being looked at critically and re-evaluated in the light of black experience', (:82), it is to be hoped that a further re-evaluation will now be done in the light of post-apartheid black experience. The critique of missionaries and missions by black theologians in the era of apartheid, was understandable at the time and justified in its context; but it now needs to be revisited and, if necessary, revised.

Boesak states an important principle when he quotes Pityana's thesis that 'the church must... examine the traditional African forms of worship, forms of marriage, sacrifice and why these things are meaningful and wholesome to the traditional African community'. It will be noted that these are all either cultic or cultural issues, but that marriage also has a legal dimension. The relation in which sacrifice stands to theology is explicit. Boesak's stipulation that 'a contextual Theology.......must not yield to uncritical accommodation', (1978:82), is to be welcomed.
7.2.1.4 Peter Mtuze

The work of Peter Mtuze is a contemporary example of the accommodationist approach. The principle established for this thesis in the comparison of Nxele and Ntsikana (4.4.1) is that incorporating Christian elements into a traditional religion [holding the traditional religion to have priority], is not an acceptable contextualization and that presenting Christianity in traditional terms [Christianity is prior] is the sounder approach.

Mtuze adopts this sounder approach. His writing is seen as the most significant contextualization for the amaXhosa on which this present thesis can proceed. Mtuze's work is of particular interest to this thesis because it is the foremost example of a specifically Xhosa Theology, and because it is a post-apartheid conceptualization. The specificity of Mtuze's method is that for him, inculturation means causing a-Christian African customs to be appropriated into Christianity. At this point, the distinction between accommodation and assimilation (7.1) needs to be applied. Assimilation was seen as a one-way process, whereby one culture is divested of its identity in making its elements fit into another culture. Accommodation was seen as a two-way process whereby two cultures agree to recognize each other's non-cardinal elements without necessary accepting them.

Mtuze's model exemplifies this two-way interaction. He recognizes the quantum theory, which is part of Western physical science, and adopts it as a vestigium of Ubuntu (:97ff). He is thus a step ahead of this thesis, engaging, as one would expect his Western counterparts to be doing, with hypotheses which embrace postmodern principles. This thesis would see this as an example of accommodation as distinct from assimilation.

With regard to the accommodation of African non-cardinal elements, Mtuze makes a number of suggestions. These will be examined in the appropriate sections of 7.2.2.

7.2.1.5 African Independent Churches

Reference has already been made to the observation of Madise concerning the strategic importance of the A.I.C's
in the on-going development and reformation of the Church in Africa (p.119). Anderson also stresses the importance of A.I.C's in the contemporary theological scene in Africa.

'The study of African initiated churches (AICs) is a vital component in the preparation for mission in Africa. It is no longer a minor and somewhat inconsequential area in the field of missiology, but one of the most important components of religious and theological education in Africa today ... 'Research into new religious movements usually involves an interface between the so-called "Northern" and "primal" world views, and (particularly in the case of AICs) between "historical" and "pentecostal" Christianity. Inevitably, this research often becomes subjective.' (1995: 1-2 internet format)

This suggests a Johari window, in which “Northern”, “primal”, “historical” and “pentecostal” are set out in such a way as to produce a number of combinations. The missionary presentation would be categorized as “Northern historical” and in some cases “Northern pentecostal”. A.I.C's would be mostly categorized as “primal pentecostal” though some, particularly the Ethiopian-type churches would be “primal historical”.

In connection with the continuity / discontinuity debate regarding the relation between AIC's and mission churches, Anderson observes that

'usually in any particular AIC there is a mixture of both the "old" mission church and the "new" African pentecostal elements. Thus, both continuity and discontinuity with mission churches exist at the same time in AICs. In addition, some AICs would exhibit more discontinuity with mission churches than would others.' (: 3)

Maboea (2002 passim) has presented the results of research in which certain aspects of the theology and practice of [in particular] the African Zionist Churches are compared with those of A.T.R. He identifies two strands: African Independent Churches [formed by secession from Western denominations] and African Indigenous Churches [formed by Africans] (:9). The ZCC's are classified as “Independent” (:50). There are thus three groups within the African Initiated Churches and Maboea assesses them as follows .

'Of these three movements, the Ethiopian AIC is the smallest and ecclesiastically the closest to the historical churches while the Zionist and Apostolic AICs have assimilated more of
Maboea's particular motif is the influence of life-giving power. His findings will be employed as a measure of the effectiveness of the Western influence on the Zionist churches by way of the Christian Catholic Church of Zion City, Illinois. This will be assessed in terms of a comparison between the Zionist Christian Church (Z.C.C.) and A.T.R’. What he has discovered will be placed in dialogue at appropriate points with the more specifically Xhosa material which was discussed in Section 4.2 and is revisited here.

It is significant that members of the Z.C.C. have discovered what this thesis has affirmed in several places, namely the resonance between the Bible, particularly the Old Testament, and African culture (Maboea, :30). A significant commentary on the communication of the gospel from the Western conceptualization is found in the reply of one of Maboea's respondents to the question: 'Why did you leave the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk in Afrika ... and join the ZCC?' The lady responded: 'because I have found life in the ZCC and am being fed.' (Maboea. :51f). It might be argued that this is a typical response when congregants move from one denomination to another even within one culture group, but the writer gains the impression that the respondent is testifying to receiving more of the gospel presented within her indigenous culture than from a predominantly Western presentation.

The aims of the following examination of current issues are:

(i) to assess the stance of contemporary Africans generally on these issues,
(ii) to determine the extent to which the traditional elements detected at the time of the initial contact with the West have been developed in conceptualization as *praeparatio evangelica*, and in contextualization as dynamic symbols, and
(iii) to inform the quest for a contemporary contextualization.

### 7.2.2 Specific Issues

An account was given in section 4.2 of the traditional Xhosa culture at the time the missionaries arrived. There are still Xhosa people who live that culture, and the influence of that culture still poses a problem and a threat to the communication of the gospel in South Africa.
Kato expressed his concern as follows:

‘Christianity has gone full circle in Africa. ... Christianity has come to the stage it was at in the second century. Just as syncretism plagued the church in the days of the apologists, so it challenges the historic faith in Africa today.’ (1985:25)

With regard to the relation between Christianity and ATR, Vernon Light (2009:14f) makes the definitive statement that 'syncretism is prevalent ... African Christians generally cling, at least inwardly or subconsciously, to their traditional beliefs.' This suggests that to hold traditional beliefs alongside Christian beliefs amounts to syncretism. As an evangelical, Light makes his judgement on the basis of scripturality, in that, '(s)yncretism is not an option for evangelicals because of their belief that the Bible is final revelation' (:148). The implication is that syncretism is to be assessed according to Scriptural standards; but, while anti-scriptural elements in ATR are to be rejected, it is also implied that a-scriptural elements are to be admitted [as non-cardinal]. This also supports the claim of this thesis that Pato's implied definition of syncretism (p. 135) is too wide.

During the twentieth century, changes came into the cultural lives of many Xhosa people. These changes have developed in two ways: (i) the formation of A.I.C's and (ii) the transformation of the racial composition of formerly Western congregations of the “main-line” churches as a result of an influx of Xhosa people into formerly white residential areas from 1994 onwards. The topics discussed in 4.2.2 will now be revisited in light of the stances of the four theologians who have been reviewed 7.2.1 and the A.I.C's (7.2.1.5), using the same sub-headings as in 4.2.2.

7.2.2.1 Initiation rites

Reference was made on page 143, to the categorization of modes of baptism as denominational distinctives and thus non-cardinal. It is interesting to note that the imbeleko and the abakweta could be considered as parallel to the two-stage initiation in the Christian Church. With regard to resonance between Christian and Xhosa initiation, Xhosa Christians who recognise believers' baptism would presumably link baptism to the abakweta ceremony; and Xhosa Christians in paedo-baptist churches would link it with the imbeleko
ceremony. Conversely, the former would link the *imbeleko* ceremony to the dedication of an infant, and the latter would link the *abakweta* ceremony to Reception into Church Membership [Confirmation].

Dwane (1989:35) makes a connection between the *imbeleko* and Christian paedo-baptism.

>'In South Africa, among Xhosa people, the custom observed at childbirth as a way of introducing the newly born to its living family and ancestry is sometimes associated with the baptism of the infant.

The *imbeleko* resonates even more closely with the Jewish ceremonial presentation of an infant in the Temple (Lk. 2:22ff).

The question of the relation between confirmation and the *abakweta* is raised quite pointedly by David Russell, whom Mtuze quotes David Russell: 20

>'When I come as a Bishop to confirm, I always find some very young boys and girls being presented. ...... In African custom we would not dream of presenting a boy for the highly significant rite of Circumcision with all its solemn symbolism, at the tender age of 12 or 13. Then why are we confirming our young Christians at such a tender age?' (Mtuze:90)

7.2.2.2 Rituals and ritual sacrifices

Mtuze provides details of the *imbeleko* which show that ritual slaughtering is involved. He refers to

>'the African women’s act of presenting her child to a member of the family who comes up to the doorway holding a goat by its horns before it is slaughtered as a ritual to introduce the new member of the family to the living and the living-dead.' (:26).

There are a number of cultural presuppositions in this short passage. Firstly, the ritual slaughtering of the goat presupposes that this act can appropriately introduce the baby to the living family. Secondly, it presumes that the deceased are in a state of living death, (Mbiti, 1990:69). Thirdly, it presupposes that contact can be made with the deceased. These cultural presuppositions ought to be examined carefully as to the possibility that they may be anti-scriptural. Modifications or at least disclaimatory explanations would

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201998, *Communion before Confirmation: The situation in Xhosa speaking congregations: Time for Transformation?* Unpublished memorandum
need to be made before the *imbeleko* ceremony could be incorporated into infant baptism or infant dedication.

Opland tells the story of an oral poem composed by David Manisi which indicates that the ritual sacrifice of *ukukhapha* is still recognized in contemporary African culture (1988:178ff). As recently as March 1988, when he attended an Old English colloquium at the University of California in Berkeley U.S.A., Manisi composed a praise poem for Alain Renoir, his host. The poem was recorded at the time of its utterance, and later transcribed. Lines from that poem translate as follows:

> 'So we kill cattle to go with a man
> when we consign him to our forebears
> he speaks to Qamata for us.' (Opland, ibid)

These three short, almost contemporary lines reveal at least four traditional cultural elements:

(i) the ritual slaughtering of the cattle;
(ii) the belief that the deceased is travelling to his forebears [ancestors]
(iii) the belief that the slaughtered cattle will accompany the deceased
(iv) the use of the name *Qamata* for the Supreme Being.

For the reasons given (above) in connection with the *imbeleko* ceremony, these presuppositions would need to be examined carefully with regard to anti-scripturality.

Nyoka, as quoted by Mtuze (2003:75), effectively links rituals for the ancestors to the Holy Communion.

> 'According to Nyoka (in Wallis ibid:34) the ensuing ritual during
> which a beast was slaughtered and some beer brewed was not at
> variance with the Christian sacrament of the Holy Communion
> in which the body and blood of Christ resonate with the sacrifice
> of a beast and the drinking of some beer.' **21**

The question which arises at this point is: What is the nature, and more importantly the effectiveness, of the resonance perceived between African ritual slaughtering and the Holy Communion?

The whole point about the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ in evangelical Christian theology is that it is “once-for-all” and unrepeatable. This would suggest that the Old Testament sacrifices [and, by

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**21** The reference within brackets in this quotation is to a collection of essays: (Wallis, S.J., 1930, *Inkolo namasiko Abantu*, S.P.C.K.)
extension, any other sacrifices] cannot be compared with Christ's sacrificial death and resurrection. 1 Peter 1:18 sets out the principle that 'perishable things' are not able to redeem us. Hebrews 9:13 refers specifically to the slaughtering of 'goats and bulls' and to the ritual incineration of 'a heifer'. It points out that ritual acts have only ritual effects. Hebrews 10:4 states categorically that 'it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins'. If the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ has fulfilled the sacrificial system of the religion in which His self-revelation is grounded, how much more will it supersede the sacrificial system of a religion with which He was never directly associated. Even if it were argued that appeasing the ancestors does not involve an awareness of sin as such or an attempt to deal with it, associating such sacrifices with the Holy Communion is inappropriate because the latter commemorates our Lord's sacrificial death which does involve an awareness of sin and God's appointed means of dealing with it. The discontinuity gives offence in respect of the Holy Communion and in no way enhances the traditional rituals.

If the scriptural pattern, comprising the New Testament teaching relating to Judaic practice is applied, the relation between ritual slaughtering and the Holy Communion [as outlined in the previous paragraph] would be one of dissonance – a contrast rather than a comparison. The converts to Christianity in Thessalonica provide a model for this issue. Paul said of them 'you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God' (1 Thess. 1:9). This is the observation of a Jewish Christian, and cannot in any way be rejected as cultural imperialism from the West. It is recognized that this argument concerns ancestor veneration rather than the ritual slaughters as such, but it lays down a principle according to which all Xhosa traditional practices can be assessed from a Christian viewpoint.

7.2.2.3 Moral Code

Many of the moral issues which confronted the missionaries in the nineteenth century, such as ritual murders and witchcraft, have since been made subject to national legislation. Where they still occur, they are dealt with as ordinary crimes in terms of the law. Hayes reports that 'o(ve)r 200 people who were accused of being witches were burnt to death in South Africa between the beginning of 1994 and mid-1995' (1995: 1 internet format). Sorcery itself will be examined in 7.2.2.6.
Polygamy, however, remains. The rationale for placing polygamy under “Moral Code” was stated in 4.2.2.3.

In at least one case (Government Employees Pension Fund Form Z864), provision is currently being made for multiple spouses / life partners.

Dwane (1989:118) echoes Colenso's reticence to debar polygamists from church membership (above, p.187):

>'I feel very strongly that the usual practice of enforcing the separation of wives from their husbands upon conversion to Christianity, is quite unwarrantable, and opposed to the plain teaching of our Lord. It is placing a stumbling block, which he has not set........If natives become Christians before their marriage, they would, of course, be allowed only one wife. (Italics MJH).

The italicized phrase emphasizes Dwane's unquestioning stance against polygamy as the Christian standard. This is a significant issue at what Buthelezi calls 'the point of the conflict between two world views: the European and the African' (p.251).

The stipulation of monogamy (1Tim.3:2) specifies overseers [ἐπίσκοποι] and deacons [διακόνοι] (1 Tim. 3: 12). This could be understood to teach that it is not mandatory for ordinary church members. The patriarchs practised polygamy. Deuteronomy 21:15ff actually recognizes polygamy in the code of laws. However, references such as Exodus 20:17 and 21 imply that monogamy was the norm even in Old Testament times. The general tenor of the New Testament also suggests that monogamy is the standard, and 1 Corinthians 7: 2 ('each man should have his own wife' N.I.V) appears to be a categorical instruction. Definitively, the words of Jesus in Mark 10: 7 give dominical authority to what appears to be the narrator's comment in Genesis 2:24, where the nouns 'man' and 'wife' are both in the singular form. It would appear, then, that whereas polygamy is recorded, monogamy appears to be enjoined.

7.2.2.4 Belief in life after death

Mtuze (2003:74-75) cites an article by A.D. Nyoka, which appeared in the collection of essays by S.J. Wallis referred to on pages 272f. Nyoka presents three convincing arguments in favour of the claim that traditional Africans believed in life after death long before Christianity was presented to them. Logically this should
have been presented under 4.2.2.4, but it has been placed here as part of Mtuze's contribution to the discourse. Firstly, 'the (deceased) person's belongings ... were all buried with him', (Mtuze, :74). Secondly, 'blacks show great respect and awe for graves' (Mtuze, ibid). Thirdly, 'the need to do certain rituals on the advice of a diviner whenever unexpected adversity or sickness struck.' (Mtuze, :75).

The first two of these evidences of belief would seem to indicate that the disposition stems more from superstitious fear rather than from faith. They certainly cannot be equated with the Christian doctrine of resurrection, nor even with the Greek notion of immortality. The third depends on a connection between the 'unexpected adversity or sickness' and the person who has died, which implies the belief that the living-dead are capable of affecting the lives of the living.

It is clear that although existing Xhosa belief in life after death can serve as *praeparatio evangelica*, it is not in itself sufficient for the Christian conceptualization.

### 7.2.2.5 Ancestor cult.

Mtuze (2003:53) quotes Benezet Bujo\(^{22}\) to the effect that Christ should be regarded as a Proto-Ancestor, and Dwane (1979:235; Mtuze ibid) refers to Christ as *Inyange lamanyange* [ancestor of the ancestors].

The status of the Virgin Mary was discussed in 4.1.2.4. There it was established that Mary ought not to be regarded as a hero-ancestor. Her status as the mother of Jesus can, however, be reflected in the respect Xhosa people traditionally have for their family, clan and tribal elders.

Dwane claims that the ancestors still have a role as intercessors and that Christ unites their intercessions with his own (1979:235). While the writer knows of no scriptural support for this, the writer to the Hebrews makes reference to a 'cloud of witnesses' (Heb. 12: 1). The context of Hebrews 11 identifies them as the heroes of Israel. They might arguably be regarded as the Judaeo-Christian ancestors. If they, together with the Christian “ancestors” are watching their descendants still on earth, it is not inconceivable that they would

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be praying for them as well. The difference between an intercessor and a mediator must, however, be clearly understood and accepted. If the missionaries could have made this sort of distinction, they might have in the African tradition more of an ally than an enemy. The message for Xhosa nominal Christians is quite clear, and quite encouraging.

Dwane describes the hierarchical structure of Xhosa religion and the status of the ancestors, in the following terms (1989:41):

'...(i)n the religious tradition of the amaXhosa God is at one extreme end and man at the other, with ancestors and people of noble rank as go-betweens. It is nowhere suggested that these mediators are vested with divine attributes, or can exercise divine powers'

With regard to other Xhosa rituals for the ancestors, Mtuze's comment is expressed ambiguously, and one of the possible meanings is rather alarming. Mtuze says (2003:75) 'In this way the living-dead regulate the behaviour of the living, an issue that the missionaries failed to appreciate.' This may mean no more than that the missionaries failed to understand the traditional African beliefs outlined in the paragraph; but, as it stands, the sentence means that the missionaries failed to appreciate the alleged fact that the living-dead regulate the behaviour of the living, and implies that Mtuze himself accepts it as a fact. This is a serious issue. Luke 16:26 seems to indicate that those who have died, whether they are categorized as “living-dead” or not, are unable to contact the living in any way.

Dwane refers to the rite of ukubuyisa by which 'the deceased head of the family is formally and ritually declared an ancestral spirit' (1989:35) and adds, quite significantly, 'Some Christian families will now observe this ritual at the time of the unveiling of the tombstone, a form of service recognised by the church' (1989:35f).

Maboea asserts (2002:36f) that

'African traditional people ... hold that for people to live peacefully in this life, they are obliged to honour their ancestors who must be respected and appeased.'
He insists that traditionalist Africans ‘pray to God through the ancestors’ but ‘do not worship the ancestors’ (2002:77), and points out that the Z.C.C’s ‘believe in one mediator, Jesus Christ’ (ibid). He explains that ‘(t)he ZCC's sacrifice to thank God for redeeming and protecting them' (ibid) but adds, significantly, that [Zionist] ‘(c)hurch members who sacrifice to the ancestors as if they are erecting a tombstone to them, do not let the church know about it' (2002:124).

It is interesting to note David Manisi’s attitude to the Nongqawuse incident (above, p. 194). He is condemnatory but at the same time dismissive. He says ’This was a shameful occurrence, for the ancestors should not talk to a mere girl' (Opland, 1998:33). Manisi blames 'the men of the time' for the tragedy, because 'they allowed themselves to be taken in by this transparent tale' (ibid). Thus, while condemning the incident, he dismisses Nongqawuse's message as a clear deception. He clearly fails to show sensitivity to those who were in the situation and had to react to it, and to describe the tale as transparent suggests that he thought Nongqawuse had invented it. His remark concerning the ancestors' breach of protocol is ambiguous. He could be prescribing to the ancestors how they should conduct themselves or he could be applying a reductio ad absurdum in line with his dismissal of the 'transparent tale'. He leaves his own conviction regarding the ancestors undeclared. It remains clear, however, that Manisi's stance is very different from the credulity, respect, trust and obedience displayed by the people at the time of the cattle-killing incident.

The writer acknowledges the acceptability of the designation of Christ as ‘the Divine-human ancestor” or even “our ancestor” on the basis of the scriptural designation “last Adam” (1 Cor. 15:45).

7.2.2.6 The spirit world and divination

The reference to the cattle-killing incident shows that there is an extremely fine line [if there is a line at all] between divination and the traditional beliefs about ancestors.

McGrath reports about a conference in Oxford, at which he held a conversation with 'some senior Christians
from Nigeria, Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania' (2004:205). Their contextualization of Christianity within the context of African spirituality is highly illuminating. Referring to the 'senior Christians' in question, McGrath says:

'They found themselves having some difficulty appreciating the plausibility or attraction of atheism. From their African perspective, everything about the natural world and human experience proclaimed the existence of spiritual reality... Many villagers throughout this region are highly aware of spiritual forces, which they often seek to consult or control through a complex system of divinations, charms and spells. With the arrival of Christianity, these spiritual forces are understood to have been tamed or conquered – though not eliminated – through the death and resurrection of Christ. The Christian gospel is interpreted in terms of deliverance from spiritual oppression, release from the power of curses, and liberation from the baleful influence of ancestors.' (2004:205-6)

The writer is not aware that any attempt has been made to identify a scriptural point of resonance for this conviction, but believes that Col. 1: 9-14 might serve that end. This reference suggests that the apostle Paul faced problems similar to those faced by many Africans, including the amaXhosa.

There would appear to be no room in Liberal Protestantism for belief in a spirit world such as African traditionalists believe in; but if the over-confident claims of the demythologizers (Richardson, 1969:91f) were to be revisited the stories of the New Testament would be seen to resonate with spirituality such as an African will recognize. Jesus makes substantive claims concerning exorcism (e.g. Lk. 11:19-20) and the Apostle Paul refers to the spirit world as a reality (e.g.1 Tim. 4: 1).

Maboea shows how the ZCC manage to balance the claims of the African world with that of Christian doctrine.

'While members of the ZCC are aware of the reality and influence of magical power which surrounds them, they are confident that God, by His life-giving power, holds a solution for them when they pray to Him in the name of Jesus.' (2002:52)

This resonates with the New Testament view, particularly as it is expressed in Colossians 1:15ff, and 2: 9-10. It is to be remarked that spirits both good and evil are recognized in the Christian scriptures (e.g. 1 Jn. 4: 1) but that these are not understood as mediators between human beings and God (1 Tim. 2: 5). This points not
only to an area of conflict between Christianity and modernism but also to the fact that Christianity has been presented and perceived in ways which Scripture does not support.

Nyoka discusses divination, claiming that '(a)t every divination the presence of a host of ancestral beings is invoked...' (Wallis 1930:34; Mtuze 2003:75). The principle laid down in the Old Testament is that divination is 'detestable to the LORD' (Deut.18:12). The significance of this for this thesis depends (i) upon a recognition of the continuity between Judaism and Christianity, and (ii) the assumption that African traditional divination is the same as, or comparable with, the divination condemned in the Old Testament. The experience of Paul, Silas and Luke in Philippi (Acts 16:16ff) provides a New Testament counterpart to the Old Testament teaching. Luke records that a young girl [παιδισκην] had a spirit of divination [πνευµα πυθωνα]. Alfred Marshall translates this literally as “spirit of a python” (1975:399). William Barclay sees it as a reference to the Apollo myth (1968/1988:232). Greek mythology records that the serpent Python was slain by Apollo, and the inference is that Apollo took possession of the serpent's spirit in the process. Barclay translates the relevant phrase as 'a little slave girl, who was regarded as being inspired by the spirit of Apollo'. Liddell and Scott associate πυθωνα with the Pythian oracle and the oracle of Delphi (1889/1959:710).

This is a very interesting New Testament narrative, which could serve as a base from which to explore the place of supernatural messages in African traditional mythology; but the most significant element in this incident, from a Scriptural perspective, is that according to Luke's record Paul cast the demon out. In terms of the main thrust of this thesis, the references to Apollo and a mythological python must clearly be regarded as non-cardinal, because they are not essential elements in the historicity of Luke's account of the incident in Acts 16. This would, however, open the door for parallel references in African mythology. At the same time, the reference to demons as such must be taken seriously, not necessarily as cardinal to the gospel, but certainly as literal rather than figurative in the story.

Kiernan refers to:
'divining intuitively by means of direct spiritual contact with the ancestors. A general tendency has also been noted of adopting medium divination by female practitioners. Even the name for such divining mediums retains the same root, -goma (meaning drum), across all Bantu-speaking societies in which the divining dance is accompanied by drumming.' (1995:75)

Mtuze refers to 'the need to do certain rituals on the advice of a diviner whenever unexpected adversity or sickness struck.' (2003:75). Mtuze regrets (:79) that 'there is still no hope of bridging the gap between the two cultures on this issue.' He appears to be missing the point here. The issue is not between (modern) Western culture and African culture, so much as it is between the African understanding of the spirit realm and that of the Bible. Hayes says of the Zionists that they 're-contextualised the Christian message for a preEnlightenment culture in which witchcraft and sorcery are part of the prevalent world view.' (1995: 5, internet format). The writer believes that discernment between good and evil spirits is a crucial issue.

According to Hayes ) 'Sorcery may be learned, whereas witchcraft is intrinsic .... 'While this is a convenient and useful distinction for anthropologists to make, normal English usage is not as clear-cut, and the terms have often been used interchangeably (Parrinder 1958:18).' (Hayes, :2 internet format).

V. Light cites R. J. Gehman23 to the effect that '(d)ivination not only reflects a lack of faith in God, but also a hunger for illegitimate knowledge; and witchcraft is a desire for illegitimate power.' (Light, 2009:160f)

The Scriptural standard seems to categorise divination as anti-scriptural. When consideration is given to the African belief that 'the living-dead will tell (an accomplished diviner) about everything regarding people's ailments.......' (Nyoka, in Wallis, op. cit:35; Mtuze, :75) it should be noted that the anti-scripturality of divination is compounded by the observation of the Lord Jesus Christ recorded in Luke 16:26 (p. 265), which pronounces such contact impossible.

7.2.2.7 The concept of Ubuntu

Mtuze draws from the writing of D. Bohm, 24

'As a physicist, Bohm employs the theory of relativity to illustrate that the basic assumption underlying the generally accepted form of mechanism in physics has been shown to be untenable. These basic assumptions crumble even more rapidly when tested against the quantum theory.' (Mtuze, :99)

The clear inference is that since 'the basic assumption' about mechanism has been discredited, the presumptions of Western philosophy should likewise be abandoned. Western spirituality, which is heavily influenced by Western philosophy, would then fall victim to this paradigm shift. Bohm uses the adjective "explicate" to describe the fragmentational world-view of modernist physics and "implicate" to describe the order of thinking he regards as appropriate in what has come to be called the postmodern world-view, (Mtuze, :100). The writer does not imply that Bohm actually used the term "postmodern". The adjective "implicate" has been chosen because of its Latin root meaning "to enfold inwards". The suggestion is that all elements of reality are enfolded in or into one whole. By contrast, the mechanistic theory which Bohm seeks to replace is "explicate" because it sees each entity unfolding within its own 'region of space (and time) and outside the regions belonging to other things'. (Bohm, :177; Mtuze, ibid).

The significance of "explicate" and "implicate" for Western individualism and African Ubuntu is quite clear. The possibilities which this thinking holds for one's understanding of cultures are far-reaching. If the postmodern view, which regards the elements of reality as implicate is accepted, the logical conclusion would be that all cultures will eventually enfold one another in such as way as to cause them to lose their identity. This has clear implications not only for distinctive contextualizations of the gospel, but also for Christianity as a distinctive religion. What is the good news of Jesus Christ in such a situation?

Without entertaining such a far-reaching effect, the writer believes that Mtuze's insight means two things. Firstly, it means that the various elements of reality which make up one's world-view are not to be categorized as "secular" or "sacred" but as folding into one another. Secondly, it means that "spiritual" elements and "physical" elements will enfold one another irrespective of the cultural milieu in which this

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241980, Science, Spirituality and the Present World Crisis, in Re-Vision, vol. 15, no. 4, pp.147-152
takes place. The question then needs to be asked whether this implies that the “spiritual” elements of all cultures are of equal value, and if not, in what way will the enfolding be the same? The assimilationist view will perceive a subordinate culture being enfolded by a more dominant one in such a way that the dominant culture remains explicate; the accommodationist view will see the process, and the resulting culture as implicate.

This _excursus_, however, should be seen more as an analogy than as a model. It serves to indicate the hypothesis that Western Christianity will find it easier to accommodate African Christianity [and _vice versa_] in a postmodern paradigm than it did in the paradigms of modernity.

### 7.3 Assessment

Although the inception of the A.I.C.’s has had an impact upon the life and beliefs of the traditional amaXhosa, there is still a remarkable degree of correlation between the life and beliefs of contemporary traditional Xhosas and the amaXhosa whom the missionaries encountered on their arrival in the Eastern Cape. It would be instructive to compare the beliefs and practices of the three types of A.I.C., Ethiopian, Zionist and Apostolic (Maboea, 2002: 9) in terms of their closeness to Western Christianity. This would produce a fair assessment of ‘(t)he impact of the Western conceptualization’ in practical terms. The topic is commended in 9.3 as an area for future research.

The role of the missionary in discourse with the amaXhosa [Chapter Four] has its counterpart in the work of various contemporary theologians, African and Western, whose contributions should now be applied to the contemporary situation in the Eastern Cape. This is the task of Chapter Eight. Chapters Eight and Nine are expected to be shorter than the previous chapters because they are applying and testing the research material, rather than adding further material to it.
CHAPTER EIGHT

TOWARDS A CONTEMPORARY CONTEXTUALIZATION

The continued existence of traditional African culture is a phenomenon which needs to be addressed in any contemporary contextualization of the Christian gospel by Xhosa theologians. The religion and culture of the traditional African must therefore be respectfully regarded if a presentation of Christianity to the amaXhosa is to be relevant, appropriate and effective, in terms more assimilable by them than the missionary presentation was, or any contemporary Western approach could be. Many Xhosa people value their culture to the extent of holding its categories to be ultimate. Others are seeking ways in which to act appropriately towards their traditions within a sincere and genuine Christian belief system and praxis.

It has been demonstrated that some elements of the pre-Christian culture of the West are still identifiable in Western Christianity (4.1.1.3). This suggests that on a *quid pro quo* basis, acceptable pre-Christian Xhosa elements might be expected to be identifiable in Xhosa Christianity. One of the tragedies of the missionary movement of the nineteenth century is that latitude was not granted to the AmaXhosa such as was granted to the Western forbears of the missionaries.

What Bernhardt has to say regarding the attitude of Christians to other religions (1994:115ff; above, p.22f) is of relevance here, inasmuch as the Xhosa traditional religion deserves to be recognized as a religion within Bernhardt's purview, even though it is not as developed as Judaism or Islam in terms of Pauw's sociological taxonomy (pp.88ff).

What Harvey Sindima says concerning the response of Africans [in general] to the Christian gospel applies to the amaXhosa as much as to any other nation. Although reference is made to 'the missionaries' in this quotation, the situations described are also applicable in the present. Sindima notes

"three kinds of response to the missionary enterprise in Africa. First, we find those Africans who felt their society was threatened by the missionary enterprise; these did not join the new faith. The second type of response represents those who accepted the package of Christian faith as presented by the missionaries... assimilating Western values. Lastly there were those Africans who sought..."
to have both worlds, Christianity and a traditional way of life’. (1994:126)

Although the people to whom Sindima refers would not have been aware of it, the difference between the second and third groups is most instructive. The second group have accepted the popular misconception that 'Christianity' and 'Western values' are coterminous. The members of this group were constantly under pressure from their fellow Xhosas, corresponding to Sindima's first group, who continued to follow the traditional religion. Not only were they associating closely with white people; but also, in becoming Christians, they were perceived to be rejecting their Xhosa identity.

If the third group have accepted the misconception about Christianity and Western values, the Western culture in their Christianity will be mixed with their African culture. Their new culture would be categorized as a “hybrid” culture. This term is used only as a description of the relation between the two former cultures involved; and in no way carries the insensitive and derogatory meaning attached to it in the apartheid era. This group will be considered in sub-section 8.2.1 below.

On the other hand, Sindima is possibly using the terms 'Christianity' and 'traditional way of life' rather more precisely. As the sentence stands, it opens up the possibility of Christianity devoid of Western culture and totally conceptualized in African culture. The nature of the inculturation is crucial. In question is the relation between 'Christianity' and the 'traditional way of life'. If the programme is to incorporate elements into A.T.R', a syncretistic mixture might be produced. This situation will be examined in sub-section 8.2.2. On the other hand the programme could be understood to aim at producing a genuine holistic African contextualization of Christianity, along the lines of Niebuhr's fifth category (p.15), devoid of effective Western cultural influences. This situation will be investigated in section 8.3.

Although according to the basic hypothesis of this thesis, (pp. 76f) non-cardinal elements need not be literally bracketed out of a contextualization, they should be recognised in theory and identified as secondary. This means that in principle, Christianity must be divorced from dependence on the Western culture and inculturated de novo in the Xhosa culture; and that this can be done only by recognizing 'specific cultural elements' in both the cultures involved and categorizing them as secondary to the gospel.
Non-cardinal elements which have been recognized cannot be categorized as 'effective Western cultural influences' which need to be removed, whereas non-cardinal elements which have not been recognized as such continue to be 'effective Western cultural influences' in Xhosa conceptualizations until they are recognized and allowance has been made for them. Only by identifying these elements and regarding them as non-cardinal can a Xhosa inculturation be genuine and devoid of effective Western non-cardinal influences. In this respect, this present chapter will be definitive for this thesis.

8.1 Contemporary Traditional Xhosa Culture
Chapter Seven, particularly 7.2.2, identified areas in which Xhosas traditional culture is at odds with Christianity. The following points need now to be made, as guide-lines for a contemporary contextualization to traditional Xhosa people.

(i) Resonance between Christian baptism and both the imbeleko and the abakweta rituals needs to be examined and exploited.

(ii) The relation between ritual slaughterings and the Holy Communion needs to be examined, possibly along the lines of Maoz's multicultural church (below, 9.1.1).

(iii) The incidence of polygamy amongst traditional Xhosas would need to be investigated. The truth of Holt's report concerning Ntsikana's example (p.168) would need to be verified so that it could be a powerful factor in the case for monogamy.

(iv) Traditional belief in life after death needs to be exploited as praeparatio evangelica, and filled with the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

(v) Ancestor veneration appears to be an ideal candidate for Maoz's multicultural church; but divination would need to be shown to be anti-scriptural and therefore debarred.

(vi) The contemporary West needs to revisit New Testament references to the spirit world in the light of the demise of modernism, and possibly adjust its own conceptualization.

(vii) The contemporary West needs to recognise Ubuntu as a Christian value. It seems to the writer that failure to do so in the past, and failure to practise genuine κοινωνία has been an impediment to the progress of the gospel amongst the amaXhosa.
In more general terms, what Wright says about modernism and postmodernism (pp.229ff) needs to be applied. Older Xhosa pastors should weigh this thinking against the modernist restrictions which Western theological education imposed on them in the course of their training.

Xhosa contextualizers should also recognize the value of presenting the wider understanding of salvation as *soteria/shalom* (pp.38ff) and the extent to which this helps to remove the obstacle of Western individualism.

8.2 Contemporary Ambiguous Culture

In the course of a discussion with the Dutch theologian, Dr. F de Graaf, Van Niekerk expressed his conviction regarding the cultural situation in modern Africa in the following way:

'I agreed we could not offer the Western culture as a solution for Africa's problems. Nor, I believed, could we put forward the culture of Africa as an option for those of the West. In South Africa we need to look for a third solution because neither could supply a spiritual and cultural basis for the other' (1993:72)

The understanding here is that culture is a vehicle for the communication of the gospel. Van Niekerk's term 'third solution' makes it clear that he is postulating a *tertium quid* - a hybrid culture created by combining the existing ones. Over a number of generations, urban Xhosas have become westernized. The demise of *apartheid* has seen a measure of merging of Westerners and westernized Xhosas which has tended to produce a single hybrid culture in some communities. A crucial question is whether Van Niekerk's 'third solution' would entail a hybrid contextualization of Christianity. Such a contextualization would amount to monoculturalism of the absolute kind. There would then appear to be three alternative ways in which cultures could relate to one another in the Christian church in the Eastern Cape. (i) According to Van Niekerk's model, all church communities in each geographical entity would merge to form a single cultural entity; (ii) according to Maoz's model, the culturally identifiable church communities would co-exist within a multicultural church and (iii) according to the monocultural model the cultures would exist separately, in separate churches. This issue will be revisited in 8.3.2.2.
It is generally agreed that the “South African culture” as a whole, is a rich culture, simply because it has multiple roots. The freedom of association afforded by the removal of apartheid legislation has caused South Africans of all races to learn about and appreciate one another's cultural life.

On the other hand, complete social freedom demands not only freedom of association, but also freedom of disassociation. No one ought to be condemned or rejected who wishes to preserve his/her own culture within a multicultural society. There ought to be no problem concerning Xhosa ceremonies from which Westerners are excluded; but equally, it should be understood that certain Western groups will want to celebrate their cultural identity on their own. Scotsmen must not be frowned upon for preserving their kilts and traditional ceremonies in South Africa, any more than should Xhosa women for preserving their umbaco, because all are part of the rich diversity of the “rainbow nation”, the beauty of which is found in the distinctiveness of its colours and their harmonious blending. This is another instance of the principle which recurs in this thesis, that cultural elements must be recognized as such and not allowed to muddy the contextualization of the gospel. It applies in the day-to-day life of the nation.

It follows, then, that South African Christians who wish to develop a hybrid contextualization of the gospel should be free to do so, provided all parties participate freely on the basis of voluntary association, and that all the cultural elements are recognized as such and either embraced or at least acknowledged and respected by all parties to the contextualization.

The task of the Church is to encounter the hybrid culture and at the same time address the remaining separate [unhybridized] cultures hermeneutically. This issue will be revisited in 8.3.2.2 when the question of multiculturalism and monoculturalism will be discussed.

At this point it becomes necessary to differentiate two types of hybridity. The first operates in the realm of culture and in this thesis refers to Xhosa people who, in becoming westernized have adopted Western secularism. The second operates in the realm of religion and in this thesis refers to Xhosa people who have attempted to synthesize A.T.R with Christianity.
8.2.1 Hybrid in culture – secularized

On a secular level, as far as culture in the broad sense is concerned, the hybrid South African culture is already a *fait accompli* in the Eastern Cape and elsewhere. In some communities the original culture remains, virtually unaffected by the interaction elsewhere. Degrees of ambiguity are therefore to be observed in this phenomenon.

Reference has already been made (pp.227f) to Gavin Taylor's perception of postmodern city mission in its hybridity. The Western contextualization of the gospel is not an issue here, because Westerners and Xhosa have alike rejected it. What is at issue is the challenge which is presented in the task of communicating Christianity in a secular society. Western secularists and Xhosa secularists need to hear the gospel in their respective contexts.

Xhosas secularists have adopted secularism from Western influence and are at various stages of discarding their tradition. The contextualization to them would need to take account of both the Xhosa traditional culture which they are abandoning and the Western culture which they are embracing.

In earlier times, Christianity was widely practised in the West, and Western secularists are abandoning the religious traditions of their forbears in much the same way that Xhosa are abandoning their traditions. The gospel needs to be communicated to them with sensitivity to their situation, and in such a way that the claims of Christ are seen to be relevant in today's world.

8.2.2 Hybrid in religion - syncretized

Pauw conducted research in Port Elizabeth which has produced information regarding the retention of Xhosa traditional practices by members of the Anglican, Dutch Reformed [N.G.K] and Methodist Churches, (1974:100-101). He found that 89% of his total sample believed that the ancestor spirits [*izinyanya*] could affect the lives of the living, and that 70% were prepared to attribute actual experiences in their lives to ancestral influence. The crucial question at this stage is: Are the respondents in Pauw's research to be categorized as devotees of A.T.R or as Christians; or is the ambiguity so fundamental that a new description,
such as “Traditional African Christian” should be applied to them?

The communication of the gospel in this context would consist of confirming beliefs and practices which are not inconsonant with Christian standards, though Christians in other cultures might choose not to adopt them. This is another case of multiculturality which will be addressed in 8.3.2.2.

8.3 Contemporary Xhosa Christian Culture

It might seem inappropriate to consider a contextualization of the Christian gospel to a Christian culture, but there are ways in which Christ confronts every Christian culture continuously in respect of its world-view, guiding principles and practices. In the Xhosa context as well as in any other, the precise relation between Christ and the culture needs to be clearly defined.

8.3.1 Christian Xhosa or Xhosa Christian?

This thesis has adopted the fifth of Niebuhr's categories concerning the relation between Christ and Culture (pp. 14f), that Christ transforms a culture. The question is: What happens to the identity of a member of any particular culture in the course of transformation? Would Xhosa people who embrace the Christian Faith regard themselves as “Christian Xhosas” or as “Xhosa Christians”? As an indication of priority, the noun would be determinative in each case. “Christian Xhosa” would be understood to refer to a Xhosa person who happened to be a Christian; and “Xhosa Christian” would indicate a Christian person who happened to be a Xhosa.

Kato asks whether 'national pride or cultural heritage' should 'come before Christ' (1975:175) and points out that 'New Testament Christianity has a strong negative answer to that' (ibid). He goes on (:175ff) to point out that loyalty to Christ, even where it involves renouncing certain cultural practices, should not be construed as lack of patriotism. Patriotism should be seen as standing apart from both religion and culture in such a way that no particular religion should be seen as definitive for any particular culture or for any particular nationality. Kato rightly points out [as this thesis has done in several places] that this is precisely
the major mistake which many of the European missionaries made when they 'identified the kingdom of God with Western civilization.' (ibid). At the time of their initial contact with the amaXhosa, it was assumed, by Englishmen as well as by Africans, that all Englishmen were Christians. The expression “Christian Englishman” would thus have been taken as a tautology. If, by contrast, they could have seen themselves as “English Christians”, their general attitude towards the people to whom they brought Christianity would probably have been different from what it was. In Osborneian terms, nationality should be categorized as a non-cardinal accident. The major hypothesis of this thesis, (p. 86), should therefore be applied to national identity.

It might be objected that Christianity should not be classified as a culture, since people of many different cultures claim it as their Faith. Some might even go so far as to claim that the adjective “Christian” ought not to be used to describe a culture. This thesis would counter such an argument by saying that embracing Christianity involves a change of paradigm which causes changes in one's world-view and consequently one's way of life. It is not implied that Christianity is a culture *per se*; but that, for example, Western Christians live in a paradigm distinct from that of Western secularists. Crucial for this thesis is the understanding that the paradigm adopted by a Christian Xhosa is different from that of a traditional Xhosa. At issue here are degrees of ambiguity. The way in which Christianity stands to a culture has already been discussed in 1.2.1.1 and 2.2.8.

In terms of the context of this section of the thesis, an advance can now be made in the application of Niebuhr's fifth category (Christ the transformer of culture) as follows:

*Christianity gives a particular shape to a believer's world-view in conjunction with the shaping function of her/his (transformed) culture.*

Expressing the latest hypothesis from the viewpoint of the believer rather than Christianity or culture:

*An individual's claim to be a Christian involves a significant and fundamental distinctiveness in her/his life such that, while being identified within her/his ethnico-cultural group of origin, she/he acquires a distinctive identity as a result of her/his religious confession.*
8.3.2 The Christian Community

A distinction needs to be made between “nominal” and “committed” Christians. The use of the terms “nominal” and “committed” should not be construed as judgmental, although it is conceded that in some ecclesiological and evangelistic writing these terms are, in fact, so used. However, in this thesis they are used to describe two positions, both of which have been called “Christian”. The difference is held to be concerned not with ethical, or character judgments, or even with depth of spirituality, but rather with personal decisions to stand in a certain relation with the church and with Christianity.

A “nominal” Christian, as the term implies, is someone who considers it important to bear the name “Christian”, but does not believe that this requires the adoption of any detailed tenets of the Christian faith, or participation in any specifically Christian activity. The difference between such a person and one who is committed to the Christian doctrines and way of life will be clear. This distinction is recognized in 8.3.2.1 and 8.3.2.2.

8.3.2.1 Nominal Christianity

People who hold this position recognize value in claiming the name “Christian”, but do not recognize the need to be [totally] involved in the life of the church or to undertake a life of Christian discipleship. As has already been mentioned, a class of Xhosa known as the “School People” emerged in the missionary era, as distinct from the “Red People”. The former were categorized as Christian on account of their attachment to a Christian mission station. A comparison of the nineteenth century situation with the contemporary situation recognizes the need to distinguish within the category “Christian”, in terms of which the “Christianity” of many of the “School” people, whose profession of faith derived from ulterior motives, have a counterpart in the contemporary situation which is as “nominal”. There were, nevertheless, many committed Christians amongst the Xhosa inhabitants of the mission stations. The ulterior motives of the “School” people of a hundred and fifty years ago no longer apply; but some may still see church membership as a sign of “respectability” or “civilization”. Closely akin to this is the notion that Church membership can bring opportunities to exercise leadership and acquire social power.
The gospel comes to the members of this group as a call to personal commitment. “Nominal” Christians need to see the church, not as a social instrument but as the Body of Christ, instituted in the first place, not as a human structure, nor even as a sort of “spiritual club”, but as the principal agency of the missio Dei to the world. The essence of Christianity is the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. Cultures as such respond to systems of belief proposed to them; but the biblical model for a genuine Christian experience is the response of an individual human being to the individual Christ as Person.

Another possible reason for nominal church membership is that individuals sense a degree of ambiguity within themselves regarding African tradition and fear that active involvement in the church might amount to a betrayal of the way in which they were reared.

The focus in contextualization for this group would seem to be the relativity of the “specific cultural elements” - both those in the contextualization received from the missionaries and also the Xhosa ones. Ways can be found, by recognising all of them as admissible but secondary, for the incorporation of the Xhosa ones into a genuine Xhosa contextualization of the gospel, replacing the Western cultural elements which now have to be unlearned. One is not compelled to betray one's upbringing, but only to forsake any anti-scriptural elements in it.

One specific topic, the revisiting of which might at the same time clarifies the conception of the Lord Jesus Christ, is the ancestor question. This was discussed in 4.2.2.5 and 7.2.2.5. Xhosa Nominal Christians might be encouraged to consider a closer attachment to the Christian Faith if they were encouraged to explore the line of thinking demonstrated at that point in the thesis. Their respect for the ancestors and any fear they may have of displeasing them could both be transformed and redirected by the recognition that the Lord Jesus Christ heads the procession, having 'led captivity captive' (Eph. 4: 8).

8.3.2.2 Committed Christians

The term “committed Christian”, particularly as contrasted with “nominal Christian”, could be understood in such a way that proclaiming the gospel to “committed Christians” might seem to be an unnecessary exercise.
However, there are aspects of the nature of the gospel which make this process needful for them as well. A number of characteristics of the Church, as exemplified by committed Christians need to be addressed.

There are aspects of Christianity in which devotees are seen to be deficient [by Scriptural standards]. A contextualization generally agreed upon by the Christian denominations can serve as a “checklist” and as a means for discussing, perhaps even resolving some of the differences evident in the Christian community.

One is its lamentable dividedness. Besides denominationalism *per se*, and interacting with it, is the phenomenon of variety in worship-styles and pastoral practices arising from cultural / ethnic differences. Two main “camps” can be identified in this connection: the presenter churches and the indigenous churches.

In thesis-specific terms, if worship styles and pastoral practices are not recognised as secondary to the gospel, conceptualizations and consequent contextualizations become distorted and the wellness of the church is undermined. The effect of differences of this sort has become somewhat blurred in recent times on account of the fact that the presenter churches have become significantly indigenized. This development sometimes results in dissatisfaction on the part of some of the members and creates the need for agreement as to how churches should proceed – either by establishing congregations where one distinctive pattern (Western in some cases and Indigenous in others) is followed, or by finding a generally acceptable blend.

In addition to this situation, attitudes and general perceptions are constantly changing even with an ethnico-cultural group. Concomitant with this is the “generation gap” which is common to all cultures. In many cases a solution is sought in providing separate worship services at different times or in different venues, for more senior adults, younger adults, pre-adults, [teenagers and pre-teenagers]. These practical issues might not appear to be relevant to the question of contextualization, but they involve principles which are.

Maoz's definition of culture as 'the why and the way that a group of people do things' (above, p. 11ff), can be extended to his definition of multiculturalism. For him, multiculturalism means 'the existence in a church, national or local, of more than one set of accepted behavioural norms.' (2007:2). Here there is more than one “way”, and presumabably a “why” for each one. At this juncture, Adeney's findings regarding universal values (pp. 75ff), particularly Stage 4, [recognizing the complexities of the cultures] are significant. The
Western contextualization of Christianity could still contribute to the advancement of the gospel amongst the amaXhosa if universal values could be discussed cross-culturally in a spirit of interdependence and a mutual recognition of the equal status of the participating cultures. Maoz approaches the issue in terms of what he calls “paradigms”. He defines “paradigm” in this context, as: 'the general concepts, conscious or otherwise, that inform a body of people and give shape to their norms and behavioural patterns' (2007:3). Changes in paradigms result in changed behaviour in a society, or church.

Maoz bases his multiculturalism on the fact that the local church should be a microcosm of the church universal, and therefore share its demographics. [This thesis find's Maoz's principle to be acceptable, even commendable; but does not hold that it should be regarded as mandatory]. The Word of God per se never changes, and yet its presentation must be adapted to the changing circumstances of life. A further implication is that because different cultural groups or age groups have different circumstances of life the Word needs to be presented to each differently. This would seem to be an argument in favour of monoculturalism and monoculturality, but this is not the case. One of the significant words in Maoz's definition of multiculturalism is “accepted”, in that it implies that in a church, certain patterns of behaviour could be accepted [tolerated] by all without being shared [adopted] by all.

Citing Romans 14:13-23 and 1 Corinthians 8:1-13, Maoz (pp. 12ff) urges that the effect of one's actions upon others is more important than any legalistic appraisal of whether the action is permitted or not. He describes how the patterns of behaviour which the Russian believers brought into the church in Israel gradually came to be accepted by the Jewish-Christian members when they were seen to be scriptural. A reciprocal development took place in the attitude of the Russian immigrants towards the local believers. It is noteworthy that the basis on which the two patterns of behaviour came to be mutually accepted was scripturality.

The Hegelian principle, that the interaction of two or more cultural groups results in paradigm shifts in each of them, producing a new paradigm which all can accept, appears to apply at this point. This begs the question as to the basis on which 'specific cultural elements' can be identified to the satisfaction of all parties
in the multicultural church. The following three questions arise:

(i) Is it appropriate to require members of one cultural group to accept the secondary elements of another?
(ii) What would it mean in practice for a secondary element to be accepted [tolerated] but not adopted?
(iii) What would refusing to adopt an element, while mentally accepting it, amount to in practice?

A meaningful contextualization for each culture needs to be provided, whether they are to co-exist in a multicultural church or be practised in isolation in a monocultural church.

Van Wyk applies the principle of scripturality specifically to indigenous churches. He says:

'It is necessary to assess indigenous churches on the basis of their obedience to the injunctions of the Word of God......

The problem of the church starts when we approach it with preconceived notions of its nature......' (1987:134)

In the first of the sentences quoted, Van Wyk appears to forget that Western churches need to be assessed on the same basis; and in the second sentence, he cites a problem which is especially found in Western Christian theology. The Christian Church is also the Church of Jesus of Nazareth – the Jesus of history and of the gospels. On this consideration, the African approach to the Church, informed by the inter-relatedness of sacred and secular, might well be a better ecclesiastical model than that of the West.

The Christian community is not immune from competing perceptions of Christianity in terms of personal salvation and social responsibility. A contextualization for committed Christians must ensure that the whole gospel, for the whole spectrum of human need, is presented. This implies a challenge and encouragement to those who have a narrow view of salvation to broaden their understanding of the gospel in this regard. It might be commented that this view comes more naturally to Xhosa Christians than to Western Christians on account of the noted fact that the former do not recognize a dichotomy between “sacred” and “secular” whereas the latter do.

Ecclesiology in the late twentieth century has been characterized by a broadening in the understanding of the mission of the Church. Clowney lists the ‘goals of ministry’ as:
'Ministry to God' [worship]; 'Ministry to the church' [nurture] and 'Ministry to the world' [witness]. These three goals intersect with the three 'means of ministry', namely: 'Ministry of the Word' [preaching and teaching]; 'Ministry of order' [church structure] and 'Ministry of Mercy' [social engagement] (1995:199ff). Many committed Christians have a passion for evangelization but very little social concern. Other equally committed Christians spend themselves sacrificially in meeting the needs of their fellow human beings, without necessarily relating their “social/charitable” enthusiasm to a personal devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ. Consequently, they do not recognize the importance of leading their fellow human-beings to see their need of personal salvation. These distortions need to be addressed.

The presentation of the gospel to committed Christians would therefore include teaching and challenging to “be the Church” in the community. This in itself would be part of the nurturing which is involved in the ‘ministry to the church’. It would also be an ideal topic for a multicultural church to consider. The focus for this group would be to recognize that the living Christ is a Person, that serving Him is real and that it involves a balanced spirituality. The implications of this for pastoral training will be explored in Chapter Nine.

8.4 Assessment

It has become apparent that the nineteenth century contextualization of Christianity in the Eastern Cape suffered from two defects. Firstly, many of the a-Christian cultural peculiarities of the Western world-view were included but were not identified as secondary to the gospel. Secondly, many of the a-Christian cultural peculiarities of the Xhosa world-view were recognized as such but were totally rejected.

Correcting these defects leads to an awareness that the form of the Christian gospel can be adapted without compromising its content; but also that the content of the gospel can be compromised if the cultural elements in the world-view of the presenter or the receptor [or both] are not treated appropriately in adapting the form.

A parallel journey to be undertaken by Western modernists moving to postmodernism and traditional Xhosas moving to faith (pp.258f) now becomes even more relevant and promising. The possibility of Western and Xhosa Christians developing their contextualizations together, and thereby...
enriching one another is also an exciting possibility. In the process, “nominal” Christians might be able to see more relevance and more appeal in Christian discipleship than they had before.
CHAPTER NINE
APPLICATION

The purpose of this thesis, which is to facilitate the establishment of guide-lines for a contemporary contextualization for the amaXhosa, can now be made more specific in light of the perceived failure of the initial Western contextualization in that respect [Chapter Four], the effects and legacy of *apartheid* [Chapter Five] and the theological discourse in Africa and elsewhere in more recent times [Chapters Seven and Eight]. This chapter attempts to draw together the findings of the research, and to indicate lines along which the most effective contextualization can be developed by the amaXhosa of the twenty-first century.

9.1 The Task

A number of desired outcomes have become apparent as the definitions in 1.2 have been developed and made specific to the context of the thesis. Before they are named, however, cognisance needs to be taken of the following observation by Anderson:

>'The fact that more people in South Africa belong to churches which originated in African initiative than churches originating in European and American missions, and that in the past three decades the percentage of people belonging to the older "mission churches" has declined from 70% in 1960 to 33% in 1991, raises disturbing questions about the content and relevance of theological training and the curricula of most theological colleges, seminaries and university faculties. In most of these institutions in South Africa AICs in general and African pentecostal churches in particular hardly even feature, either in terms of the content of the curricula or in the theological student intake.' (1995: 6 internet format)

Although Anderson's concern appears to be specific to theological training, the outcomes to be formulated, which are based on the findings of the writer's research, need to be fine-tuned to the situation which forms the immediate context of the contemporary communication of the gospel, in terms of the statistics Anderson has
provided.

- **Culture in relation to Christ**
  At the end of the contextualization process, the receptor group should be able to discern the way in which Christ seeks to transform their culture so as to produce a genuinely Christian conceptualization which is faithful to the receptor culture.

- **World-view**
  At the end of the contextualization process, the receptor group should be able to recognize the paradigm appropriate for interpreting and systematizing the philosophical and theological material presented to it, and thus to re-form its world-view.

- **Gospel**
  At the end of the contextualization process, the receptor group should be able to derive its own contextualization from the conceptualization resulting from its reception of the gospel, clarifying its relation to the historical events which comprise it. Particularly, the group should be able to see in what way Jesus Christ is Saviour and Lord within their context.

- **Salvation**
  At the end of the contextualization process, the receptor group should be able to understand, in relation to their own context, the narrow view of salvation as personal eternal life and the broad view which envisions renewal for all aspects of life and for the whole creation.

- **Communication of the Christian Gospel**
  At the end of the contextualization process, the receptor group should be able to appreciate and appropriate the process whereby the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, revealed in the Bible both as personal eternal life and as *soteria/shalom*, is received; and to initiate ways in which the members of the receptor culture, can be taught the doctrines and be persuaded to become Christian believers and disciples.

- **Heresies and Schisms**
  At the end of the contextualization process, the receptor group should be able to recognize heresies according to the clear light of scripture and church doctrine, and judge them accordingly. The group should be able to identify schisms as being different from heresies, and either adopt, or at least tolerate them in other cultural
In order to set a programme in motion to achieve the outcomes listed above, two basic questions need to be asked:
(i) what type of agency [facility] needs to be developed?
(ii) what type of personnel would be needed to operate the agency?

In contemporary South Africa the State Education System has been secularized. This means that the total responsibility for the propagation of the gospel rests with the churches and para-church organizations. The writer agrees that this is as it should be, and sees a clear indication of the identity of the agency to be used. It follows that if the church and para-church organizations are the agents, the personnel would be church leaders equipped by the pastors and other recognized personnel. A church profile will be constructed in 9.1.1. The pastor/leader profile will be discussed in 9.1.2. The findings of 9.1.1 and 9.1.2 will be applied in 9.2 specifically to B.I.E.C. and its faculty, as an institution at which pastors and church leaders are trained and formed.

9.1.1 A profile of the Church
In this regard, the central issue is whether monoculturality or multiculturality should be the guiding principle: that is, whether believers from different cultures should worship and grow in separate congregations, so that in any given congregation only one culture is represented; or whether Christian communities should reflect the separate cultural identity of the various groups represented in the geographical area served by the church in question, with its members nevertheless still worshipping together as a united congregation. For the sake of clarity, this thesis reserves the terms “monoculturality” and “multiculturality” as descriptions of the nature of the community life of various churches, and the terms “monoculturalism” and “multiculturalism” for the philosophical position, or theological conviction in terms of which the particular type of community life is chosen and developed.

The period reviewed in this thesis from the arrival of the missionaries to the present has made it abundantly clear that monoculturality did not work. The system failed in the early years when “mission” churches were established in separation from “settler” churches, because, even after they had proved their competence to do
so, the Xhosa leaders were not encouraged to conceptualize for themselves. This monoculturality failed because it was exclusively Western. Whether it was unconscious monoculturality or deliberate monoculturalism is an open question; but the principle was not accurately understood, and therefore not wholeheartedly applied. The system also failed in the apartheid years because the church was unable fully to be the church on account of the artificial boundaries which were set to its operation. In this case, there was no 'clear commitment' to the principle. Attempts to introduce multiculturalism in post-apartheid South Africa, are also failing because of a lack of resolve on the part of members of the constituent ethnic groups to make it work. There is lack of motivation because the nature of multiculturalism is misunderstood in many quarters. Church leadership tries to establish “multi-racial” denominations and churches because they believe it is the right thing to do, but no one is completely satisfied. The nature of the envisaged and desired multiculturalism needs to be clarified.

The aim of multiculturalism is not to produce a contextualization which every member of the church could sincerely make her/his own in its entirety. This would involve the merging of the various cultures in a congregation so as to form a tertium quid; which would result in inauthentic existence for all the cultures. What is envisaged is a united congregation in which various cultures participate. The non-cardinal elements of one's own culture are embraced and the non-cardinal elements of the other cultures are accepted [tolerated] and respected in a spirit of enriching diversity.

The contributions of Hesselgrave/Rommen and Kato to the debate about contextualization (1.2.4) indicate some of the areas of cultural distinctiveness which need to be considered. The question is whether customs, language, traditions, liturgy, or dress necessitate the practice of monoculturality; and if not, how they can be accommodated in a multicultural church.

These elements are difficult to classify in terms of Osborne's categories, because they do not constitute clearly scriptural, a-scriptual or anti-scriptural issues. Nevertheless the message which the writer senses is that honest and frank discussion, centred upon Scripture, can remove confusion and misunderstanding between partners in a multicultural church. In most cases it would be a matter of proving that the elements in
question are a-scriptural rather than anti-scriptural. In the process, each strengthens and enriches the other through mutual respect and recognition.

It is noteworthy that in some churches where there is limited African influence, such as historically “white” churches where there has been little transformation towards multiculturality, the younger members of the congregations have developed a worship style very similar in nature to the informal, vibrant charismatic style encountered in “black” churches. It augurs well for the multicultural symposium-style interaction which could take place in local congregations and denominations. This phenomenon is found in “white” congregations in Western countries as well. It is therefore difficult to know whether formerly Western-oriented churches in South Africa which are undergoing these changes in their worship style are taking their lead from indigenous African modes of worship or from overseas; or whether the development is a worldwide phenomenon occurring in all these countries simultaneously and independently.

A brief account of Maoz's multicultural project (p.11f) will illustrate the nature of the agency envisaged. Maoz describes how Russian Christians arrived at his Grace and Truth Christian congregation in Israel, and how they asked for scriptural reasons for the Israeli members 'acting as [they] did and declining to adopt habits of action framed in Russia' (2007: 6). They were asked to explain why they expected the Russians to change, and each side benefitted from this exercise. Maoz describes an important element in the cultural interaction.

'"The Russian-speakers challenged the Israeli norm for abrasiveness while the veteran Israelis challenged the Russian Christian reticence to speak up when a brother errs. Russian speakers rebuked us by their example of courage and evangelistic commitment, and we reminded them of the importance of expository preaching, transparency and accountability.' (ibid)

Maoz echoes the main contention of this thesis when he advocates 'self examination, in the process of which [the church] will seek to distinguish between what is fundamental and the peripheral in its own paradigmatic approach to life' (ibid).
The whole point of contextualizing is that members of each culture can understand the gospel and live their
discipleship in contexts which are authentically meaningful to them. Whether people of other cultures
choose to fellowship with them is a matter of choice.

In respect of the situation in the Eastern Cape, as well as elsewhere, it needs to be emphasized that the
process of contextualization should be a joint process based on the conceptualizations of the various cultures
involved, each being submitted by the multicultural church leadership team or full church body to the
standard of Scripture. It must furthermore be specified and emphasized that it is a two-way process.
Western theologians must be prepared to accept the insights of Xhosa Christian theology, especially in view
of the fact that Western theology is itself in flux. It is also important to take into consideration the position
and nature of Xhosa society as an ambiguous [intermediate] culture within the large-scale society of South
Africa as a whole. As a by-product of this joint exercise, theologians from the various culture groups will
be able to align and update their own specific conceptualizations. Multiculturalism would seem, therefore, to
be the most natural basic model for this thesis.

What follows are guide-lines, based on Maoz's methodology, for churches holding the view that the
multicultural context is the best means of ensuring that the non-cardinal elements in any textualization are
recognized as secondary to the gospel, and that it is God's chosen way for God's church at the present time.
The guide-lines attempt to provide a working profile of the church.

Higgs (1995:119) enumerated four stages for a multi-faith education programme (p.73f). These can now be
applied to Christian “education” in a multicultural church. Firstly, the phenomenological phase could
comprise a series of informative presentations by representatives from each group. In the second phase,
members would share their particular distinctives in the form of discussion or dialogue. Thirdly, the
discussion could be widened so as to attempt to identify the Faith which all the groups have in common. In
the final phase, the church comes together to celebrate its unity and its diversity in whatever ways are
considered appropriate.
This process would be best conducted at local congregation level, but could also be tackled by means of workshops at a regional or even national level. A hypothetical symposium is envisaged, at which representatives from all the ethnico-cultural groups in the constituency of the workshop meet to discuss the communication of Christianity in their situation. This statement of intent presupposes that all participants will be positively committed to both Christianity and multiculturalism. It is also assumed that prayer and sensitivity to the guidance of the Holy Spirit would characterize the whole procedure.

The specific programme might not correspond exactly to the outline given above. For example, a possible modification might be the inclusion of a series of sessions for each group on its own, at which specific topics are examined by means of questions in the form of the following: “What do we believe about, for example, humanity and God, and how can we present this to the plenary session?” The Xhosa group might see merit in evaluating the views of Takatso Mofokeng, Itumeleng Mosala and other black radicals in the Liberation Theology school. The Xhosa group might also refer, by contrast, to the assimilationist thinking of Mtuze and others. They might wish, on the other hand, to explore specific issues such as the theology of ancestor veneration in a Christian context. The statements of the findings of these groups would need to include all the non-cardinal elements each group would submit for acceptance [toleration] by the others.

With the group-formulated response in mind, each group joins the others in plenary session, at which the question: “What are we to understand as the gospel revealed in Scripture?” is posed, in order to compile a definitive statement of the cardinal elements by consensus. This statement would need to differentiate clearly between the cardinal elements on which all are agreed and the non-cardinal elements which some would espouse and the others tolerate. It is emphasized that this does not reduce the gospel to the lowest common denominator of each church group. It is a process which would be reminiscent of the Ecumenical Councils of the early church, and would need to be approached with great care and prayerfulness. Scripture would act as definitive source, and the Holy Spirit would be the arbiter and revealer.

Having compiled the statement, the members would then, still in plenary session, address the final question “How are we to communicate this to our people?” The biblical model for this would be the Council of
Jerusalem in Acts 15. The implementation would then follow, on the assumption that Acts 15:28 (“It seemed
good to the Holy Spirit and to us” N.I.V.) would apply to the findings of this exercise as much as it did in its
original context. It would not necessarily follow that the communicating would be done by members of the
culture addressed, although this would have obvious advantages. The apostle Paul, a conservative pharisee,
was appointed by God to be the apostle to the Gentiles, and each multicultural community would need to be
open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit in this regard.

As previous chapters have indicated, the task of communicating the Christian gospel is not only a
hermeneutical one, but also a homiletical one. What is at issue is not only the production of the best possible
translation of the text of Scripture, nor even the best possible formulation of the doctrines in Systematic
Theology; but also an adequate conceptualization and consequent contextualization of the essential gospel by
Xhosa and other preachers and pastors. Not only must the Christian message be conceptualized to form an
acceptable essential gospel, it must also be communicated to the community in a form they can understand
and assimilate; in other words, an acceptable distinctive contextualization for each group.

9.1.2 A profile of the training and the pastor
The task of a Christian educational institution is to produce students who are intellectually flexible,
culturally adaptive, technologically competent, emotionally expressive and spiritually aware’ (Slimbach,
2001:2). These criteria can be grouped as follows: intellectual flexibility and cultural adaptivity are in the
cognitive area, technological competence is in the “skills” area and emotional expressiveness and spiritual
awareness are in the conative area.

Transformation is an aspect of the required response to globality (6.4). It may seem obvious that changed
circumstances call for a changed approach; but it is also true that circumstances are constantly changing, and
these call for a constant re-evaluation of one's approach. Hovil's findings concerning the training of clergy in
Uganda (pp. 1f) incline him to the view that

'Theological training is very important because of the changing
world. The Church leaders should be able to move with the world,
but not changing the gospel. But if there is no training, they will
be moved without knowing what they are doing.’ (2005:5)

The ideal profile of a pastor, parachurch leader or faculty member informs the outcome of the theological education s/he needs to receive. Such a person will be able to facilitate meaningful transformation so as to achieve genuine multiculturality in the church, and enable the church to transform its mission to the community.

Hovil also draws attention (2005:5) to David Bosch's use of the deliberately ambiguous expression “Transforming Mission” in the title of his 1991 book (*Transforming Mission*, page xv), and his subsequent development of it. Bosch points out that the expression means both that mission needs to undergo a process of transformation, [“transforming” as a participle [gerund] of which “mission” is the object] and that mission is tasked with a transforming function [“transforming” as an adjective describing “mission”]. Thus in order to equip and support parish clergy in a world of change, mission, [of which theological education is a very important part], needs both to be transformed and to transform.

The broadening of the church's view of mission mentioned briefly on pages 38ff needs now to be examined in more detail, with special reference to this thesis. Michael McCoy offers the following five-point definition:

>'In mission we serve the good news of the reign of God as we
(1) witness to Christ's forgiving, saving reconciling love for all;
(2) build welcoming, transforming communities of faith;
(3) stand in solidarity with the poor and needy;
(4) challenge injustice and oppression and
(5) protect, care for and renew life on our planet'. (1998:42)

This definition can be seen to be in line with the broader view of salvation presented on page 35 of this thesis. In response to the issue of transformation in the context of this thesis, the question attempted in this chapter, therefore, is:

*In what specific ways does the contextualization of the Christian gospel need to be adapted in respect of the contemporary Eastern Cape, in order to facilitate the transformation which will enable its people to make appropriate conceptualizations and to correct inappropriate conceptualizations already made?*
It is to be noted that in this question the word 'contextualization' is singular and the phrase 'appropriate conceptualizations' is plural. This intends to suggest that contextualization is a process undertaken by a multicultural church, and conceptualizations are the outcome of the work of the various partner-cultures, each stating its own non-cardinal elements and those of its partners' non-cardinal elements which it is prepared to acknowledge [tolerate]. The history of the period from the arrival of the missionaries to the present day was reviewed at the beginning of the thesis and an attempt has been made to chart the effects of theological, cultural, economic and political activity on the Christian gospel in this country during that time.

There are three possible stances in relation to the difference between the missionary contextualization and contemporary conceptualizations. (i) Some have seen the original contextualization to be irrelevant and have discarded it; (ii) others have attempted to adapt it to the changing context; (iii) still others have opted to hold contextualization and contemporary context in paradox with the implication that it is the context that has “gone wrong”. Those who adopt the second stance [as this thesis does] are aware of advances in Biblical Studies and Theology, which call for a revision of the missionary contextualization, even within the Western context itself.

Parallel to this is the legitimate desire of Xhosa people for a conceptualization they can genuinely make their own. African thought has produced Liberation Theology, Black Theology and various forms of inculturationist and assimilationist theology. These various theologies have been assessed according to the principle of scripturality and guidelines have been sought as to the nature and extent of the elements in each which need to be identified as secondary to the gospel. It is hoped that this has cleared the way for the construction of a programme of pastoral formation to meet the situation. Before outlining the task, the question of methodological policy must first be considered.

The task of pastors would seem to be to make themselves and the recipients of their teaching [learners; applicants for church membership and church members] aware not only of the nature of the gospel as it is contextualized in one's own culture, but also of the fact that unfamiliar contextualizations are to be recognized, even if they differ from one's own, because all contexts are receptor [host] contexts, relative to that of the New Testament.
The corresponding aim of pastor training / formation would be to train theological students with due regard to the contextualization issues as they affect their own culture and to form them into pastors who will be able to communicate the gospel to their own people.

It is helpful, at this stage, to refer to Orlando Costas' description of theological education as

'a task that seeks (1) to form (character, abilities and thoughts),
(2) to inform (mind, praxis and contemplation) and
(3) to transform (values, people, institutions and communities)' (Hovil, 2005: 9)

The sub-categories in brackets in this quotation tend to blur the three main categories somewhat. The writer believes that if the “form-inform-transform” structure were abandoned, there may be a case for subsuming “abilities” [in category (1)] together with the rest of category (2) under the term “cognitive” because of its obvious association with “praxis”. Praxis is cognitive in the sense that knowing how to perform a task is as much a type of knowledge as knowing facts. Similarly “thoughts” [in category (1)] and “mind” [in category (2)] would seem to belong together and are also cognitive. Furthermore, inasmuch as one already has a character [however inadequate] when one enters training, the forming of character [in category 1] would really be transforming and would seem to belong in category (3). The writer sees these as conative. As a transformed transformer, the graduate would need to extend the transformation into 'institutions and communities'. In the process of this training, social and professional skills are developed. In this way, Costas' programme for theological education can be fitted into Slimbach's triad (p. 306) of cognitive, conative and skills areas. The three areas would be reformulated into:

- **cognitive** [mind/thoughts and praxis/abilities]
- **conative** [character and values],
- **skills** [pastoral, preaching and social]

Figure (5)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training Areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cognitive</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>{Slimbach} Intellectual flexibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>{Costas} mind/thought</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conative</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>{Slimbach} emotional expressiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>{Costas} character and values</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It will be observed that in some cases Slimbach's criteria for a given area seem to be completely different from those of Costas [as modified and expanded by the writer]. In these cases the criteria can be seen to be complementary, producing together a fuller area. This schema will be applied in the practical situation at B.I.E.C. in 9.2.

Robert Banks compares a number of models for theological training, but proposes the “missional” model, which 'places the main emphasis on theological mission, on hands-on partnership in ministry...' (1999:144). He elaborates his definition by saying that the missional approach 'has a view of learning that revolves around active involvement in ministry through both practical reflection and reflective practice’ (1999:157). The writer sees this as an over-arching approach to the task, providing for reflection and practice in each area of the schema, [cognitive, conative and skills].

Banks raises a number of pertinent issues regarding the place or role of theological education in relation to the church on the one hand and the academy on the other. With reference to the situation in America, he makes a distinction between seminaries and Bible institutes. By comparison with seminaries, he says:

'Bible institutes ... tend to have a more suspicious, sometimes even negative, attitude towards the academy, but retain stronger connections with the church and with mission agencies.' (1999:208)

Using a Biblical analogy, Banks notes that 'Paul spoke in such academic contexts as Mars Hill and the School of Tyrannus' (1999:210), but also that he 'often taught in, and operated in close collaboration with, the churches he founded' (ibid). In his final assessment, however, Banks says of Paul's work that

'(i)t's proper sphere ... was mission, not primarily education on the one hand or fellowship on the other, even though it contained strong elements of both.' (ibid)
9.2 Practical Aspects: Bible Institute of Eastern Cape

B.I.E.C. does not fit Banks' profile with regard to its 'attitude towards the academy'. The Institute has an agreement with the University of Fort Hare, in terms of which learners are prepared for the B.Th degree. The Institute's 'connections with the church and with mission agencies' are maintained by means of deputation work, but more importantly by the Local Church Placement scheme, which places second-year learners in churches for a brief period to work alongside mature pastors.

The modus operandi of B.I.E.C. has been stated as follows:

'Learners are prepared through:
1) prayer, teaching, guided learning, private study, practice, interaction with faculty and fellow students and mentoring;
2) personal application through discipline, hard work and accountability.' (Light et al., 2008a: 3)

B.I.E.C. is already implementing training in the three areas identified: cognitive, conative and skills, (pp.330ff). Emphasis is laid both on academic learning [Biblical, Pastoral, Theological and Historical] and on praxis [public reading, preaching, evangelization and pastoral care]. In the three sub-sections that follow, the relevant section of Figure 5 has been reproduced as Figure 6, Figure 7 and Figure 8 respectively.

(i) Cognitive.

*Figure (6)*

(Slimbach)    Intellectual flexibility    cultural adaptability
(Costas)      mind/thought             praxis/abilities

With regard to the cognitive element, the course of training includes Biblical Studies, Theology and Christian Heritage (Church History), giving a cognitive basis for praxis and content for reflection.

Cultural adaptability is provided by the multi-ethnic nature of the learner body and the cross-cultural nature of the college activities. The demographics of the urban areas of the province are changing in such a way as to facilitate the establishment of multicultural churches and the transformation of extant monocultural churches multiculturally. At this stage, however, most churches in rural areas, are still monocultural. B.I.E.C. is committed to multiculturalism. Transformation is taking place at the level of the individual
learner. The role of the hypothetical symposium mentioned on page 335 is played by discussion sessions in which learners (mostly “blacks” but including a few so-called “coloureds” and “whites”) and teachers (mostly “white” at this stage) interact and transact around various topics in their course modules. In some modules provision is made in the reading lists for the study of Western theologians and African theologians. In this way consideration is given to what constitutes the cardinal elements in both and the non-cardinal elements in each. The extent to which transformation is experienced by the ‘institutions and communities’ in which the learners minister after completing their training is at present difficult to gauge. This will largely depend on the extent to which people in the institutions [mainly the churches] and the communities at large are presented with a contextualization which they can make their own, in the sense of elements they embrace and elements they respect and tolerate. A means would need to be developed in terms of which this could be measured. A number of the Xhosa-speaking diplomates of B.I.E.C. and graduates of Fort Hare under the agreement referred to on page 311 are fulfilling meaningful pastoral roles in formerly monocultural (Western) churches. Some English- and Afrikaans-speaking students are ministering at various levels in formerly monocultural (Western) churches which are in the process of becoming multicultural.

Evangelistic missions are held twice a year, and learners are required to participate in a minimum of five such missions during their three-year diploma course.

(ii) Conative.

Figure (7)

{Slimbach} emotional expressiveness spiritual awareness

{Costas} character and values

The formation of character and spiritual awareness is regarded as a very important part of the preparation of learners for their future role as pastors, evangelists and/or church planters. In addition to a two-semester module on Spirituality, learners are evaluated by themselves, their peer group, their teachers/tutors and the pastors or leaders of their local churches. This is a multicultural exercise. Those activities listed under ‘Cognitive’ above also have a conative effect.

(iii) Skills.

Figure (8)

{Slimbach} technical competence
The placement system (p.304) also gives learners the opportunity to develop pastoral skills, such as leading worship, conducting funerals and weddings, counselling and conducting church meetings. A course in Practical English provides support to Xhosa learners and other learners whose first language is not English. Two English-speaking faculty members [one a British citizen and the other a naturalized ex-British citizen] are learning isiXhosa, and encouraging non-Xhosa-speaking faculty members and learners to do the same. Courses in preaching and opportunities to preach at chapel services seek to provide skill in that area. The preaching is assessed by faculty members. Computer literacy also features in the curriculum.

It remains now to examine the nature of the content of the theological education provided at B.I.E.C. and assess the extent to which contextualization is taking place which can result in acceptable conceptualizations being developed in multicultural churches. This is important because these conceptualizations become the contextualizations which will be presented to the communities.

An area which needs attention is the cognitive area dealing with thoughts/ideas – the biblical and doctrinal content of the training provided. There is need for development in two areas.

• The confessional area.

The doctrinal position of B.I.E.C. is conservative-evangelical. Many of the learners are Baptists, some are Methodists, some Church of England (CESA), and some Anglican (A.C.S.A). Most of the remaining learners are involved in non-denominational house churches. Some come from African Independent Churches. An interesting recent development at the college has been the inclusion in the learner-body of priests and deacons of Umzi wase Tiyopiya. All these groups must therefore also be considered in shaping the contextualization. The New International Version of the Bible in English is unofficially recognized as the standard text at the college. Some teachers refer to the Xhosa Bible in discussions. The use of dynamic equivalents could be examined more creatively; and to this end, promising learners could be encouraged to study Hebrew and New Testament Greek.
The religio/cultural area.

Learners are not at this stage being actively encouraged to go to their Christian cultural roots in terms of the hymns of, for example, Ntsikana and Tiyo Soga; although they have been exposed to these influences to a certain extent.

It would appear that dialogue between the standards and doctrines of the Institute and the thought-forms and practices of the students' constituencies, following the lead given by Mtuze, would be an effective approach for B.I.E.C.

(i) A limited opportunity for dialogue by the Local Church Placement scheme (p.304); but this needs to be expanded. This type of interaction would provide an objective basis for the cognitive process.

(ii) The dialogue between the College and the Xhosa community is carried on in terms of regular questionnaires, in which the learners evaluate the course content and the teachers' presentations. An annual conference for pastors in the community serves the triple function of upgrading the qualifications of the pastors, facilitating multicultural interaction between the pastors and strengthening relations between B.I.E.C. and the local churches.

The two questions which need now to be asked are:

1. *To what extent is this dialogue being encouraged and implemented at B.I.E.C.?*

2. *What steps need to be taken in order to facilitate the implementation of it?*

An examination of the current Curriculum and Syllabi should provide information towards an answer to the first question.

9.2.1 The B.I.E.C. Courses

9.2.1.1 Curriculum.

A curriculum is understood to be the totality of disciplines [subject areas] comprising a course of training. The curriculum outlined in this thesis is due to be restructured in 2010 to meet the requirements of the new structures being implemented by the Department of Education, but the content of the modules in the courses
will remain substantially the same. Teaching is offered in the following disciplines [subject areas]: Biblical Studies, Christian Heritage Studies [Ecclesiastical History and Missiology] Pastoral Studies, and Theological Studies. Each semester course in each year of study comprises a module.

9.2.1.2 Syllabus

A syllabus is understood to be the totality of modules within a discipline in the curriculum, and includes a brief description of the content of each module.

The syllabus for Biblical Studies comprises the following one-semester modules:

**In the First Year:**
- Old Testament Survey
- New Testament Survey
- Life of Christ (Part “A” in the first Semester and Part “B” in the Second Semester;)
- Introduction to Biblical Interpretation and Preaching.

**In the Second Year:**
- Principles of Interpretation I
- Old Testament Historical Books
- Pauline Literature and Exegesis of Key Passages

**In the Third Year:**
- Principles of Interpretation II
- Pentateuch
- Gospel and Letters of John
- Romans and Galatians

The syllabus for Christian Heritage Studies comprises the following one-semester modules:

**In the First Year:**
Biblical Basis of Missions

**In the Second Year:**

Urban Evangelism and Mission

Theology of Mission (including a brief introduction to Islam)

Church History Survey

**In the Third Year:**

The Church in African Culture

Community Development: Theory and Practice

The last two modules on this list are significant and relevant to the particular constituency of the College and to contemporary society. The first seeks to redress the past imbalance which favoured the Western Culture. The second, given the changed and changing nature of the country's demographics, would be a further contribution to multiculturalism.

The syllabus in *Pastoral Studies* comprises the following one-semester modules:

**In the First Year:**

Spirituality (Part “A”)

Introduction to Christian Leadership

Spirituality (Part “B”)

The two-semester course in Spirituality offered in the First Year, is followed up by surveys and questionnaires in the Second and Third Years. Slimbach's criterion of spiritual awareness (p. 327) is served here.

**In the Second Year:**

Pastoral Ministry I

Counselling I

Preaching (and leading worship)

The placement system (p. 300) requires members of the community (pastors and church leaders) to interact
with the Institute in the learner's progress, by completing survey forms. These surveys ensure that in the process of transformation, the content remains relevant; but it is important that a check be factored into the system whereby it can be ensured that the content also remains true to the cardinal elements of the gospel.

In the Third Year:
Preaching II
Worship and Liturgy
Counselling II

The syllabus in Theological Studies comprises the following one-semester modules:

In the First Year:
Doctrines of Scripture and of God

In the Second Year:
Doctrine of the Holy Spirit; Doctrine of spirits
Doctrines of Christ and of Salvation
Doctrines of the Church and of the Last Things

In the Third Year:
Ethics

9.2.1.3 Observations concerning the Syllabus

The tension to which Sanneh draws attention (1989:173) can still be detected in the syllabi of the college. The modules in Biblical Interpretation would seem to be candidates for consideration in that regard. Although writers such as Kato, Mbiti and Mtuze have been introduced at fourth year level, it might be of value to introduce them earlier in the curriculum, together with Sanneh. An adequate and relevant study guide would need to be produced, to guide students through this content. It is regrettable that, on one hand at this stage few students are taking modules in New Testament Greek and on the other that the isiXhosa Bible is seldom referred to in lectures. Exposure to both languages would be advantageous not only for Xhosa
students but also for English-speaking and Afrikaans-speaking South African students as well.

Another fruitful area would be the Christian Heritage (Church History) modules. The work of J.K.Bokwe on Ntsikana, though dated, as well as that of J.S.Mbali and M.Madise could creditably supplement the reading lists in existence. Janet Hodgson's books about Ntsikana would also reward more detailed study.

9.2.2 Comparative study.

In view of the fact that the majority of the academic staff at B.I.E.C. were trained according to the Western pattern and some were actually trained in Western countries, the extent of the transformation / adaptation of their contextualization to make it relevant in contemporary South Africa needs to be assessed. A comparison of the academic offering of B.I.E.C. with that of a comparable institution in England, [Oakhill Theological College, London], is deemed to fulfill this function. The Doctrine of Salvation has been selected because of its core position within the theological framework of Christian Doctrine.

The Oakhill course deals comprehensively with the major facets of Calvinism and Arminianism, assessing each in terms of Scripture references. Calvinism is outlined according to the traditional “Five Points” framework. Arminianism is presented as countering the Calvinistic doctrine point-for-point. A summary is then given of the New Testament basis. One locus classicus, Romans 9, is identified. Here it is shown that the main difference between Calvinist and Arminian exegesis is that the former asserts that Paul is referring to individuals, whereas the latter sees the passage as referring to nations.

The course proceeds to focus on the respective soteriologies of the two positions. Arminians see salvation in terms of God's “election” of Christ to be our Saviour. They emphasise God's foreknowledge as the basis of His conditional election of believers. The Arminians believe that the “bondage of the will” [which sin causes] makes us dependent on God's prevenient grace. They consider that this clears them of the charge of semi-Pelagianism. The Calvinist position emphasises the unconditional bestowal of irresistible grace which applies an effectual calling to chosen individuals. John Wesley's arguments for prevenient grace are then analysed and assessed.
After a great deal of theologizing around various terms such as reprobation and preterition, and such intricate doctrines as that of the two wills, [the sovereign will of God which respects human freedom and God's moral will that all human beings should be saved and repent], the various understandings of universality and the atonement are discussed. This is classical Western Protestant theology in which the Reformed approach preponderates.

By comparison, the B.I.E.C. offering is theologically very thin. One of the reasons for this is that the Oakhill course is taken by final year B.A.-level and M-level students, [with appropriate differences in the respective assessment packages]; whereas the B.I.E.C. course is for second year Diploma students who may possibly upgrade to B.Th at some time in the future. Another reason is that classical Western theology is not seen as significant or relevant by the amaXhosa. The crucial question at this stage is whether the orientation of the B.I.E.C. module is found to be less “classical Western” than that of the Oakhill module.

The Doctrine of Salvation is presented at B.I.E.C. in a 2nd Year module entitled “Doctrines of Christ and of Salvation”. Because these are two very wide fields which have been combined into a one-semester course, only seven of the twenty-five lectures are available for the doctrine of salvation as such, and a further ten to the doctrine of the Work of Christ specifically. The remaining eight lectures deal with the doctrine of the Person of Christ. The content of the course is predominantly scriptural, with the writings of theologians such as Wayne Grudem, John Stott and Howard Marshall serving as guides. The writer believes that, for example, Sigqibo Dwane might well be added to that reading list. Taking the nature of humanity and sin as starting points, the course proceeds through a study of the Judaic Law to various biblical models: deliverance, redemption, expiation/propitiation and reconciliation. “Expiation / propitiation” might appear at first to be an abstruse concept, but it has been introduced on account of the way it can and should be discussed in relation to traditional Xhosa teaching regarding ritual slaughterings for the ancestors and the important distinctions which Christians need to make in that area.

Although ideally a module on its own, the Work of Christ can, if necessary, justifiably be included in a module on the Doctrine of Salvation. The basic theological study in the B.I.E.C. module comprises
Justification [the objective work of Christ initiating our salvation] and Sanctification [the subjective work of Christ by the Holy Spirit developing our salvation].

In this module, the orientation is generally towards Scripture rather than theological reflection. Such theological content as there is is currently heavily Western. The theologians whose work forms the reading assignments are all Western. The Xhosa element is almost entirely reactive. This is a serious lack, because it means that the Euclidian triangle, (pp. 61f) has not yet been travelled.

One positive feature is that the learners are afforded the opportunity to learn by a supervised application of the “reader-response” method, such that their own thinking constitutes an exercise in conceptualization and contextualization. The long-term aim, hope and desire is that Xhosa theologians will be produced whose writings can replace those of the Western theologians currently being read, and supplement the existing work of Xhosa writers. The Western theology can then play a comparative, rather than a definitive role.

In the interests of multiculturalism, a significant item in this module is the inclusion of a Major Assignment (3000 to 4000 words) on the topic: “The Person and Work of Christ in Modern South Africa.” Its importance is indicated by the fact that the assignment accounts for 50% of the total marks for the course. The Study Guide suggests that about 200 words should be devoted to explaining why it is important to understand who Jesus is and what He did for us. It is further suggested that the body of the assignment be made up of two parts: about 1500 words to develop the historical doctrine of the Person and Work of the Lord Jesus Christ and about 700 words to apply the doctrine to contemporary South Africa. The second of these two sections would show how the doctrinal truths can be presented to the various ethnic groups, and multi-ethnically; the extent of materialism amongst whites and middle-class blacks; nominal Christians; other religions and especially A.T.R (Higgs, 2005:9f).

This assignment has been offered as a step, not only towards multicultural dialogue, but also towards the actual Africanization of the content of theological teaching at B.I.E.C. Inasmuch as this is a diploma course, it might be anticipated that a more advanced approach will be made if and when degree courses are designed
and offered by the Institute. When the curriculum is revised, it would be good to Africanize the module on
salvation further, by considering the *soteria / shalom* debate (pp.38f), so that salvation can be seen as
including the total healing of the human person and the restoration of all creation. This resonates well with
the Xhosa understanding of the unity of sacred and secular.

A further step in the process of the Africanization of the curriculum as a whole, is the introduction of the
Third Year B.Th course of the University of Fort Hare. Typical of the content of this course are Modules

In TNT312, African writers are studied, who regard it significant that Egypt, as part of the continent of
Africa, gives Africa a presence in the New Testament which has often been ignored or down-played by
Western theologians. In TST321 Biblical eschatology is outlined, together with an outline of the historical
development of eschatology in the West, as background to a study of African theologians. The latter
includes a study of the African concept of time. African theology in this area and classical Western
eschatology are then placed in a three-way dialogue with Biblical eschatology.

The retention of Western theology for the purposes of comparison with African theology, specifically Xhosa
theology signifies the conviction that when specific non-cardinal elements [distinctives] are recognized as
such, they need not be a problem for the communication of the gospel. In fact, many students testify to the
enrichment value of such comparison. This has obvious value in the cause of multicultural interaction.

The writer believes that the transformation which has already come to B.I.E.C. vindicates the major
hypothesis of this thesis [that Westernisms, if recognised and regarded as secondary, do not present a
problem for the contextualization of the gospel in Africa]. Furthermore, he sees the implementation of that
hypothesis as a methodological principle which holds tremendous promise for the Africanization of
theological education and pastor formation in the Eastern Cape.
9.3 Possible areas for future research.

The writer became painfully aware, in the process of compiling his research proposal and preparing the thesis itself, of the temptation to stray into bypaths which would broaden the scope of the research so as to make it incapable of being properly handled, as well as rendering the thesis academically unacceptable. It is gratifying, as an epilogue to the thesis, at least to be able to list and briefly outline these bypaths as areas for future research.

1. Aristotle's stance of 'wonder and amazement', together with his approach to natural phenomena as the subject-matter of philosophy might merit revisiting in the light of the traditional African approach.

2. It would be interesting to investigate points of strong resonance between African tradition and the Old Testament. Circumcision is the most obvious, but the tribe and clan structure would also apply. A linguistic analysis of key terms in the Septuagint and a comparison of these with the corresponding Hebrew terms in the Hebrew Bible on the one hand and Xhosa translations on the other, might prove to be an informative exercise within the framework of a thesis in this subject-area.

3. An alternative emanating from this might take the form of a comparison between African culture which resonates with the Old Testament and the contemporary Western culture which has its roots in Hellenism. This would consider whether Christianity might have fared better in the Eastern Cape if it had been presented in its Judaistic form rather than its Western form.

4. Origen's hierarchy of consubstantial rational beings might instructively be compared with the hierarchy postulated in Xhosa traditional spirituality.

5. It would be interesting to investigate any historical link which might exist between certain elements in the theology of A.T.R and the contextualization of Christianity presented in North Africa by Frumentius in the fourth century. This could be part of a comparative study of the Roman contextualization in North African and the Western contextualization to the amaXhosa.
6. It would also be interesting to probe more deeply than this thesis has done into the “monocultural / multicultural church” issue. In what way can a balance be established which takes account of the need to express the unity of the Church and at the same time the need for each cultural group to express its faith authentically?

7. Mention was made in Chapter Two of the relation between Christianity and ethnic identity. It would be interesting to discover whether the removal of residential apartheid will, in the long term, result in total racial integration in one church of each denomination [or a United Church] in each suburb, or whether ethically-based churches will continue to proliferate; and in the case of total integration, to what extent worship patterns will change as a result of changes in ethnic composition.

8. The didactics applicable to the new Africanized content of theological education has been touched on at various points in the latter part of this thesis; but the writer believes that an in-depth study of this issue in the light of sound pedagogical and andragogical principles would be significant and rewarding. A specialized application of this might deal with the extent and nature of Africanization in the content of modules for graduate and post-graduate theological students.

9. One particular aspect of theological education is the issue of language medium, bearing in mind that the amaXhosa experienced a language barrier in the sense that the missionary contextualization was basically in English with translation into isiXhosa by the missionaries themselves, whereas when the gospel came to the Hellenistic world, Greek was the common language of both the Christian evangelists and the host population.

10. It would be helpful to research the nature of the reformation which the African Renaissance requires, so as to provide guide-lines for its development and implementation.

11. The traditional belief that spirits can be enlisted for material gain would appear to resonate with the teaching of the prosperity cults encountered in the present. The extent of interaction and its results might prove interesting and worthwhile.
These suggestions are far-reaching both in terms of historical setting and content. If this thesis becomes the inspiration for post-graduate researchers to take them up, the writer will have achieved one of his objectives for it.
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