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# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **PREPARING THE STAGE – VOICES OF ANTICIPATION**

### **1.1 AN AWKWARD QUESTION**

A pastor is not the same anymore. Something has altered quite dramatically in the theatre of pastoral performance. The world of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is looking for transcendence (trying to find God), for significance (trying to find themselves) and for community (trying to find their neighbour) (Stott, 1988:123ff.). In response, the church must understand itself theologically, organise itself structurally, express itself verbally and be itself, morally and spiritually, if it is going to rise to the challenge of the day (Stott, 1988a:243ff.)

Yet, if so many other dimensions of modern life are undergoing change, it is not surprising that the perception of a pastor is also undergoing its own revolution. The shifting definitions (and there are many) are not always smooth or clearly evident. One has to differentiate aberrations from creative responses, trans-cultural truth from cultural specifics, and all the while trying to keep in focus the impressive figure of Jesus Christ, the One on whom the writer to the Hebrews urged us to fix our eyes (Heb 12:2 NIV). As earnestly as one desires to emulate Christ, there is – as Max Lucado (1998) labours to demonstrate – a great deal of careful analysis of the heart of Christ, a great deal of sensitive interpretation, followed by courageous application that is involved in the process of being 'like Christ'.

Having made the point that the example of Jesus, or Christopraxis (Anderson, 2001:29), is still the touchstone of all things Christian, it is sobering to reflect on whether he would be regarded by contemporary standards to be a good pastor. Certainly he would be an engaging teacher, or a sensational healer, but would he make a good pastor? Since this thesis is approaching things from the vantage-point of Baptists, that same question can be rephrased: Would Baptists really consider Jesus to be a good pastor? Was his

ministry focus different to what Baptist pastors see their role to be, and as a result, therefore, ought we Baptist pastors not to hold the example of Jesus less closely? If we were to embrace the paradigm of Jesus in our efforts to understand the role of a pastor, would we not become so awkward in a Baptist church that we would be asked to resign? When we consider that, according to Chandler (2001:557), the problem of forced terminations of American Baptist pastors has reached "epidemic proportions", and that according to Pierce (1998:27) pastoral terminations among South African Baptists is an 'escalating problem', there clearly is some manner of mismatch that is affecting the tenure and effectiveness of pastors. Harrison (2001:87), too, calls the high turnover of pastoral staff a 'blight' on the churches and argues for a better understanding of the call to preach, that is a common expectation in Baptist circles.

Whether one agrees with Harrison or not, the concern over the dysfunction between pastor and community raises the matter of expectations and role-performance which are in transition in the wider society.

It might be true to say that there have been times when society held a clearer perception of what the holy man, the priest, the minister or the rabbi looked like. A holy man was treated with reverence by everyone. His role was maintained by a careful observance of food rules and by regulations to avoid the disreputable members of the society (Forrester, 2000:72). But times have changed and what made a pastor functionally effective in a previous era apparently is not the same now. Pastors must cope with escalating complexity, increasing expectations of their role, pressure to prioritise professional competence over personal godliness, marriage and family life under threat, and the need to adapt leadership styles (Anderson, 1994:260 ff.). Understandably, pastors project grave uncertainty over their role, which John Stott believes to be one of the notable features of the contemporary church (1989:3). Indeed, what is a pastor these days, and what does a pastor do in modern society? A pastor preaches. Yes, but does that define him, since he also counsels and officiates at weddings and funerals, baptisms and communions? A pastor prays for people. He organises. He is politically active during

times of national crisis and oppression, without losing himself to politics. He leads a group of followers of Jesus (the church). In South Africa, with its unemployment officially standing at 25.5% of the population, as at September 2006 (*Labour Force Survey September 2006:iv*), pastors are being called upon to be employment facilitators. As the AIDS pandemic escalates, pastors find themselves drawn into para-medical support and into fund-raising to meet the need of families devastated by the loss of income and the enormous medical costs. Indeed, the identity of the pastor is experiencing stress (Johnson, 1995:182), which itself is compounded by calls for the pastor to minister out of a steady reservoir of authenticity and confident spirituality (Parrott, 2003:73).

Baptists, of course, have defined the pastoral role in particular ways, as will be apparent later in the thesis, but amid the myriad of expectations, aspirations and demands, the pastor pauses to hear a voice, a faint voice perhaps, that there is something else that is needed at this time, among these people. A faint voice, to be sure, but it is one that must be heard for all its awkwardness.

In registering the peculiarities of such a voice, the author of this thesis has approached the topic with a distinctive perspective that has been shaped by having earned a Master of Theology degree in Practical Theology, with a strong alliance to the social science emphasis found at UNISA. Many of the key dimensions and accentuations of this approach have been retained in the current doctoral thesis. In addition, the author also holds a Master of Arts degree in English literature which opens up another perspective for dealing with the topic before us in a new and original manner. The traditional vantage-point of practical theology is strongly interdisciplinary by nature, and it focuses on the exchanges between theology and the social sciences. In keeping with such an interdisciplinary appreciation, the author of the thesis will bring a third partner into the conversation and correlation of disciplines, by stressing the linkages between theology, the social sciences and English literature. In this way, the practical-theological treatment of a topical problem will be enriched by the original and unique interaction with the background of English literature. In the course of the development of the thesis, then, it is



the view of this author that by critically combining the practical-theological / social-scientific approach with the perspective of English literature, there will be a considerable deepening of the research project.

The presence of English dramatic constructs is evident from the beginning, insofar as the thesis is structured more in terms of a play, at the outset, than merely a critical restatement of practical theology and social science methodology. Many of the chapter headings and sub-headings reflect this combination through theatrical themes of voices, stages and audiences, as the thesis proceeds to explore the dimensions of the artistry of the pastoral role. The structure, however, will preserve the dominant features of a research degree in practical theology, notwithstanding its admiration for relevant literary components. The reader will note that from time to time throughout the thesis the first person singular ("I") will appear. While such a direct form dominates postmodern discourse, its use gives the thesis, here more particularly, a candour and a personal quality which the author feels will enable the project to flow in a literary fashion.

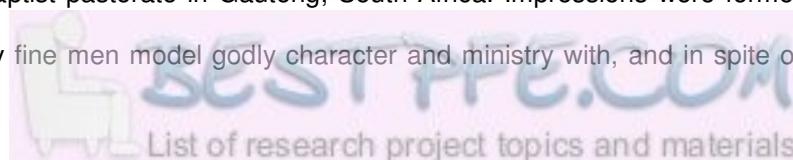
## **1.2 HEARING THE VOICES**

The vagueness implicit in the notion of hearing faint voices can easily be misconstrued to mean that a thesis of this kind is an exercise in murkiness and insubstantiality. Such is not the case, even if the stirrings of curiosity are hazy.

Any investigation starts somewhere, however indistinct. As Alford (1998:21) recognises:

"No work springs out of thin air; it is a historical product, grounded in the intellectual traditions you have absorbed, in the theories of society you have learned, in the audiences for which you write. But it also reflects a series of choices, almost always made with uncertainty, because, by definition, you do not know enough to make the right choices. Constructing an argument is an emotional as well as a cognitive process, a series of leaps of faith, sometimes grounded in hard evidence, sometimes in sheer speculation."

My investigation emerged over thirty-six years of Christian life and ministry alongside other Baptists in South Africa, thirteen years of which took place within the structure of the ordained Baptist pastorate in Gauteng, South Africa. Impressions were formed from observing many fine men model best character and ministry with, and in spite of, their



own personal weaknesses. These impressions interacted with personal reflections on biblical principles of leadership, to produce a tentative expression of authentic pastoral ministry, true to personality and biblical perspective.

Nevertheless a growing disquiet began to arise that something important was missing. With the changes in the South African socio-political scene that came to a head in 1994, Baptist pastors were plunged into a deepening challenge: How were we going to relate to a vastly different church composition and to a disturbing shift in spirituality among the wider secular community? Methods that had worked reasonably well before just did not function optimally anymore. The script of ministry needed to be translated more carefully into the language of a new social audience. Books on pastoral ministry published in the USA and UK did not seem to offer any ready models with which to engage the present ministry climate in South Africa. Indeed, the praxis of Baptist ministry within a South African socio-political and religious setting was suggesting the need for a practical-theological analysis with respect to the two-fold traditions of Scripture and denomination and with due regard for the immediate context.

Denominationally, indications were appearing that Baptist praxis was in trouble. A conversation in 2003 with the then General Secretary of the Baptist Union (BU) and a later conversation in 2006 with the then Area Co-ordinator of the Baptist Northern Association (BNA), a regional official of the BU, gave evidence to the fact that the BU was having to adjudicate more and more instances of pastors and congregations in conflict with one another. Grant Baston, a colleague whose Masters thesis examined the interplay between congregational expectation and pastoral identity, speaks of his involvement on the BU Conflict Resolution Network, where over a three-year period he was faced with in excess of thirty interventions in churches experiencing high levels of conflict (2005:3). Dawson (2005:45), writing from the vantage point of Coloured churches, acknowledges that the manner in which the pastor perceives his role is a major factor in his efforts to prevent conflict. It would seem that a number of Baptist colleagues were

finding the role to be beset with expectations and demands for which they were not prepared, or which were complicated by new factors.

At this juncture, one was simply responding to the discontented voices on the stage of ministry, as it were. A more thorough investigation was necessary to ascertain more accurately what pastors were hearing about their role and identity. For this reason, the research instrument of the current thesis included a survey of the roles of the Baptist pastor (Appendix 1 and 2).

To some extent, the emerging problem is one of Baptist ecclesiology, where the pastor is presented and reinforced by images of authority and practice that are positioned awkwardly with other images of a lay-centred ministry of the priesthood of all believers. The ambivalence in our ecclesiology can be traced to the beginnings of Baptist history. Many of the earliest pastors of the movement (e.g. John Smythe, Henry Jacob) were highly educated men, previously ordained by the Anglican Church from which they broke away (McBeth, 1987:76 & Fletcher, 1994:19, 24). Later leaders were drawn from the working classes with little education and certainly no ordination. Though not necessarily identified as such, a clear difference was developing. A similar tension between educated leadership versus non-educated leadership plagued the beginnings of the Southern Baptist Convention, in the USA, where the founders possessed a good education, while the rural majority was more persuaded that religion was a matter of the heart and preaching was a gift of the Holy Spirit that did not require special preparation (Fletcher, 1994:66). It is little wonder, therefore, that a polarity between the ordained ministry and the priesthood of all believers would persist to the present day and result in instances of conflict. The way Baptists have understood themselves to be the church-in-ministry, with their dependence on the ordained clergy at the same time as expecting the ordinary membership to be vitally and centrally involved in ministry and governance, is an issue that is bound to create deliberate, as well as accidental, conflict and confusion.

Sensing that one's ecclesiology is in need of a new paradigm often leads one to experimentation. As Parrott rightly observes, quoting Quinn: " ' We don't change because it is a good idea; we change because we are in love or in crisis.' New love and new loss challenge identity. Embracing change is a self-identity issue" (2003:76). The momentous transitions (cultural, generational, in worship style and leadership structure), which we, as a church, were undertaking, prepared the way for a paradigm quest that took the research, as mentioned earlier, in my case, into interdisciplinary conversation. The new paradigm in this thesis, understood as a metaphor of ministry, describes the pastor as a 'spiritual antagonist'. Essentially a metaphor is a transference or 'a carrying over' (μεταθορά – *metaphora*). Its sense is drawn from μετά (*meta*), meaning "beyond" or "over", and φέρειν (*pherein*), meaning "to carry" (Bullinger, 1898:735). Metaphors bring into relation entities that would not normally be connected, thereby instigating sudden and fresh possibilities of understanding. To speak of the pastor as an antagonist juxtaposes a spiritual function with a literary-dramatic one, and allows the role of the pastor to be explored and appropriated in a manner that overcomes present obstacles and opens up new creativities. This controlling metaphor is explicated in later chapters.

The voices, muffled though they might have been at the beginning, become just a little sharper. In order to respond with appropriate decisiveness, it is necessary now to clarify the research problem that had emerged.

### **1.3 THE RESEARCH QUESTION**

Much has been written on the role of the pastor. However, the radically altering socio-political and spiritual context in South Africa, which in itself is affected by global trends, is forcing pastors to reassess who they are and how they can respond to a shifting context. If old patterns are changing, it is necessary to explore new ones. The research proposes a different understanding of the pastor by utilising a metaphor of the pastor as 'spiritual antagonist', and it seeks to test the suitability of such a metaphor within the ecclesiological tension of ordained and lay ministry.

Consequently, the research question that this thesis will seek to address is this: **How effective is the praxis-metaphor of the pastor as spiritual antagonist for a renewed understanding of Baptist ministry in South Africa in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?**

Within a question of this form, several related questions will be posed: (1) What is the context of ministry in South Africa in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? This matter will be addressed in chapters two and three. (2) What are the current expectations on Baptist pastors? Chapter four will deal with this question. (3) What do Baptist pastors understand their position to be in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? Chapter five examines this question. (4) What is the proposed role of the pastor as spiritual antagonist? This is a key issue and will be dealt with in chapters six and seven. (5) What implications are there for renewal if we were to embrace the praxis-metaphor of the pastor as spiritual antagonist? The final chapter tackles this question.

#### **1.4 THE AIMS OF THE RESEARCH**

Research of this nature takes place during a time of national and spiritual transition. The work intends to understand those times well and to extract several themes with which the pastor must contend. Furthermore, it is necessary for this practical-theological thesis, through a combination of qualitative and quantitative exploratory research among a sample of Baptist pastors in Gauteng, South Africa, to probe the current praxis with respect to role and ministry, and to describe and test the praxis-metaphor of the pastor as spiritual antagonist, to see whether it offers a new paradigm for ministry in our context.

#### **1.5 A PRACTICAL-THEOLOGICAL STUDY**

The current thesis stands within a theological enquiry that is heavily influenced by the view of practical theology as a communicative theological operational science (Heyns & Pieterse, 1990:46). The discipline of practical theology, itself still in process and therefore self-conscious, has progressed from its early roots as applied theology, or as an extension of the insights of other theological subjects. Sensitive to the biblical injunction to be doers of the word and not just hearers, and cognisant also of the Greek

philosophical duality of pure theory (Plato) and 'phronesis' or 'practical wisdom' (Aristotle), theology has always struggled to come to terms with the twin realities of heaven and earth (Forrester, in Schweitzer & Van der Ven, 1999:17). Central to the debate, over the years, has been the legitimacy of reflecting upon human actions, or **operations**, in the encounter between God and humanity. In order to accomplish this reflection on action, or 'praxis', the discipline has opted for a **hermeneutical** stance to situations (Farley, in Woodward & Pattison, 2000:117), and it has had to differentiate itself from the general theological enterprise, so that it has been in a position to hold **theory and praxis in bipolar tension** (Heitinck, in Schweitzer & Van der Ven, 1999:266) or 'dialogical communication' (Pieterse, in Schweitzer & Van der Ven, 1999: 419). Furthermore, practical theology is persuaded to be **participatory** in opening up the discourse to formal theologians and informal theologians alike, with all their differences and experiences, and to have an ear for the unheard human voices (Swart, 2006:58; Campbell, in Woodward & Pattison, 2000:85). It is compelled to be **contextual and experiential**, for the sake of constructing and giving credence to the view from 'below', i.e. the life-experience of the ordinary folk and the marginalised ones (Swart, 2006: 50; Woodward & Pattison, 2000:14), and it must also be **transformational**, insofar as it seeks to bring about remediation and improvement to situations of life-and-faith (Woodward & Pattison, 2000:13). Lastly, it ought to be **correlative**, so that the operations of Christians correlate and therefore reflect the character and actions of God in Christ (Reymond, in Schweitzer & Van der Ven, 1999:171).

Practical theology has leaned heavily on the social and human sciences for research methods and empirical authenticity (Pieterse, in Schweitzer & Van der Ven, 1999:423), to the point that one wonders whether it is submitting too ardently to secular systems. Nevertheless, the scientific nature of the discipline has afforded it a rigorous interrogation of the interpenetration of life and faith, and it has made the subject accessible to all kinds of enquirers, not only to those of settled Christian conviction. Furthermore, the scientific thoroughness has meant that practical theology has become a professional discipline that self-regulates the presence of Christ-followers in the world. It is as Graham says, that

"Practical theology therefore functions in order to enable communities of faith to 'practise what they preach' " (in Woodward & Pattison, 2000:106). Such self-marshalling forms and re-forms the understanding of what constitutes appropriate godly action. The movement of reforming, says Don Browning (1991:7), starts with practice and ranges through theory and back to practice. Practice is theory-laden and though the theories may not be acknowledged, it is an assignment of practical theology to assist the impetus of critical self-reflection whenever practice confronts a crisis. The theories are then described and evaluated (in the light of a biblical standard), before formulating a different set of practices. Such a "broad-scale interpretive and reinterpreting process... a 'hermeneutic' process" (1991:10) commences at the level of experience (inner core) and moves outward towards an 'outer envelope' that comprises interpretive paradigms, historical consciousness, communities of memory and experimental probes. The movement is a fundamental practical theology which gathers under it descriptive theologising (What within a particular practice are we actually doing?), historical theologising (What do the normative texts that are a part of our history really imply for our praxis?), systematic theologising (What new horizon of meaning is fused when praxis questions are applied to the central Christian witness, and what reasons can be given to validate the new horizon of meaning?), and strategic theologising (How do we understand the current situation? What should be our praxis? How do we critically defend the norms of our praxis in this situation? What strategies should we use?) (Browning, in Schweitzer & Van der Ven, 1999:59; Browning, 1991:55). Browning's commitment to experience at the inner core of his practical theology is challenged and revised by Ray Anderson (2001:29), who feels that a Christocentric focus ought to inform that inner component. Such a criticism is indicative, perhaps of the same kind of ambivalence that one finds in Baptist practical-theology over where one ought to commence the enquiry: with experience or with doctrine.

Having sketched an initial position for practical theology, it is possible for me to set out a personal definition of the subject. Practical theology is *a contextual hermeneutic of discontent that must make transformational sense of the growing awareness of the*

*awkward presence of God in Christ by his Holy Spirit; and the growing awarenesses of human theological-communicative actions.* It invites the participation of the community of ordinary theologians, at the same time as it critiques that community, so that it can carry out its correlative work of bringing into being a group of people obediently and creatively aware of God's liberating actions. Yet in the moment of bringing such a community into being, the seeds of discontent are already sown that will impel the next phase of critique.

Practical theology is thus never at rest with itself, or its operational concerns. In its attempts to correlate awarenesses, it performs much like Gadamer suggests when he talks of a creative fusing of horizons of interpreted reality with those of Christian normative sources (Fowler, in Schweitzer & Van der Ven, 1999: 83).

Several terms, given above, necessitate further discussion, and to this matter we now turn.

## **1.6 DEFINING KEY TERMS**

### **1.6.1 Role**

Building on the insights of several writers (Moreno, in Biddle & Thomas, 1966:6; Biddle, 1979:58; Allutto, 1968:33, 62), I understand role to mean those behaviours expected to be characteristic of one or more persons in a context. As this definition relates to pastors, it will read as *those behaviours expected, by pastors themselves and by other people, to be characteristic of a pastor in a context wherever Christian presence is exerted.* The definition emphasises five key elements of roles. They are behavioural, they are performed by persons (in this case, pastors), they are limited by contextual specifications, they involve a complex arrangement of expectations, including descriptions, prescriptions, results, evaluations and consequences (sanctions and rewards); and they comprise behaviours that are considered to be characteristic of pastors, i.e. that a significant proportion of these behaviours are forthcoming from pastors.



### **1.6.2 Pastor**

When the term 'pastor' is used in this thesis, it will refer to the ordained office, for it is among such respondents that the field research was conducted. However, in applying the results of the research, a far wider concept of pastor will be employed, which will include all those committed Christians who function formally or informally in the capacity of pastor in the lives of other people.

### **1.6.3 Praxis-metaphor**

The proposal of a new praxis-metaphor draws on two fields, the field of practical-theological praxis, and the field of literary metaphor.

By defining metaphor as a praxis-metaphor, the intention is to harness the power of metaphor for the purpose of reconstructed, reflective action. Praxis proposes action, but simultaneously uncovers the actions and practice of people to the critical light of Kingdom values and perspectives, for the sake of continuous reform and correction. Metaphor, at its most basic, is a figure of speech in which a word or phrase literally denoting one kind of object or idea is used in place of another, to suggest a likeness between them (*Merriam-Webster's collegiate dictionary*). Metaphor comprises a complex conceptual transfer of revolutionary proportions between two entities, both of which bear similarities and dissimilarities (Bennett, 1993: 13; McFague, 1982:17, Van Herck, 1999:5).

### **1.6.4 Antagonist and protagonist**

Drawn from the world of literature, the term "antagonist" represents a character who stands in opposition to the main character (or "protagonist") of a play / story. At the heart of most definitions of antagonist is this notion of opposition. The *Concise Oxford Dictionary*, for example, registers an antagonist as an "opponent". Elsewhere, antagonist is rendered as "a character or force against which another character struggles" (<http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com>). As a result of the presence of the antagonist, the main action of the story begins to unfold. The task of the antagonist is to develop certain characteristics in the protagonist. At the risk of being seen as an obstructing force, the

antagonist simply offers a different perspective that is designed to yield growth and development in the protagonist to yield a fully rounded character of a story or play.

Inevitably the issue of conflict is suggested along with the notion of antagonism. Conflict, which can be approached as a negative or a positive phenomenon, is not avoided in this thesis, but is explored realistically as a clash of perspectives that offers potential for both destructiveness and constructiveness. Whatever form results will depend on our understanding and mastering the parts, purpose and power of conflict. These matters will be discussed in chapter six and seven more fully.

The metaphor of the antagonist offers rich correspondences with the role of the pastor in contemporary society, especially in South Africa. These correspondences will be explored as the thesis unfolds. The metaphoric counterpart of the antagonist, i.e. the protagonist, suggests a person or people among whom, with whom and to whom he ministers in an effort to develop and stimulate growth.

#### **1.6.5 Spiritual**

In describing the pastor as a spiritual person, this thesis seeks to discovery – or re-discover – the capacity for awe and mystery in the pastor's ministry stance before God.

#### **1.6.6 Ministry**

The Greek word used by the apostle Paul in Romans 11:13 for ministry is the word, *Διακονία*, meaning 'service'. In its general sense, ministry refers to service rendered to God or to people, and in its more specific usage it brings to mind the officially recognised service of persons set apart (usually by formal ordination) (Ferguson, Wright & Packer, 1988:430). The word covers the professional activities of pastors and religious leaders, including the essential tasks of ministry such as preaching, teaching, celebrating, pastoral care, evangelism and administration. Attention, then, might be given to the organisation of these tasks into a model of ministry that unites variety around a central authority and identity (Colijn, 1995:1).

All too often ministry of this nature is depicted as taking place within the parameters of the faith community, or the church. In tracking the territory of ministry through this thesis, our metaphor of the pastor as spiritual antagonist will press ministry beyond the official core tasks, towards the creativity of response which measures what pastors do against the larger involvement of believing people in a mission of awkward growth and provocative development.

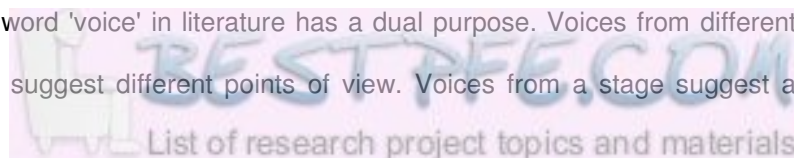
#### **1.6.7 Identity**

Psychologists have proposed many approaches to the understanding of identity, ranging from ego-analytical theorists such as Freud, Jung, Adler and Horney, through socio-developmental theorists such as Erikson, to functional theorists such as Mark Snyder (Friedman & Schustack, 2003:117-158). As such they have emphasised in their definitions of identity the internal, personal and introspective aspects (ego-analytical theorists), or the processes of social integration (socio-developmental theorists), or the individual's motivating behaviours and goals (functional theorists).

Christian identity has tended to lay greater stress on character that is demonstrated in behaviours ("The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love" – Gal 5:6). Christ-centred character and good deeds, as evidence of a changed life, is highlighted by Christian ethical teaching (Atkinson & Field, 1995:65). This thesis, therefore, will appreciate the necessity of inner virtues that equip a person for pastoral competence, but it will also anticipate that the pastor will need to balance such internal quality with a particularly social dexterity, mediated by a governing vision (or metaphor) that seeks pre-eminent approval from God as revealed through the Scriptures and endorsed by the leading of the Holy Spirit in various social matrices.

#### **1.6.8 Voice**

The use of the word 'voice' in literature has a dual purpose. Voices from different literary sources suggest different points of view. Voices from a stage suggest a



similar diversity and variety of points of view. Dissimilar to the timbre of a speaking voice and deeper than the fictitious voices in a literary work, the use of 'voice' locates a core vision of a writer or speaker, a "sense of an all-pervasive presence, a determinate intelligence and moral sensibility, which has selected, ordered, rendered, and expressed... literary materials in just this way" (Abrams, 1971:125). Thus the term highlights both variety of perspective, as well as the presence of a coherent vision.

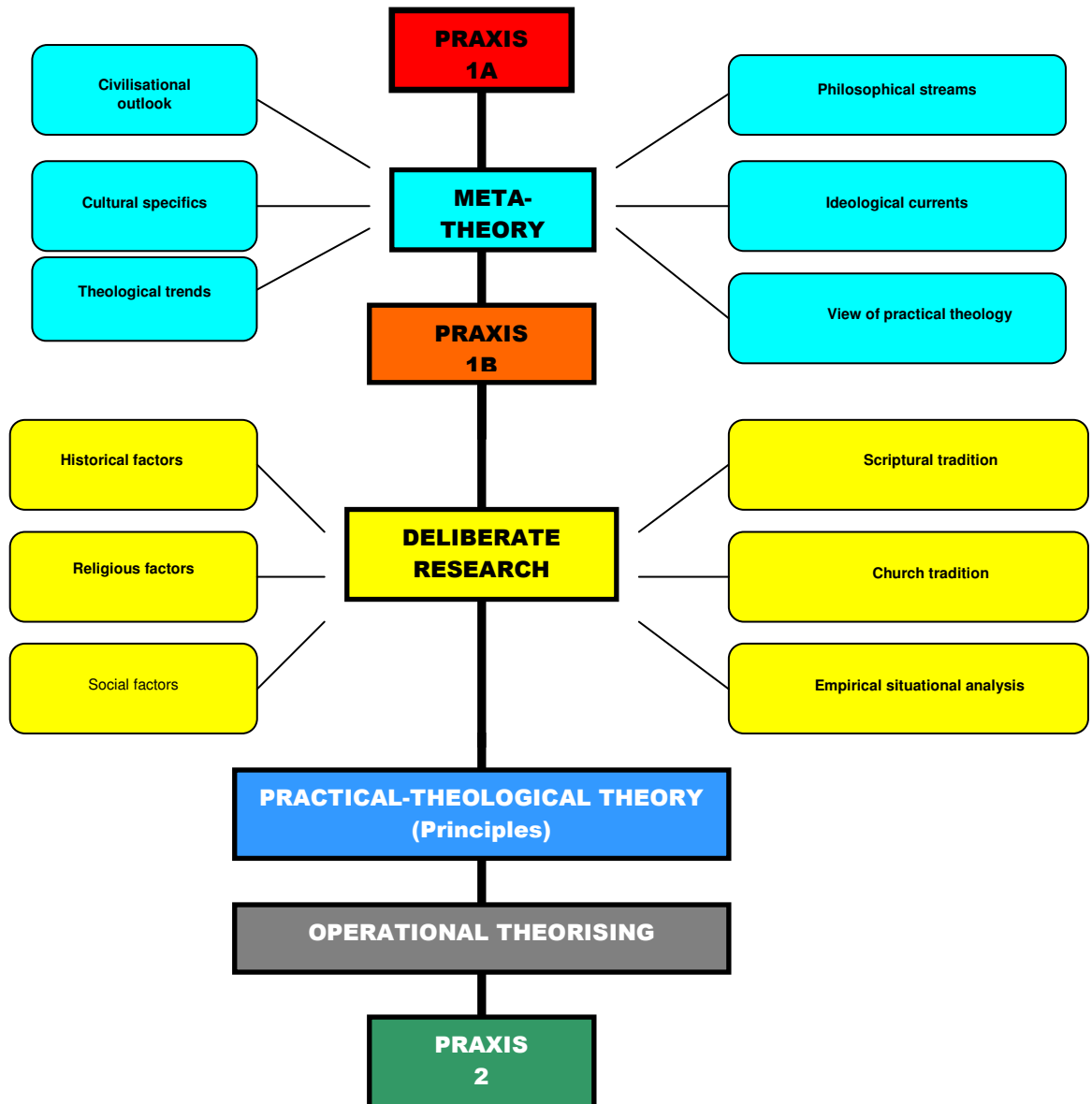
This thesis is especially sensitive to the assorted perspectives that impress themselves upon the role of the pastor and which make his task a distinctive one. The approach of the thesis is also keenly aware that it is adding another voice to the already present array, by its assertion that the pastoral voice is patently antagonistic in its governing perspective.

## **1.7 THE ZERFASS MODEL – PERSONAL ADAPTATION**

Rolf Zerfass (1974, in Heyns & Pieterse, 1990:35) produced a methodological model that is extremely helpful for understanding practical-theological processes. It starts with current praxis, in our case with an aspect of ministry in the Baptist church, and investigates it with respect to the historical, religious and social factors involved. The deliberate research goes on to include the insights of a scriptural tradition in which Baptist praxis stands, as well as the wider church tradition of which the Baptist denomination is a part. The last component of the deliberate research introduces the results of an empirical situational analysis before coming up with a new practical-theological theory. This theory informs the operational theorising that shifts the theoretical principles a stage closer to implementation, on the way to an improved praxis (praxis 2).

Included at this point is an adaptation of the Zerfass model produced by the author of this thesis (see Fig. 1/1, below). This amended model will be used and referred to throughout, and it will be utilised to connect the chapters of the thesis.

**Fig. 1/1 ADAPTATION OF ZERFASS' MODEL**



**1.8 PREDISPOSITIONS (METATHEORY) IN APPROACHING THE CURRENT THESIS**

After acknowledging the initial problematic praxis of Baptist ministry (praxis 1A of the amended model of Zerfass) that has been outlined earlier in this chapter, it is necessary to set about devising a way of addressing the deficient praxis. Such an enterprise will be led by the amended Zerfass model. Yet even as I turn my ear to hear the voices on the stage of current praxis and attempt to understand what is needed, I am aware that my ear has already been trained to listen in certain ways. I am a Baptist pastor. As such, the way

I hear is conditioned by my predispositions of the pastoral role, which now must be declared. In doing so, my Baptist penchant for the personal testimony is perhaps apparent, whereby personal disclosure is offered to help another person to orientate to key values and principles that affect one's decisional outlook. Furthermore, the declaration of one's personal stance – with its biases and emphases – is a critical factor in an authentic practical-theological investigation. As Browning explains:

Honestly and explicitly positioning the social location of the researcher is... an extremely important component of descriptive analysis in the larger practical theological task. The question to be put to any researcher is not only What did you learn? but also How did your interests and social location influence the questions that guided you? (1991:22).

With this in mind, therefore, we turn to the metatheory process of Zerfass' amended diagram by developing the civilisational outlook, cultural specifics, theological trends, philosophical streams, ideological currents and view of practical theology.

### **1.8.1 The heritage of a Western civilisation**

I am a product of a Western mindset that holds various regional peculiarities together under several values that may be emphasised or de-emphasised by those regional groups if one examined them at such a level. Hence, for example, American, British and white South African people might classify themselves as westerners, but would differ considerably in their regional, or cultural, ways. Louw (1995:43) describes the Western orientation under five headings, four of which I find relevant to our discussion. The Western approach is rationalistic and analytical, individualistic, obsessed with achievement and given to abstract thought.

As I approach the study of the pastor and his role, I am set to appreciate the necessity of rationality in determining how a person will apply himself or herself to a task. There needs to be a plan that can be stated unambiguously and which, to some extent, can be measured. With clearer definition and understanding will come greater productivity, co-operation and progress. When a pastor grasps what he needs to do, what he is doing at the moment and why he is doing it like that at the moment, he will be empowered to reaffirm his commitment to his role, or to make whatever alterations are necessary to

bring him into line with his goal. The expectation is that such an empowering will lead to greater satisfaction, both for him and for the people among whom he ministers. Clearly I am a Westerner.

### **1.8.2 Cultural specifics**

At the same time as I am a Westerner, I am also a white African. As such, I am given a predisposition to **directness**, to **gentleness** and to a **range of need** (own words).

My rationalistic, production-orientated heritage from my European roots has fostered a propensity for directness, so that the job can get done in the most expeditious manner possible. Nevertheless, my life in Africa, so far, has given me a profound respect for the gentleness that is sometimes evident in black African community and conflict resolution. The challenge ahead for a white Westerner – with European roots – to relate the metaphor to an African context which has been his birthplace and home is formidable. I am strengthened by Louw's insights into wisdom as a new paradigm for practical theology (1995), for it seems to partner creatively with the metaphor of spiritual antagonist when it comes to the daunting task of doing theology with, rather than for, people on this continent. Louw describes African way of life as being humble, relational, co-operative, accepting, inclusive, dialogical, spiritual and affirming of the sacredness of life (1995:46). I think he is right. I am inclined, therefore to balance the often harsh directness of white western haste with the quiet, softness of black African gentleness. I do so with a conviction, however, that every culture is a fallen phenomenon (broken by sin) and in need of being assessed by Gospel standards.

Africa, of course, has also presented me, quite inevitably, with a range of need: from poverty to affluence, from weakness of one kind (the incapacity of the poor) to weakness of another (affluent arrogance). No problem is ever simple on this continent, and while that does not frighten us into inactivity, it alerts us to the fact that there are many facets of a human situation that must be taken into account. The pastor, working within such

complexity, will find that he is always barely grasping the full implications of the human condition into which he must interpose biblical principle.

### **1.8.3 Theological trends**

The pastoral role, like any other aspect of religious life, is not exempt from the influence of the many theological trends in vogue at the moment. Notwithstanding such variety, this thesis starts from an evangelical theological position. As such, the thesis stands within a Baptists tradition that regards itself as evangelical. Yet to classify a stance as 'evangelical' does not necessarily set forth a clear position anymore. Mohler (1997:8), a president of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, is convinced that evangelicalism towards the close of the twentieth century was bankrupt, and he goes on to explain:

The new developments among those who call themselves evangelicals are strikingly similar to the pattern of the early modernists and liberals. As the century now draws to a close, some evangelicals have adopted the language and the categories of the liberalism which began the century. The evangelical movement was driven by an explicit commitment to stand for biblical truth, even as that truth was under assault by the modern, secular, and anti-supernaturalistic worldview. That is to say, evangelicalism grew out of an explicit rejection of liberalism and modernism. To some extent, evangelicals knew who they were not only by the positive substance of what they confessed, but also by the negative measure of what others denied. Yet, over the last thirty years, evangelicalism has become itself marked by an increasing theological pluralism. Doctrinal diversity is no longer an issue merely extraneous to evangelicalism. The evangelical movement is now marked by theological pluralism and diversity, even concerning the doctrine of God.

Beougher (1998:15) has commented similarly on the fragmentation of evangelical consensus. Nevertheless, the evangelical position embraced in this thesis emphasises the sovereignty of God, the final authority of Scripture for all of life, the all-pervasive effect of sin on humanity (total depravity), the full and complete atonement for sin in Christ's death, the gift of salvation through God's undeserved favour through faith, the need to proclaim the Gospel to all nations without compromise or intimidation, and the visible and personal return of Jesus Christ to usher in the new heaven and the new earth (Elwell, 1984:379).

With respect to the pastoral role, the evangelical position in this thesis will expanded under several common doctrinal headings, below.



**Revelation.** What we know about God has come to us through two primary channels, i.e. general and special revelation. Within special revelation, the three components of historical events, the biblical record and the incarnation together show us the character and action of God, which enable us to work out what God's purpose is in creating the universe, and consequently what our purpose can be. The Scripture (Old and New Testaments) offers us information about God, and it provides an interpretive framework by means of which we can think biblically. Though there might be smaller technical errors within the contents of the Bible, due to the involvement of humans in the formulation of the text, the direction and principles of salvation and faithful Christian living, set out in the Bible, are inerrant.

Such a position will affect the way we come to the pastoral role. We are not without guidance as to how we are to act as pastors. Taking our cue from a God who presents himself purposefully, we can have an impact on the lives of people around us with godly purpose. What resources Christ used to carry out his earthly mission, we can also use.

**God.** According to Erickson (1985:263), God can be discussed in terms of what he reveals himself *to be*. His attribute of greatness classifies a variety of sub-characteristics by which we can speak of God, viz. God is spirit, God is personal, God is living, God never ends and God is constant. His attribute of goodness incorporates his holiness, righteousness, justice, truth and love, while his Trinitarian presence can be, at once, immanent and transcendent. Furthermore, God is revealed not only as the one who is, but also as the one who does, and in this connection we are affirming that God has acted in creating inanimate and animate objects for his own glory and in providentially keeping his creation intact, especially in restraining the effects of evil (Erickson, 1985:345).

No pastor, or Christian for that matter, will ever be God, nor should he strive to be God in the lives of the people among whom he ministers. Yet he can model godliness as fully and as accurately as his faith and growth allows. Increasingly, then, he will represent

Christ to people around him.

**Humanity.** Falling from its noble position as the pinnacle of creation reflecting the image of God, humanity has had to battle with the consequences of sin that has swept through every dimension of life so destructively. Now every human being is born with the defect of sin, from which he must be liberated if his life is to rise above merely an earthly existence.

The pastor, himself having been rescued – and continuing to be rescued – from the grip of sin, must turn to his fellow humans with a word that subverts any comfort that a fellow-generation might try to fashion out of a philosophy that does not draw its life from Christ.

**Salvation.** All hope of rescue (salvation) is centred in Jesus Christ, who is at once fully God and fully human. His death on the cross paid the penalty that sinful humanity ought to have paid, and it broke the power of sin over life. This liberation achieved for humanity by Christ's death and resurrection is brought near to us by the work of the Holy Spirit and is activated as we repent of our self-deification and rely on the accomplishment of Christ in dying and rising for us. Humans who align themselves to Christ are empowered by the Holy Spirit to live through a life-process of transformation into the likeness of God. Justified at conversion, we are continually set apart for the purposes of God (sanctification) until, after death, we fully reflect the magnificence of Christ (glorification). Those who prefer to seek a rescue, apart from Christ, consign themselves to an eternity apart from Christ (hell).

Pastors are to embody the call of God on a person's life, expressing repentance, faith in Christ and ongoing transformation towards godliness. Pastors will challenge perpetually the self-sufficiency and self-centredness of human hope in an attempt to motivate people to seek God more and more.

**The church.** The community of people, given to following Christ's way of life, represents another dimension of the re-embodiment of Christ during the absence of the historical

Jesus of Nazareth. This community (the church) is equipped by the Spirit of Christ with spiritual gifts in order to carry out the divine mandate of making disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that Christ had proclaimed (Mt 28:18-20) under the Father's direction (Jn 12:50). Within the context of the church, with its godly, Spirit-equipped leaders and its opportunity for service, disciples are matured and strengthened to withstand assault on their commitment to Christ (Eph 4:11-16), and to prepare themselves for successive advances into spiritual territory where people can be rescued from Satan's delusions and confusions.

Pastors prepare people for works of service. They play their part in the growth of fellow-followers of Christ towards maturity so that they can take hold of their new liberation from old, deadening and defeatist ways. They labour in both institutionalised structures of church and outside of them. If the current trend today really is away from institutionalised church, as both Cowdell (1996:16) and Barna (2006:13) suggest, then pastors are going to need to redefine themselves in ways that can address the congregation beyond the walls of the sanctuary. The praxis-metaphor of this thesis has distinct possibilities here.

**The end times.** Life as we know it here on earth will not persist forever. Its end will be signalled by Christ's promised second coming. Christ's return will be personal, physical, visible, unexpected and triumphant, and it will usher in the final judgement from which the final destiny (heaven for believers; hell for unbelievers) will be made clear by Christ, the Judge.

Pastors live and act with eschatological urgency, knowing that time is short and people are in peril unless they embrace the new life in Christ, and live in that new life with increasing freedom, joy and productivity.

#### 1.8.4 Philosophical streams

Any practical-theological study cannot, nor should it, insulate itself from interacting with the prevailing philosophies of the time, since we are all affected by the philosophical climate, whether we like it or not. Four streams are noted here as relevant to our thesis.

Secular society, along with a large proportion of the Christian community, is steadily emphasising the advantages of **individual existence**, whereby I am free to decide how my life ought to be lived. The opinions of others – unless they accord with my own – will be resisted as intrusions upon my freedom.

Closely related to the preceding stream is the view of religious **belief as a private matter** that ought not to be challenged or scrutinised too closely. Kretzschmar (1992) is persuaded that Baptists have a particular leaning towards privatisation of the faith. It is not too outrageous to envisage a time up ahead when certain legal structures might attempt to reinforce the privacy of religion, so that it will be an offence to try to change people's religious conviction in any way. Proselytising is already an offence in countries such as Morocco, Libya and other Muslim countries; and in locations such as China, North Korea, Laos and Israel it is resisted, notwithstanding constitutional freedoms of religion (US Department of State, 2006).

**Postmodernism** has changed the religious territory considerably. More of a mood than a philosophical position, according to Marsh (1994:44), postmodernism has reacted vehemently to an earlier modernism rather than to Christianity itself (Janse van Rensburg, 2000:5; Campbell, 1999:433). Though there might be creative ways to engage with postmodernist thought, it has played its part in relativising boundaries and it has dismantled absolutes which formerly helped people to locate themselves with respect to fixed reference points. It has replaced Truth with truths (Groothuis, 2000:11) and though difficult to describe accurately, it would seem to hold at least five core values. Brian McLaren (2000:162) lists them as follows:

1. Postmodernism is sceptical of certainty
2. Postmodernism is sensitive to context

3. Postmodernism leans towards the humorous
4. Postmodernism highly values subjective experience
5. Postmodernism rates togetherness as a rare, precious and elusive experience

Marsh (1994:44), drawing on Miller, takes the critique further by identifying five themes in postmodernism: evolution (everything is in process), relativity (the universe consists of dynamic relations rather than fixed things), indeterminacy (uncertainty lies at the heart of reality), participation (knowledge is not received but is created by our participation) and the negation of transcendence (the conscious denial of any reality other than that which is concretely evident).

The metatheoretical position undergirding this thesis interacts with a postmodern context, but does not embrace postmodernism. The thesis insists that reality can be approached, but never fully grasped because of our human finiteness; nevertheless, a fixed, reliable reality is posited, inasmuch as God is 'fixed' (constant), reliable and setting certain standards which are not open to negotiation by a fallen humanity.

### **1.8.5 Ideological currents**

Since 1994, all religious action in South Africa must take cognisance of a major shift in ideological thinking. Ideals of democracy, inclusiveness and selective non-discrimination have affected our outlook profoundly. We are all trying to work out the best way forward from a dim past and through a hazardous future. Pastors must work with these ideals in various ways and attempt to heal past wounds and limit newly-made ones. They are called upon to respect state ideals without becoming enslaved by state agendas. The selection of leaders in the church is often stretched between the insistence on democratic selection, on the one hand, and the preference, on the other hand, for choosing spiritually gifted people regardless of the wishes of the majority. Leadership and pastoral work is made more difficult by unavoidable sensitivities to racial categories, despite the fact that race is not meant to be an issue anymore.

If that is not complex enough, the pastor must also work carefully with gender-sensitivities as well. The ideological trend in our society favours equality both of value and function,



but the church is not always so easily convinced that such a twin equality is correct or appropriate. Feminists take exception to the ongoing male dominance in church leadership, to the male perspective on history and to the 'maleness' of religious language.

My starting-point for the current thesis is to understand the pressure of ideology on religious action, but always to be seeking to obey biblical priorities. It is my conviction that there is equality of value between people and genders, but not always equality of function. I believe, for example, in male headship, both in the home and in the wider church home. I believe it appropriate to refer to God in male terms, not because the feminine impulse is denied, but for the sake of consistency of headship. As this applies to language, the issue is one of pragmatics. Believing that certain conventions of the English language limit the clumsy options of he/she and his/hers to only one easier form, this thesis will not embrace a non-sexist style of writing. No aspersion upon females is intended by this preference.

#### **1.8.6 View of practical theology**

The amended Zerfass model requires that one's view of practical theology be explained. This has been accomplished under para. 1.7, above, and therefore will not be covered here.

### **1.9 OPERATIONALISATION OF THE THESIS**

Having provided a description of the nature of the thesis as well as my metatheory, it is apparent already that the praxis of the pastoral role has shifted (to praxis 1B) from earlier depictions. It is now necessary to provide a brief summary of the means with which the deliberate research will be carried out.

The thesis proposes, first, to explore the phenomenon of the pastoral role as Baptists might perceive it. It also attempts, second, to introduce a new concept into the understanding of the pastoral role and to test its effectiveness. The exploration will proceed through a combination of qualitative and quantitative research, drawing on the

strengths of each methodology as it exploits survey data-collection, in conjunction with open-ended one-on-one interviewing techniques. The opinions of fifty-two Baptist pastors in Gauteng, South Africa, will be elicited and analysed to help us to ascertain how Baptist pastors conceive of their role and the changes that might be necessary, in the light of an altered socio-religious context, to bring about much-needed reform.

To set the scene, therefore, this chapter (**chapter one**) has primed us for the thesis ahead by identifying the nature of the research problem, by discussing key terminology and by explaining the initial stance of the research. In a sense, the stage has been prepared and the theatre is filling with voices of anticipation.

Following on from the orientation provided by the first chapter, the next two chapters are devoted to the changing context of ministry for South African Baptist pastors. For our purposes, the new context – with its socio-historical changes (**chapter two**) and with its religious shift (**chapter three**) – represents a new stage upon which the actors in the spiritual drama must learn to perform.

**Chapter four** takes seriously the first set of expectation that shapes the manner with which the pastor executes his role. Perpetuating conventions of the theatrical audience clamouring its approval or disapproval of stage performance, the chapter recognises the persuasiveness of biblical prescriptions and of the wider church.

**Chapter five** perpetuates the investigation into the expectations that shape the pastor, this time examining the persuasiveness of the media, and the influence of one's personal encounters with role models.

The impact of ongoing re-enactment of pastoral actions within a multi-vocal setting (of the Bible, wider church, media and role models) is registered in **chapter six**, as 'voices from the stage', where the results of the empirical investigation are presented.

In **chapter seven** the quest for a new metaphor of ministry is undertaken as the stage is searched for a persona who will perform an alternative role to the one that is often depicted for the pastor. We are led to reflect on the antagonist of drama, recognised in literature and in Scripture.

If chapter seven commenced the search and brought us to the notion of the antagonist, **chapter eight** offers a new paradigm of pastoral ministry by presenting a 'strangely different voice' perhaps, but one that is patently spiritual in character and design, whose voice resonates with imagination and provocation to produce startling but wholistic change. Chapters seven and eight stand at the heart of the thesis, as the practical-theological theory that leads us towards a revised praxis of ministry.

**Chapter nine** attempts to operationalise the practical-theological theory by suggesting (still within theoretical parameters) what is to be gained for the future of ministry by conceiving of the pastor in terms of a spiritual antagonist.

With that framework in mind, it is time for us to turn to the changing context within which pastors are called to operate.



## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **A NEW STAGE UPON WHICH TO ACT: PART 1 - A CHANGING SOCIO- POLITICAL CONTEXT OF MINISTRY**

#### **2.1 IT'S ALL CHANGING**

South Africa has entered a new era, both with respect to the socio-political scene and to the religious setting. The cumulative effect of both these contexts is to provide an irresistible impetus for change to ministry. Yet the circumstantial dynamics are complex and multilayered, and they press us to consider options that are not easily acceptable to the religious frame of mind. For these reasons, pastors have not always been prepared to consider the new situation seriously. There is a danger that Baptist pastors (and probably pastors of other denominations too) will oversimplify the forces that are exerting pressure on Christian ministry. Generally, we Baptists have favoured the simplified approach to life. Our love of the three-point sermon tempts us to reduce complexities to easy units, and our adherence to a Baptist principle of separation of church and state has made us believe that we are exempt from dealing with the perplexities of socio-political will.

This chapter and the next, therefore, attempt to highlight some of the density in the relationship between the history of major themes selected by the researcher and the current context in which pastors must operate with integrity, insight and courage. In terms of Zeffass's amended model (Fig. 1/1), we are considering the historical and religious factors of the deliberate research. By deliberate research I understand the intentional investigation of the context and dynamics of the initial praxis, which generates (rather than merely 'collects') source-data useful for the defining and reforming of the praxis. The sources of data will be drawn from human behaviour and characteristics, as well as from the products of human behaviour and characteristics (Mason, 2002:52; Mouton & Marais, 1990:76). In this chapter, and the one to follow, this researcher begins each theme of the deliberate research with a selective and brief historical background analysis to respect the behaviour and the product of earlier behaviour.

## **2.2 SOCIO-POLITICAL CHANGES**

Changing socio-political times have excited certain religious alterations which have registered an impact on the broader religious scene as well as on the Baptist denomination in particular. Selected socio-political themes have been chosen by the researcher from a plethora of possible issues facing Baptist pastors who are occupying this new stage. The seven themes are, as follows:

1. From oppressive apartheid to emergent democracy
2. From segregation to integration
3. From minority domination to majority domination
4. From isolation to globalisation
5. From one-way-is-right to dealing with difference
6. From relatively contained crime to rampant criminality
7. From manageable diseases to pandemic

### **2.2.1 From oppressive apartheid to emergent democracy**

The honeymoon is over, remarked Allister Sparks (2003:9). The harsher realities of political transformation have overtaken the euphoria of liberation in 1994. In that year (1994) South Africa emerged, formally, from the confinement of apartheid, when the first democratically elected government, headed by the African National Congress (ANC), took office. It had been 'a long road to freedom', not just for the then president Nelson Mandela.

One index of oppression could be torture and state-sponsored violence. Human rights organisations estimate that approximately 200,000 South Africans were arrested between 1960 and 1992, and the majority of those were tortured in detention (Chapman & Spong, 2003:4). Real people suffered greatly at the hands of an oppressive regime. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission, established in 1995 by an Act of Parliament, attempted to bring to light the atrocities of our dark past, and by so doing to bring relief and healing to deep wounds inflicted on our national soul. It was as condemning of apartheid brutalities as it was of violations of human rights carried out by the ANC under the guise of liberation (Meredith, 2006:658). Most of the focus, however, came to rest on the viciousness of state aggression.

Another index of oppression could be restrictive regulatory controls and unfair distribution of resources. Beyond the many individuals who endured direct assault, families and communities found their lives confined by apartheid laws that sought to distribute resources disproportionately (Chapman & Spong, 2003:4). The country was orientated in favour of inequality, in a process that was rooted in the earliest Cape settler establishments of the 1600s. Accompanying a lengthy period of inequality came a complex poverty, stemming from generations of multiple deprivation and reinforced by pain, destitution, humiliation and squalor (Terreblanche, 2002:384). Earning capacity was unequal (Chapman & Spong, 2003:4), compounded by a growing unemployment that rose from 20% in 1970 to almost 40% in 1995 (Terreblanche, 2002:372) that went hand-in-hand with an increasingly capital-intensive national economy and a sharp increase in the black African population rate after 1960 (2002:374).

A third index of oppression could be the effect that social organisation has on the psyche of the nation. Psychologically, the scars of inferiority and insecurity are difficult to measure but easier to sense relationally. Nevertheless, writers speak of "Internalised Racist Oppression" and "Internalised Racist Superiority" that have influenced the perspectives of both the oppressed and the oppressor (Venter, 2004:146). It alerts us to a dimension of the suffering that has been endemic to our country, even if not often recognised, viz. the effect of apartheid on the oppressors. Antjie Krog (in Sparks, 2003:167), an Afrikaans poetess, covered the proceedings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and was deeply affected by the revelations. She speaks of her profound sense of guilt and soul-searching as Whites were forced to come to terms with their relationship to the guilty perpetrators. De Klerk (in Sparks, 2003:1, 5, 135) registers how white oppressors, themselves, have been robbed and left confused and dislocated in a country they once thought was home.

Already before the first election of 1994, and within an environment of uncertainty, suspicion and fear (mixed with some hope), multi-level initiatives were underway to transition the country from an oppressive apartheid to democracy. The unbanning of the

ANC, the release of Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners, the CODESA negotiations in 1991 and the many prayer meetings of church groups around the country and abroad that interceded for a better future, all helped to pave the way for a new policy framework that would entrench an understanding of what we deemed to be precious in our national life:

The Republic of South Africa is one, sovereign, democratic state founded on the following values:

- (a) Human dignity, the achievement of equality and the advancement of human rights and freedoms
- (b) Non-racialism and non-sexism
- (c) Supremacy of the constitution and the rule of law
- (d) Universal adult suffrage, a national common voters roll, regular elections and a multi-party system of democratic government, to ensure accountability, responsiveness and openness (*Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*, 1996:3)

Throughout these times of entrenched oppression and the later movement towards freedom, South African Baptist pastors have been ministering as best they could. They themselves have been shaped by historical conditions. Some have taken sides during the struggle and some have preferred to dismiss politics as having nothing to do with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Whatever might have been their approach to the convulsions of our national life, they have been compelled to take up a political position – even if it has been one of denial. Now, in a profoundly revised context, Baptist pastors are coming to terms with their own place in a country vastly different to the one in which they began to minister several years ago. In the process of their own transformation, they are called upon to minister to people who have internalised oppressive patterns and who might have high (even unrealistic) hopes for the emergent democracy. It all makes for a complicated drama.

### **2.2.2 From segregation to integration**

South African history has been one of dividedness and separation. From as early as 1685, marriage between Whites and slaves was prohibited by law (Roux, 1964:23). Separation was to be a principle of administration to keep control and to secure peace in the southern part of Africa (1964:48). Keeping people apart (segregation) might have been a strategy to safeguard weaker cultures from the domination of a stronger, white culture during Sir Theophilus Shepstone's administration of 1848-75 in Natal, but as a

political doctrine it was boosted between 1900 and 1910 by the Report of the South African Native Affairs Commission of 1903, which advocated separating Whites and Blacks politically and territorially. Once the policy had been clarified, it became legislation during the period of 1910-1924 (Davenport, 1978:332).

Politically, black and coloured voters were systematically removed from the voters' roll. Territorially, the race groups were separated by the Natives Land Act of 1913 and the Urban Areas Act of 1930 (with amendments over the years). This was followed up in 1948 by definite cultural separation (entertainment centres, theatres), backed up by the Group Areas Act of 1950 that made it awkward for interaction to occur on a cultural or religious level. Then, in 1953, educational segregation through the Bantu Education Act ensured that children would not learn together (1978:333ff.).

Against the backdrop of 350 years of segregation and 45 years of apartheid, it stands as one of the most amazing transformations, ever, that our society could co-operate in the hazardous and rapid dismantling of offensive legislation, the integration of residential areas, schools and facilities, the negotiating of new public symbols, the assuaging of hostility, suspicion and deprivation, and the redrawing of geo-political boundaries (Sparks, 2003:17). Despite our history, our people seem to have the capacity for adventure.

Many of the current Baptist pastors prepared for ministry during an era when the prevailing mindset favoured segregation. Pastorally this meant that we approached ministry with an inherently compartmentalised expectation. People could be divided into age-groups, racial groups and educational groups more or less on the assumption that we could minister to homogenous entities of experience. In an integrating society, such as we are faced with today, these categorisations are no longer helpful, but we have not equipped ourselves with anything better. Now young people in child-headed households, for example, are experiencing adult responsibilities at a bewildering rate, so that pastors cannot relate to them as children any more than they can regard them as adults.

Integration has blurred distinctions and it has presented ministry with awkwardly cross-designed needs.

Faced with these and other complexities, Baptist pastors are having to lead into territories of integration where they might feel unsure of what to anticipate. They realise that integration must happen, and that they must lend enthusiastic support for an authentic amalgamation in their congregations, but without delay they must devise new ways of relating to a diverse congregational opportunity

### **2.2.3 From minority domination to majority domination**

Integration is complex at the best of times, but the challenge is compounded when the merging groups are unequally represented. In the face of superior numerical odds, any smaller group will be tempted to fear the larger group's numerical power and it will be enticed to preserve itself. Such a tendency was not unique to South African history. Even in biblical times, the Egyptians looked on the Israelite's rapid expansion in Egypt, and instituted measures to curb the new demographics (Ex 1:9-10 NIV).

The early beginnings of South Africa laid a foundation for an uneven spread of population groups. From the time of the Mfecane dispersion of the Bantu at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which was caused, to some extent, by a critical increase in population among competing tribes (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007:125, 127; Davenport, 1978:10-11), through to the establishment of the Cape settlements, the issue of balancing population numbers was a feature of life. The San people, south of the Orange River may have numbered around 20,000 and the Khoikhoi probably numbered around 100,000 when the Dutch settlers first arrived (Davenport, 1978:4). The initial settler population that landed in 1652 comprised a mere 90 people (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007:46). In an unknown territory, those odds would not have made for a great deal of security. Further anxiety among Whites would have resulted from Dutch East India Company policies of importing excessive numbers of slaves to outnumber slave-owners at the Cape (Davenport, 1978:20). It would have been exacerbated by the influx to Natal of indentured Indians in 1860 (1978:76), and by the migration of rural Africans to urban areas (1978:89). In

various historical situations, therefore, an underlying fear of black 'oorstroming' (swamping) made people keenly aware of the weight of numbers. It was inevitable that when the opportunity came, white power would ensure that the threat of domination would not become a reality.

If Whites were alarmed by the imbalance in racial demographics in history, things have not changed much with the passage of years. In fact, the disparity between the groups has intensified, as can be demonstrated in the table below.

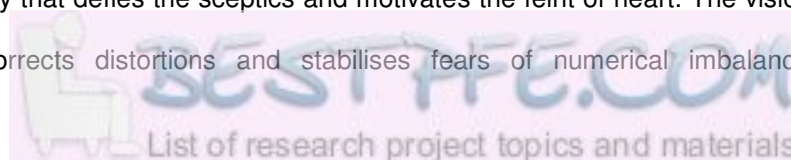
| <u>Year</u> | <u>Blacks</u> | <u>Whites</u> | <u>Coloureds</u> | <u>Indians</u> |
|-------------|---------------|---------------|------------------|----------------|
| 1910        | 67%           | 22%           | 9%               | 2%             |
| 1996        | 76.5%         | 12.5%         | 8.6%             | 2.6%           |
| 2001        | 79%           | 9.6%          | 8.9%             | 2.5%           |

Information drawn from Terreblanche, 2002:381 & from *Census 2001 Census in brief*, 2003:12

Then too, the rural population of the country is burgeoning. It is estimated that between 1985 and 2010 an additional three million people – mostly young people – will be living off the land. This does not include the influx of illegal immigrants from other parts of Africa. The rural population could grow by 40% in 25 years, and the urban population could more than double (Freedman, 1999:58).

Clearly, for the numerically unequal groups to co-exist in a secure fashion, there has to be some facilitator already in place, or one that will need to be put in place, to ensure long-term synergy, rather than cultural compression. It may well be that leadership, both secular and religious, will become even more critical in providing a vision of creative interrelation. As Freedman says, inspired by Nelson Mandela: "We need political, community and business leaders to create and communicate brave, powerful visions" (1999:4).

Baptist pastors (like all Christian pastors) are uniquely placed in the generating of vision. Their work is inspired by revelation and creative biblical precedent that combines to offer a view of society that defies the sceptics and motivates the feint of heart. The vision they put forward corrects distortions and stabilises fears of numerical imbalances by



encouraging worshippers to place their hope and confidence in a God who has a heart for the nations, not just for one cultural group. To what extent Baptist pastors are truly responding to biblical vision for the future of our land, rather than parochial irrelevancies, remains to be seen. Whatever they do, Baptist pastors will have congregations of unequal proportions, and they will have to minister in a way that does not rely on forms of domination. They have the extraordinary privilege of lifting the gaze of many people to consider issues that transcend the interests of the people-group from which their congregants come, and they have the chance to shift the reliance of their people from a confidence undergirded by strength of numbers to a assurance supported by the biblical identity of the 'people of God'.

#### **2.2.4 From isolation to globalisation**

The passage of nations from relative isolation to greater interrelation is itself a complicated business and one that is controversial. Our world is propelling itself inevitably in the direction of a globalised self-identity, but it is one that is highly ambiguous. There are those (Sumner, 2003, for example, list twenty-two academics, whom he labels 'rampants' or 'spikeys') who are persuaded that globalisation has benefited poorer communities by replacing the restrictions of resources and opportunity with greater diversity and personal empowerment, which has led to growth and the reduction of poverty. Sumner acknowledges that there are similar numbers of academics who are not convinced that globalisation has delivered as many benefits as it has problems. Gnanadason (2005) is one of them who believes we cannot remain ambivalent in our response to the phenomenon, because its impact on the Third World has been dehumanising. After reviewing some of the literature in the field, the researcher of this thesis finds himself more sympathetic to the negative estimation of the overall effect of globalisation.

##### **2.2.4.1 Globalisation: History, boycotts and rapid transformation**

Trade routes linking South Africa with other parts of the world, and vested interests in South Africa by other nations, have naturally drawn the country into relationship with other powers. That ordinary South African soldiers and airmen played their part in World



War 2 (WW2), that General Smuts was a member of Winston Churchill's war cabinet, and that Smuts was co-instrumental in the setting up of the United Nations (UN) all signified to some extent that South Africa was intimately associated with wider world issues. However, after WW2 the world would be especially reticent about policies of racial dominance in the light of the Nazi experiment (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007: 313), and South Africa's racial policies, pertaining to the Indian question, were introduced to the agenda of the first UN meeting in 1946 (*UN General Assembly Resolution 44(I), 1948*) where it would stay for several General Assemblies. In 1952, following the Defiance Campaign in South Africa, the country was again before the agenda of the UN (*UN General Assembly Resolution 721(VIII), 1953*). The attitude of other nations generally favoured an internal solution to the nation's problems, but this approach would change in time as anti-apartheid sentiment encouraged the use of sanctions.

The first punitive measures were largely voluntary in the form of UN Resolution 1761 of 1962, requesting member states to break off diplomatic relations with South Africa, close ports to South African craft, boycott the import and export of all South African goods including weaponry, and refuse landing rights to South African aircraft (*UN General Assembly Resolution 1761(XVII), 1962*). For states that were unsure of whether apartheid really was as pernicious as it was described, the UN helped to define apartheid as a crime (*UN General Assembly Resolution 3068(XXVII), 1973*). The Gleneagles Agreement of 1977 isolated South African sport, and the Sullivan Principles of the same year sought to pressurise General Motors (and other businesses) into trading with another country only if they abided by certain fair principles (*Sullivan Principles, 1977*). The most damaging economic sanction that affected the country came when Chase Manhattan Bank became nervous that South Africa was a financial risk because of its growing instability, and the bank refused in 1985 to roll over outstanding loans to the South African government (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007:390). In the mid-1980s a concerted effort to force the hand of the South African government was mounted by the European Community and the Commonwealth with its trade and financial sanctions. To strengthen their hand against South Africa, the USA brought its Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of

1986 (CAAA) which called for severe restrictions on loans to South Africa and for bans on iron, steel, coal, uranium, textiles and agricultural goods (strategic materials, diamonds and gold were conveniently excluded from the ban!). These bans were to be in force until certain political objectives were achieved (Levy, 1999:7; CAAA, 1986).

To further intensify the isolation, boycotts of South African academics and academic material sought to cut South Africa off intellectually and culturally. Yet, as Lancaster and Haricombe point out, the action was more symbolic than effective and probably severed South Africans from the very impetus to reform (in Crawshaw, 1995:4, 136).

The effectiveness of the sanctions in bringing about regime-change is debatable. While ANC supporters connect changes with the sanctions (cf. Levy, 1999:3), others argue differently (such as Levy, 1999, De Klerk, 2004, Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007), saying that the primary impact was psychological in that the nation sensed its isolation more keenly than before. While the isolation, according to De Klerk, strengthened the resolve of the government and many of the Whites to stand together – and it produced some surprising spin-offs for the development of the South African oil, arms and technology industries – the sense of isolation resonated with the mentality of separateness with which our history has had a long association.

With the 1994 election, South Africans came in from the cold, as it were. The challenge continues to be one of transforming a country from an isolationist, siege economy into a participant in the new world marketplace (Sparks, 2003:18). But the passage into the global world is not for the feint-hearted. If South Africans imagined the re-introduction to the world would be greeted with massive handouts and generous rewards for a long struggle, it is finding that the 'level playing fields' are ruthlessly competitive and frequently destructive. Skills are in demand, not badges of suffering. Technological agility and high-end organisational ability is suddenly expected from a citizenry that has plentiful supplies of unskilled labour. At the whim of foreign financiers, whose instincts can set in motion panic-trading that affects millions of lives on the ground (2003: 207), the irreversible

system of globalisation generates disproportionate amounts of wealth that are in the hands of a few. At the same time the poverty gap widens between these new celebrities and the masses who are falling behind (2003:203). No longer is it the minority of Whites in South Africa who are grasping the treasures; it is now the international elite in London, New York, Zurich and Hong Kong.

The impact of globalisation is also being measured in terms of culture, sexuality, marriage, the family and religion, as new patterns are replacing traditional ones in a potentially dangerous confrontation (2003:205). The inherent selfishness of the global perspective is leading us, says Nürnberger (2007:213), towards persistent discrepancies, marginalisation of the unwanted, competition, consumerism, ecological strain, new weaponry, a loss of responsibility and a loss of a sense of the whole.

The way ahead is not a phenomenon that we can choose to avoid. Various described as internationalisation, liberalisation, universalisation, modernisation, or respatialisation (Scholte, 2005:16), globalisation affects each of these five aspects of social organisation: geography, production, governance, identity and knowledge (2005:22). It is not merely a new way of trading with more people across greater distances. According to Scholte, it is "a reconfiguration of social geography marked by the growth of transplanetary and supraterritorial connections between people" (2005:8). It is both a cause and an effect, but it represents a new mindset whereby the world – and our place in it – is rearranged, and our consciousness is deliberately broadened. We communicate differently, we travel further, we produce using diverse commodities and skills, we produce for markets far-flung, we transact digitally and in global currencies, we depend on and are sensitive to foreign exchange, and we submit (or react) to global organisations such as the United Nations (2005:67). Globalisation not only presents a different way of perceiving reality in a global context rather than a local one, but it also offers a means to reshape reality on a global scale with the additional instruments of new information technologies and the liberalisation of trade (Bedford-Strohm, 2007:9). Globalisation intersects our identity in our world, in ways we did not expect.

#### 2.2.4.2 Globalisation and identity

Globalisation has exacted a heavy toll and will continue to do so in the years ahead. Charles Lemert and Anthony Elliot (2006) have written an incisive account of the emotional expense of globalisation. They identify that the individuality of modern people is under severe threat. While notions of individuality have conjured up images of freedom to follow one's own dreams and to let others follow theirs, the new individuality that globalisation is enforcing requires that we reshape, reconstruct, re-invent and transfigure ourselves (2006:2). This re-creation involves ongoing emotional struggle to relate internal and external experience. Whenever people are confronted by a new world, they have three choices: to retreat, to deny, or to remake themselves (2006:68). The remaking of the individual is what our times expect. What is embraced is not a pre-packaged individualism thrust upon us by a changed society ("manipulated individualism"), nor is it a withdrawal into a private world ("isolated privatism") (2006:49). It is not even a limitless variety of individuals, each with their own unique configuration, for there would hardly be a modern world were there not some common element with which we all can collaborate (2006:46). It is rather a rich multiplicity, unequally spread throughout the world and brought on by the global processes (i.e. socially produced), whereby a person must contend, in the imaginative domain, with issues of dependency and independence, with keeping abreast of the latest social shifts and with 'a reflexive awareness of living experimentally', alongside other people who themselves are breaking new ground (2006:66)

Reflexive individualisation, of the kind Lemert and Elliot propose, can be best illustrated by the consumer envisaged in the Apple computer advertising campaign:

Here's to the crazy ones. The misfits. The rebels. The troublemakers. The round pegs in the square holes. The ones who see things differently. They're not fond of rules. And they have no respect for the status quo. You can praise them, quote them, disbelieve them, glorify them or vilify them. But the only things you can't do is ignore them. Because they change things. They invent. They imagine. They heal. They explore. They create. They inspire. They push the human race forward. Maybe they have to be crazy.... we make tools for these kinds of people. Because while some see them as crazy ones, we see genius (in Lemert & Elliot, 2006:48).

It behoves the new breed of individual to re-create identity, quickly, only partially in relation to the social network, and in a way that integrates large volumes of information without becoming fragmented along the way (2006:59).

It all sounds exciting and creative, but there is a downside. The art of re-creation is acknowledged to be a messy and often contradictory business (2006:61), which catches the person in a double-edged bind of self-realisation and limitation, freedom and alienation. The reliability of a certain context disappears. When we were growing up, we had to learn how to fit into a relatively stable context, but now, growing up faces one towards an uncertain context, where the expectation we entertained of the future context more than likely will not be there to fit into. As such, globalisation is producing **contextual anxiety** (2006:11, 19).

The emotional wellbeing of global citizens is subject to **emotional dislocation**, which is stimulated by frequent job changes. The average American graduating from college today can expect to change jobs some eleven times, as well as change his or her skills base at least three times (2006:6). "Dynamic poverty" is a phenomenon of globalisation, where a person can anticipate moving in and out of work in temporary phases of a normal working life (2006:90). Nevertheless, the fear of being dumped becomes a backdrop to the globalised world.

**Emotional immaturity** is likely to be exacerbated by the techno-literacy of young children which may be acquired at the cost of premature withdrawal from the intimacy and social discourse of the family (2006:22). People's lives are reduced to units of information compressed into jpeg files, or modelled by transient images on television or in romance novels.

#### 2.2.4.3 Responses to globalisation

Scholte (2005:384), however, foresees that communities can adapt their own from several possible responses to globalisation: neo-liberalism (letting market forces lead the

process, with minimal interference from government), rejectionism (attempting to reverse the trend and rebuild societies without world-wide connectivity), reformism (modifying market forces in order to maximise the benefits to existing social structures and minimising the damage), transformism (seeks to modify the social structures and ideology). Terreblanche (2005:423), critiquing the democratic capitalism of post-apartheid South Africa, which is heavily reliant on a historic neo-liberalism, believes that a social democratic version of democratic capitalism will steer South Africa through the current crisis involving unemployment, poverty, racial inequalities, violence and criminality. Blaming the ANC and the corporate sector, Terreblanche describes the current situation as "a system of African elite democracy cum capitalist enclivity". Market forces driving globalisation are not benign, but ought to be harnessed to serve the socio-economic transformation of the country in which three shifts will have to be negotiated: (1) A paradigm shift, rejecting neo-liberalism, (2) A power shift, taking back from the corporate sector the power to affect real change for all South Africans, not just for a few, (3) A distributive shift, redistributing opportunities, resources and property over a period of time to restore social justice and close yawning gaps between rich and poor (2005:460). Though appealing in its desire to effect real change in the shortest possible time, Terreblanche's illuminating critique adopts an idealistic position vis-à-vis the poor. Nowhere does he concede that the paradigm shift he proposes actually involves a massive and time-consuming re-education of the poor, so that the 'hand-out' mentality, so persuasively inculcated through years of subjection, is replaced by a culture of ownership, responsibility and investment. His assumption, too, is that the corporate sector, driven as it is by capitalist self-interest, will happily continue to invest in South Africa while its profits are systematically eroded.

#### 2.2.4.4 Globalisation and local Baptist congregations

But perhaps with statesmen-like leadership at national, local and community level, the chances of bringing about miraculous and unexpected shifts may not be too outrageous after all. If Baptist pastors feel that globalisation is an exotic phenomenon that will not reach into their congregations, they are in for a surprise. Congregants' spending power

(and tithing capacity) is affected by global trends, their worries and prayers are influenced by global shocks, and their ambitions and forms of escape over the weekend are conditioned by global fantasies. The recalcitrant phenomenon of hardened hearts towards injustice and poverty can be either entrenched or dislodged by the theologising of the spiritual leaders in the church community. Baptist pastors who choose to be ignorant of these forces inadvertently might be blinding their congregants to a dimension of worldliness with which the Bible frequently does battle, and for which Baptist morality is particularly vigilant. Furthermore, as congregants come to terms with current conditions in society, they interpret – according to group interests – the events that led to the changes. Such interpretations may incline congregants towards either a reformist or a transformist response to change (Gnanadason, 2005:3) – if change is at all contemplated. Pastors who choose to remain uninformed about global incentives could easily find themselves commenting, or remaining silent, in ways that prove to be unhelpful to the critical integration of our Baptist people into a wider global world. We can very easily foster an isolationist mentality when we have not reflected on the forces that brought us to our present situation.

### **2.2.5 From one-way-is-right to dealing with difference**

For South Africans, of all cultures, this thing that we have embarked on as a national adventure is deeper than we think. During the apartheid era, we learned a simple social truth, that one way was right. If you were white, your way was right; and if you were not white, your way was not right. That truth, perhaps crudely stated here, found its way into all levels of society.

We were not free to decide where to live, since there was one right way to arrange that side of things. We were not free to associate with whomever we chose, since there was a right way to govern those matters too. Christianity (and a Dutch Reformed variant of it) was the dominant religion, to the relative exclusion of all other expressions. A strong authoritarianism characterised much of the upbringing in our homes and schools, with little opportunity for discussion and negotiation. Criticism of the one-way, itself positing

another way, was discouraged, especially when it came to criticism of the state. Freedom of expression was under severe threat during those years. Censorship, as a form of 'pre-control', alongside 'self-control' and 'post-control' (punitive measures that courts impose), might be necessary to some extent in any ordered society (Van Rooyen, 1987:4), but it became symbolic in South Africa of the determination to impose a particular perspective on our nation. Even before the introduction of the Publications Control Board in 1963, the state sought to restrict, or ban, films and books deemed to threaten public morals or security (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007:341). The then Interior Minister, Theophilus Dönges, son of a Dutch Reformed clergyman, became the chief censor in 1951, banning anything he considered indecent, obscene or objectionable, and no court could overrule him (*Time Magazine*, 12 Nov 1951).

For a brief period after 1994 the country enjoyed greater freedom promised through the Constitution. One example would be the concerted move to facilitate freedom of expression and to free the press to be allowed to critique various aspects of civil life. Some would call it an essential freedom (Sparks, 2003:61), even if its exercise is uncomfortable. The response to freedom of expression is frequently to try to muzzle criticism and to return to a one-way-is-right mentality of a former era. Moeletsi Mbeki, the brother of the most recent former president of the country, has identified a worrying trend towards an earlier repressiveness, even in the ANC which has long been regarded as a champion of freedom:

Everyone must toe the line. You can see this in the ANC. The ANC is trying to get rid of dissent.... This conformism comes from the resistance tradition. The African population is afraid of dissent. It is afraid of critique. In fact critique is not in the vocabulary of the democratic movement in South Africa. They only see it as destructive criticism. They see critique as potentially weakening to their solidarity (in Hunt & Lascaris, 1998:185).

His remarks bear close relation to a common characteristic of leadership on the African continent that favours one-party rule and which seeks enthusiastic praise as a sign of loyalty (Meredith, 2006:165, 188, 643, 656).

To some extent Africa finds itself in an ambiguous situation, one that is a product of the competing images of 'rainbow nation' versus 'africanisation'. On the one hand there is a



move towards acceptance of other ways and views, probably reflected most keenly in the rise of postmodernism with its tolerance for other realities and its encouragement to create one's own reality. By contrast, there is at the same time in our land a resurgence of a singularly African vision, as reflected in the African Renaissance, which is at pains to bring the identity of Africans – in contra-distinction to any other group – clearly onto the social agenda. By so doing, the need to define 'African' looms large and it threatens to complicate the inclusiveness that was espoused by the image of the rainbow nation. Perhaps we ought to describe postmodernism and the African Renaissance further at this point.

#### 2.2.5.1 Postmodernism, the 'rainbow nation' and accommodating differences

Postmodernism in Africa is a very different phenomenon to what we might expect in Europe or America. The postmodernism of Africa is not the abstract philosophical curiosity of the West. Rather, it is a hybrid of post-colonial modernism and a reaction to years of oppression by various styles of leadership. Nürnberger (2007:11) says that postmodernism lives off the economic output of modernity. Modernity emphasises human mastery and it is driven by powerful impulses that are more readily recognised in South Africa at the moment:

Emancipation, autonomy, power and control are the driving forces. All authority is rejected – whether the authority of the church, the Bible, cultural traditions, the state, the family, the parents or the ancestors. Individuals are entitled to live their own lives (individualism), see for themselves (empiricism), think for themselves (rationalism), employ their own means (pragmatism), pursue their own interests (economic liberalism) and satisfy their own desires (hedonism) (2007:10).

As such, therefore, postmodernism appears to be the 'rebellious child of modernity', an intensification – rather than an abandonment – of modernity (2007:221). With the initial flush of liberation from oppressive restrictions, many South Africans now seek the benefits and advantages which modernity promises, rather than desiring to overthrow modernity for its successor.

Of course, there is no agreement as to whether postmodernism is a continuation of modernity or a break from it. The designation of 'post' in postmodernism implies that it is a



phenomenon that is subsequent to modernism, yet Habermas would suggest that modernity is an "incomplete project" and that we ought to learn from the mistakes of those programmes that have tried, prematurely, to negate modernity (in Docherty, 1993:106). Considering the factors that seem to have given rise to postmodernism, we are even more convinced that South Africans are not yet done with modernity. Groothuis (2000:26) identifies seven such factors:

1. The failure of reason to bring about universal knowledge and technical mastery of the world;
2. The increasingly untenable likelihood of a unified worldview when society is so cosmopolitan;
3. The unacceptability of one absolutely true religion or philosophy when confronted by the increasing diversity of religious and philosophical perspective;
4. The inability to locate a fixed sense of personal identity, or way of life, in a cosmopolitan or pluralistic environment;
5. The unreliability of language to represent an objective reality;
6. The untrustworthiness of written documents to hold truth value;
7. The realisation of the connection between 'truth' and power-relationships that masquerade as neutral means of enforcing order.

In addition to some of the above factors, Dockery (1995:287) adds the loss of confidence in modernistic progress, especially in the light of the mass slaughters of the twentieth century. He also cites the loss of confidence in modernistic cause and effect, in the light of the randomness of much of the horrors of the twentieth century.

It is the contention of this thesis that South Africa is not at the point of rejecting modernism, though it is keen to throw off the restraints of the past that prevent its peoples from enjoying the improved lifestyle and comfortable conveniences of a modern world. If there is an emerging postmodernism in South Africa at all, it is either a liberationist or constructive postmodernism, rather than a deconstructive postmodernism, or a restorationist postmodernism, to use Dockery's four-fold classification (1995:16). There is a reaction to social structures that seeks to transform them. While not dismissing objective truth, as deconstructive postmodernism will do, liberationist postmodernism does not value consistency or coherence as much as modernity does. Constructive postmodernism attempts to reconstruct a worldview, but rejects metaphysics as a means of doing so.

Yet in attempting to reconstruct an alternative worldview, full-blown postmodernism, of the deconstructive type, is in actuality a festival of chaos. Following Ihab Hassan (in Docherty, 1993:152), a postmodern theorist, postmodernism favours anti-form (as opposed to form in modernism), play (as opposed to purpose), chance (as opposed to design), anarchy (as opposed to hierarchy), process (as opposed to the finished product), absence (as opposed to presence), dispersal (as opposed to centring), intertext (as opposed to boundary), micro-narrative (as opposed to grand narrative), indeterminacy (as opposed to determinacy) and immanence (as opposed to transcendence).

Some of the concepts may promise freedom, but the cumulative effect is towards a dismantling of structure, even of the kind that makes society work. Society cannot function on unchecked individualism. We cannot drive on our roads unless we respect certain rules that require us to stop at a robot even when we are late, because other road-users must cross in front of us. Unless there is a selectivity with respect to the aspects of life that are to be rejected by postmodernism, full-blown postmodernism celebrates breakdown and non-functionality as a worldview. As another postmodern theorist says:

The postmodern would be that which, in the modern, puts forward the unrepresentable in presentation itself; that which denies itself the solace of good forms, the consensus of a taste which would make it possible to share collectively the nostalgia for the unattainable; that which searches for new presentations, not in order to enjoy them but in order to impart a stronger sense of the unrepresentable.... Let us wage war on totality (Lyotard, in Docherty, 1993:46)

#### 2.2.5.2 African Renaissance and the promise of a singular perspective

In contrast to the particular form of postmodernism in Africa, then, there is a rise of another perspective, characterised by the African Renaissance. Central to it is the debate over who is an African. Makgoba, Shope and Mazwai believe that Africanness, while including colour and geography, is more appropriately based on the three elements of history, culture and consciousness (Makgoba, 1999:ix). Guèye develops this idea by asserting that it is "a cultural choice and commitment, something which is acquired, gained, a matter of a deep feeling and concrete behaviour. Everybody who feels so deeply African that he or she lives and is ready to die for Africa, everybody who feels our

continent in the depths of her or his soul and in each beat of her or his heart, can legitimately be considered as an African" (in Makgoba, 1999:247). Guèye's view of commitment to Africa is rejected by Prah, who questions the 'commitment' to Africa of figures such as P.W. Botha, Moise Tsombe and Ian Smith. Instead, both Prah and Pityana go back to defining Africanness as a deep-seated solidarity informed by language, history, tradition and indigenous knowledge (Prah, in Makgoba: 1999:39), in a manner that lays emphasis on racial-cultural distinctives (Pityana, in Makgoba, 1999:138).

The idea within the African Renaissance of a renewal, or an awakening, which will bring about improvement to the masses is not a new concept, but dates back to the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century (Prah, in Makgoba, 1999:43; Meredith, 2006:676). Easily confused with pan-Africanism by writers (like Prah) who neglect the religious dimension undergirding African Renaissance fervour, it is a reassertion of ancient pride (1999:13), a response to Africa's historical crises of oppression and subjugation (1999:17), and a return to former glories (1999:33). To achieve the goals of renaissance, it is proposed that Africans detach themselves from the fortunes of imperialist Whites (1999:36), that they cease blaming colonialists at every turn (1999:91), that they balance the global and the parochially African (1999:92), that they renew African values (1999:168), especially of *ubuntu* (1999:144), and that they strengthen their common unity (1999:262).

And herein lies the dilemma, since in order to strengthen the unity, it is often perceived to be incongruous that Africans should criticise their leaders, or that there should be another way of seeing things. John Stremlau (in Makgoba, 1999:101f.) sounds a welcome note when he argues, in the midst of vague notions of African Renaissance vision, for African leaders to emphasise seven constructs for relating the African Renaissance to the wider, diverse scene: (1) Less sovereign rights and more human rights; (2) More civic nationalism and less ethnic nationalism; (3) Due process of the law; (4) Multilateralism, whenever force is necessary to quell coups; (5) The economic base of political wellbeing;

(6) Greater engagement with the global economy; (7) The establishment of partners abroad.

Recognising the problems inherent in the drive towards African unity, Tshilenga (2005:207) notes that, like Nkrumah (the father of African independence), Africans are seeking first the kingdom of God in a political sense before the spiritual. There needs to be a change of the heart, he argues, if any of the socio-political reforms will be worthwhile: "Renaissance without reformation fails; and reformation without transformation amounts to nothing."

#### 2.2.5.3 Dealing with differences

Whatever the ambiguities of the new era in our country with respect to dealing with differences, the world is moving in the direction of greater tolerance for diversity. The postmodern trend, celebrating unlimited variety (Nürnberg, 2007:220), seems to be taking root in other parts of the world and will surely find its unique expression on the African continent.

On many levels there is a new interest in dealing with differences, whether it be cultural differences affecting Christian mission (Jenkins, 2007), or the heightened sensitivity surrounding human rights, or the unbundling of monopolies (Pahad, 2004:3), especially of the media industry (Arnold, 2007:206), in order to allow differences to thrive. Whereas the former dispensation downplayed differences by imposing one way, the current situation calls for a new unity to be formed in a way that does not attempt to obliterate identity. Differences may have to be held intact quite deliberately, and guarded quite carefully, until a new common identity can be fashioned that has little need any longer to draw on previously entrenched differences to sustain that commonality.

The church is well-positioned to model this dynamic. Congregants bring a variety of different cultures to the fellowship. Previously it was thought that the elevation of one culture would bring about a felicitous identity, first by elevating Whites, and more recently

by elevating Blacks. The snag will always be that the solution can only make use of predominantly one cultural configuration. Yet when the church is able to focus attention on the unity that is to be found – not in anyone's culture – but in our identity in Christ, we are able to pull away from the restrictions and dangers of multiculturalism.

Baptist pastors cannot avoid the debate over culture. It has to be embraced and settled by a renewed sense of our common identity in Christ before all else. A clear theology of culture and identity has to be worked out in the field, and communicated consistently and courageously. Furthermore, Baptist pastors who might have enjoyed an authoritarian style of dictating one way to deal with situations will surely find that they will have to substantiate (preferably from Scripture) why they are choosing a particular solution, especially in the light of the many options available. When confronted with congregants who insist on other ways of doing things, pastors are not simply contending with recalcitrant members, but they are feeling the effects of the wider social trend that is appreciative of multiple options. We shall see later that the metaphor proposed by this thesis will assist us enormously in this matter, as it seeks not to impose one way, but to interrogate various ways sufficiently for the person to be better able to choose his or her way forward.

#### **2.2.6 From relatively contained crime to rampant criminality**

For any difference to be enjoyed, the presence of safety is assumed. However, in South Africa, safety cannot be taken for granted. During the apartheid years, security was a national concern, but it was interpreted to mean the security of the state, not necessarily the security of all citizens.

With the democratisation of the country in 1994, matters of safety and policing have undergone huge changes in order to re-brand security agencies (Hutton, 2007:5). For all the positive restructuring and accountability, there are still immense problems related to law enforcement and the level of personal safety that citizens register (Harris & Radaelli, 2007:3; Kynoch, 2003:1). Crime has become an issue that has been raised with concern by the African Union's Peer Review (reported in *News24*, 6 Dec 2007) and one that threatens to undermine any social gains that our country has made.

Realising that crime statistics in the country are controversial and subject to official controls, the overall trend of crime in the country for the period 1994 to 2007 would appear to be decreasing from its peak in 2002/3. A similar decrease would seem to be evident with murders (apart from an upswing in 2006/2007), while aggravated assaults (including house robbery, business robbery, bank robbery, cash-in-transit robbery and car-hijackings) seem to be increasing from a low during 1996/7 (Burger, 2007:1).

The public perception of police corruption is not helping people to feel confident that a real effort is being made to counteract criminality. Measures put in place in the late 1990s to curb corruption that saw 23,246 cases reported to the Anti-Corruption Unit (ACU) by 2001 were mysteriously abandoned by the National Police Commissioner in 2002, allegedly over transformation and accountability issues (Faull, 2007:2). The Commissioner's alleged links with organised crime is still to be investigated at the time of the writing of this thesis. With growing disappointment over police inability to keep the people safe, it is little wonder that a market is emerging for private security that threatens to outnumber the security personnel in the public sector (Gumedze, 2007:1) by three to one (Shaw, 1998:4).

Certainly something creative and co-ordinated has to be undertaken to stem the tide of criminality, for crime can easily come to be seen as "the central test of the capacity of the Government to rule and the new democracy to consolidate" (Shaw, 1997b:1). To be fair, we need to note some of the challenges that the current government is facing with respect to the issue of crime. First, crime has always been hard to measure, since every instance of crime may not be reported. Furthermore, since politics and crime have been so intertwined it has been difficult to confront the issue squarely without stumbling into politically charged debate. The liberation struggle re-interpreted certain criminal acts as legitimate resistance to the system, and on the other side of the political divide, the security forces took liberties that would otherwise be condemned as criminal and which ought to have been checked by any authentic justice system. Third, the trends in crime

from 1990 are similar to the experiences of other nations that are undergoing transition to democracy. As changes take effect, the instruments of control are re-organised, with the result that criminals find new ways to gain illicit advantage. Fourth, the legacy of a colonial-style bureaucratic structure has continued to centralise policing in Pretoria, often resulting in a loss of grassroots relevance. Fifth, reform initiatives after 1994 have concentrated more on the 'front end' of the criminal justice system, viz. visible policing, than on the 'back end' aspects such as crime detection, effective prosecution of offenders, alternative forms of sentencing and the system of incarceration (Shaw, 1997b:3,4).

The government, of course, has attempted to respond to the crime wave. It has instituted Community Policing Forums to incorporate local participation. Its National Crime Prevention Strategy (NCPS) has sought to bring together six departments that relate to crime prevention and control: Correctional Services, Defence, Intelligence, Justice, Safety and Security, and Welfare.

Citizens, themselves have fashioned their own response. Wealthier sectors of society have sought to buy safety in the form of sophisticated intruder-detection systems and private security personnel (Gumedze, 2007:1; Shaw, 1998:4), while less economically empowered sectors have supported vigilantism, e.g. People Against Gangsterism and Drugs (PAGAD). When counter-measures have failed, many people who can do so, have emigrated, taking with them badly needed skills and resources that have the effect of weakening the economic base of the new democracy (Shaw, 1997b:7). Christopher Stone (2006), writing from Harvard University in the USA, disputes the often-cited link between crime and economic growth in South Africa. While he admits that our crime is uniquely violent and that it does constrain growth, he believes that the government can reverse the mainly negative perceptions of crime by protecting household-based economies and by communicating gains frequently to a disbelieving local population. In sum, though, he undermines the real effect of crime by casting doubt on the veracity of the crime situation.



Altbeker (2007:29) takes a different approach. He is of the opinion that criminality has been boosted by a strategic blunder on the part of our politicians and our justice system, whereby crime prevention (poverty alleviation, education, etc.), rather than law enforcement was allowed to be prioritised as a national initiative to fight crime. Wanting to find a less aggressive image than the apartheid regime cultured, coupled with a style of police leadership during the transition, and guided by criminological opinion at the time, the police set itself the primary task of doing 'armed social work', i.e. trying to prevent crime, rather than enforce the law and remove criminals from social networks where their influence could negatively impact others.

Regardless of official attempts to thwart crime up (Benton, 2007), South Africans in the new land still look forward to the prospect – however remote – of safer towns and cities (Shaw,1997a).

Baptist pastors cannot escape the effects of crime on their churches. With so many members victimised by criminal acts, and with more and more instances of churches being burgled, the issue of crime is an unavoidable pastoral and structural issue. It calls for pastors to be highlighting the spiritual base of criminality and it draws pastors, inevitably, into a social critique – even protest – on behalf of congregants whose cries are either not heard, or no longer uttered. Even ministry to police officials cannot be unqualifiedly supportive, but is inclining towards the prophetic and the cautionary of the kind that is proposed by the prevailing metaphor of this thesis.

### **2.2.7 From manageable diseases to pandemic**

Africa has always been afflicted with stubborn disease. Early explorers such as David Livingstone encountered disease, suffered personal losses from it and eventually himself succumbed to it (Pakenham, 1991:6; Mackenzie, 1993:123). Though medical science has done much over the years to contain illness and epidemics, Africa is still regarded as a hazardous place for travellers because of the many diseases against which tourists ought

to seek immunisation (*SAA Netcare Travel Clinic*, 2007; Briggs, 1998:1; *Getaway Africa Magazine*, 2007).

Though many illnesses have challenged South Africa over the years, perhaps the most prominent at the moment is HIV-AIDS. In acknowledging its impact for ministry, the researcher will allude briefly to the statistics, before going on to discuss government and NGO responses, and how the church can reply.

The statistics tell us about the number of deaths<sup>1</sup>, the prevalence of AIDS<sup>2</sup>, the high-risk sectors of the population<sup>3</sup> and those most vulnerable to AIDS (children<sup>4</sup> and pregnant women<sup>5</sup>). The latest UNAIDS 2008 Report on Global Epidemics identifies South Africa as having the highest number of people living with HIV in the world (*SA Department of Health*, 29 July 2008). Whiteside & Sunter (2000:44) call the AIDS pandemic the worst infectious disease to have affected Africa in recorded history, and certainly medical eyewitness accounts of the scourge even back in 1995 would seem to support the horror of it (Rigby, 1995:1475). Other medical practitioners try to place the pandemic in relation to other diseases in Africa, reminding us that more people have died from malaria than from AIDS but without the same degree of publicity (Derbyshire, 1995:633).

Indeed, the interpretation of the statistics has been controversial. Under the Mbeki government, the causes and impact of AIDS have been disputed (Nattrass, 2006). Rather than accepting the link established by the scientific community between HIV and AIDS, the government sought to promote untested alternatives to antiretrovirals by focussing on poverty, palliative care, traditional medicine and nutrition (Butler, 2005).

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<sup>1</sup> The number of **deaths** related to AIDS: 1.4 million South Africans between 1983 (when the first AIDS cases in South Africa were reported) and 2005 (Geffen, 2006), and 320,000 death in 2005 alone (*Aids Foundation of South Africa*, 2005)

<sup>2</sup> The **prevalence** of AIDS: By 2005, UNAIDS estimate that 5.5 million South Africans are living with the disease (*Aids Foundation of South Africa*, 2005), or 10.8% of the population (Geffen, 2006), or 18.8% (*UNICEF*, 2007)

<sup>3</sup> **High risk** sectors of the population: People who fall into the 20-44 year-old category (Whiteside & Sunter, 2000:58). The average **life-expectancy** of South Africans is now 51 years in 2005 and projected to drop to 50 years by 2010 (Geffen, 2006).

<sup>4</sup> **Children with AIDS**: 5.4% of the population in the age range 2-18 years (Brookes, Shisana & Richter, 2004:15). **AIDS orphans**: By 2005, it was estimated that 1.2 million children under the age of 17 years had lost one or both parents (*Aids Foundation*, 2005). According to an HSRC survey, 10% of children had lost a parent by the age of 9 years, and 15% of children had lost a parent by 14 years of age (Brookes, Shisana & Richter, 2004:15).

<sup>5</sup> The **growing problem**: Taking the number of HIV positive pregnant women attending antenatal clinics into account revealed a staggering increase (1990 – 0.7%; 1991 – 0.8%; 1994 – 7.6%; 1999 – 22.4%; 2005 – 30.2%) (Geffen, 2006; Whiteside & Sunter, 2000:introduction)

One of the most vocal non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to have challenged the position of the government has been the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC). It has attempted to compel government to roll out treatment to all AIDS sufferers. Understandably it has interpreted the statistics in a way that has supported its own cause (Geffen, 2006:3).

The experts may long continue to argue over the statistics, but the fact remains that the disease is taking its toll economically (decimating the productive work force, and deepening the poverty crisis), socially (breaking up families and plunging some into child-headed households), politically (responses to AIDS shaping major political decisions and careers) and spiritually (causing people to search deeply into the meaning of life, and others to challenge practices and taboos). Educationally, too, the pandemic is not only removing youngsters from the classrooms, but is also a serious detriment to the teaching staff of our schools on the continent (Govender & Farlam, 2004:3). Allister Sparks calls the AIDS pandemic "an African holocaust" (2003:283) and he may well be right, for what we grew up to understand as a world of manageable diseases has suddenly become a context for a raging pandemic.

Baptist pastors find themselves between these two interpretations of the pandemic, wondering who is telling the truth. Whatever the statistics might be pressed to say, churches are becoming increasingly aware of the scourge of AIDS. Congregants are dying of the disease, or are having to cope with AIDS-related deaths in the family. Pastors in South Africa cannot pretend that AIDS is someone else's problem, especially when they are having to contend with its impact on ministry personnel and resources. Of all the organisations that attempt to address the pandemic, the church is the one that is most likely to raise the matter of changed behaviour as a means of reducing the incidence of the disease. Though it might be unpopular, Baptist pastors will have to find their voice on this issue, at the same time as they mobilise support for compassionate



ministries to sufferers. Again the identity of the pastor as spiritual antagonist comes to the fore.

### **2.3 IDENTITY**

At the heart of the changes that are going on in our land lies the effect on our identity. Identity, whether it be as South Africans, as Whites or Blacks, as African or non-African, as women or men, 'straight' or gay, all these components of identity are in the process of radical revision, as identity is being reformulated. Whereas, previously, we may have allowed ourselves to be identified *in separation* from other people, we must now work out who we are *together*. As we do so, we are prone to overreact to former dominations and insist on their opposites to the point that we have once again defined ourselves by separation. It is not only Zimbabweans, like Hess (2006), who are wrestling with identity issues of being White in a land that disparages what Whites represent. Like her, South African Whites are undergoing their own rediscovery of what they can hold onto in a dislocating context, and what they can offer. Whites are not alone in their quest for new forms of identity. The entire African Renaissance initiative hopes to assert a new Africanness that draws its metaphysical strength from age-old authority and dignity, but with newly contested freedoms.

Baptist pastors, raised and trained to expect certain features of the stage to be in place, now discover that the stage has altered. Who they are within this evolving society is not that clear anymore. Burgess (2003) reminds pastors that, in changing times, the church is constantly tempted to define itself in terms of market niches. Yet it is the pastors who, more than ever, must be clear about who they are in the midst of swirling change. For Burgess the pastoral identity comprises pointing people to the crucified Jesus whom God has now raised to everlasting life. The pastor is the one who prays regularly, reads the Bible regularly and who thinks about his faith deeply, rather than superficially. In effect, Burgess is highlighting the fact that pastors carry out ministry within a specific period of history, but they are called to be inspired not by socio-political upswings, but by a vision of their identity as one called out from the group to follow a different allegiance (to Jesus

Christ), and to speak back into the group from that new allegiance. The tone of socio-politics at any given time might be optimistic, but the pastor is not swayed into believing that heaven has come on earth. He still keeps on speaking – even disturbingly – about new life that does not issue from this world. Alternatively, the developments of society might be depressingly sombre, but the pastor does not give way to cheap hope that denies the real problems resulting from human independence of God. He still keeps speaking, directing people away from cut-price hope towards the absurd surrender that motivates Christian determination and action in an uncertain world.

For pastors to take that route of courageous identity, while standing in a broken socio-political context, they will need to integrate the metaphor of the spiritual antagonist, which this thesis seeks to explain.

## **2.4 SUMMARY**

Terreblanche (2002:19), following Alvin Toffler, has said that in the study of our history we can distinguish between two kinds of power shifts: a transfer of political power and a deep-level change in the very identity of power that transforms power. Our study of the socio-political changes in the country has commenced at the level of the historico-political shifts that have established the wider context in which Christian ministry, here, will have to operate. These are matters that Baptist pastors will need to address if they are to be relevant. In addition, they will need to face the momentous changes that are taking place in the religious territory of our land, as they are pressed to consider a brave, innovative stance. To such religious concerns we must now turn.

# **CHAPTER THREE**

## **A NEW STAGE UPON WHICH TO ACT: PART 2 - A CHANGING RELIGIOUS CONTEXT OF MINISTRY**

### **3.1 WIDER RELIGIOUS TRENDS**

"The beginning of the twenty-first century is a good time to be a pastor, a time full of uncertainty and danger," says John Piper (2002:ix). It is a time of momentous change, or 'discontinuity', as Brian McLaren calls it (2000:19), where five levels of change are intertwined: changes in knowledge, attitude, behaviour, organisation and matrix (2000:16). We have already seen, in the previous chapter, just how some of these elements have presented themselves in the socio-political dynamics. George Barna (2006:9) labels the context of radical change that we are in at the moment 'a quiet revolution'. He goes on to note, through his research, that there are seven trends that are effecting spiritual change in America (2006:42f.). His insights are instructive for the South African milieu, and they resonate with changes we have already identified, and with some that will be set out in this chapter.

Barna speaks of a shift in the generations holding power in society (trend 1), a rise in a new view of life that favours postmodernism (trend 2), a dismissal of the irrelevant, especially with respect to traditions (trend 3), an embracing of variety in technologies (trend 4), the search for genuine relationships over mere acquaintances (trend 5), a desire for greater experiential participation in reality (trend 6) and the desire to find true meaning in life by exploring the twin features of sacrifice and surrender that can produce growth and fulfilment (trend 7).

Barna continues by observing that one of the most striking outcomes of these trends will be the shift away from the local church as the locus for the experience and expression of the faith of modern people. Through national research, he predicts that the local church will reduce in focus from 70% of the population in 2000 to approximately 33% in 2025, and that alternative faith-based communities will have risen in value from 5% of the

population in 2000 to 33% in 2025. Also, by 2025, 33% of the population will realise their faith through the media, the arts and other cultural institutions rather than its 20% level in 2000 (2000:49). It may well be that we will find membership of institutional churches declining, in favour of project-driven Christian commitments.

The church of Jesus Christ can respond to these significant changes by seeing itself either in terms of a lake or a river, as Daniel Brown (1996) likens it. In terms of the lake, the church measures its success by the number of people it manages to assemble and keep within the lake. Such a static model highlights size and attendance, buildings and programmes as indicators of growth, and it attempts to resist the effects of the changes at every turn. By contrast, the process model, which views the church as a river, celebrates the transformations that take place while the people are in the swirl of events, before they move on, having grown within themselves to a stage further than they were before (Brown, 1996:20).

In the spirit of the 'river', then, let us try to understand some of the religious swirls in which we find ourselves. The researcher has reflected on seven elements of the changing religious climate, which he believes are crucial for understanding the current stage upon which Baptist pastors act:

1. The reappraisal of the involvement of Christianity in colonialism;
2. The steady dismissal of the influence of Christianity in South Africa;
3. The cultural integration of Christian churches;
4. A changing agenda within churches;
5. A clash of loyalties;
6. A gap for perversions and oddities;
7. The attraction of the megachurch.

Thereafter, we will examine changes specific to the Baptist denomination, before posing the question of what the pastor as spiritual antagonist offers us in our search for a new identity. Again, it must be understood that, in terms of Zerfass' amended model, this chapter – like the previous one – is devoted to the historical and religious factors of the deliberate research.

## **3.2 RELIGIOUS CHANGES IN SOUTH AFRICA**

Baptist pastors find that the position of Christianity in society has undergone extensive devaluation. They themselves are under pressure to minimise the Christian message, in favour of more acceptable explanations. In devising a contemporary strategy for locating the Christian message within the lives of South Africans, it is vital that they understand the changing attitudes towards Christianity that are discussed below. The emphasis of the discussion of several of the key points focuses on missionary history, rather than Christian history in general. Baptists have a special respect for missions and evangelism, as can be seen in the official objectives of the Baptist Union (*South African Baptist Handbook 2005-2006:440*), the BU Mission Statement accepted at the BU Assembly in Kimberley in 2003 ("Under the Lordship of Christ we exist as a multi-cultural fellowship of inter-dependent churches, functioning in territorial associations, to impact this generation with the Gospel"), in addresses by presidents of the BU (e.g. John Basson, in *South African Baptist Handbook 2006-2007:197*) and by co-ordinated local-church initiatives (e.g. Impact 2010).

### **3.2.1 The reappraisal of the role of Christianity in colonialism**

The researcher intends, in this section, to re-position the role and understanding of Christianity in colonialism. The debate is often extremely one-sided and requires more nuanced presentations. This section is not intended as a long missionary history, but rather a selection of material to balance the debate.

The criticism of the unwholesome link between Christianity and colonialism has persisted down the years, one of the more recent being that of Magubane in his historical assessment of the African Renaissance, when he refers to "the Christian colonial system" (in Makgoba:1999:21). He goes on to condemn the hypocrisy of Christianity for its support of slavery. What Magubane omits to mention is the fact that slavery was abolished by the sterling and unpopular efforts of Christians such as William Wilberforce, who changed public opinion in all British colonies, including South Africa. He fails to mention that slavery was extensively practised by the Romans, as well as by Arab Muslims. What is particularly sad in this unfortunate connection is the devaluation of the



noble contribution made by generations of missionaries who themselves were struggling to translate the wonder of the new life in Christ into situations vastly different to their own. Some African critics quickly overlook the fact that we in this continent have not managed to do much better in contextualising the mystery of the Christ-event in our times. Mbiti (1980:820) draws the distinction between the diminishing node of Christianity in the Northern Hemisphere and the expanding node of Christianity in the Southern Hemisphere. In line with WCC thinking, he alludes with some pride to the shift of Christian influence from north to south, yet fails to acknowledge that the shift might be more a matter of the demise of Northern models of spirituality than necessarily about the superiority of Southern contextualisations.

Frequently, Christian witness on the continent has implied that Christians colluded with colonial interests, but this is far from the whole truth. Granted, missionaries might not always have been convinced that the evils of colonialism warranted the abandonment of the entire system, or that the people were necessarily ready for independence. They might also have been unaware of just how offensive it was perceived by the local populations, and they might have feared that with the demise of colonialism, their work would be adversely affected (Kane, 1982:260). But missionaries were involved in opposing the slave trade in Mombasa and Zanzibar (Hildebrandt, 1990:126), protesting Belgian abuses in the Congo (1990:170), protecting local African land rights in South West Africa (1990:172) and, through the persistence of London Missionary Society representatives, shielding the local inhabitants of Botswana against the greed of Cecil John Rhodes (1990:174). It was missionaries who stood against the exploitation of Hottentots and frontier African tribes in South Africa (1990:88; Elphick & Davenport, 1997:38). We will explore this issue of the influence of Christianity in Africa, with special focus on South Africa, later.

When we speak of missionary endeavour on the continent, it must be clear that the appreciation is for both foreign and local Christians. Much has been written on the foreign missionary input, but there were unique contributions made by Africans themselves to the

expansion of Christianity on the continent. Philip Quaque, an inhabitant of Ghana, was won to Christ in the early 1750s by the relatively unfruitful ministry of a foreign missionary. Philip went on to complete theological studies and was the first African to be ordained as an Anglican priest to serve his own people (Hildebrandt, 1990:74). Joseph Smith led William de Graft to Christ around 1830 and soon a thriving Christian community along the Ghanaian coast was running under De Graft's influence. Both men were Africans (1990:92). The first witness in Benin was a CMS mission station that was run by an African by the name of P.W. Bernasko (1990:109). One of the first Church of God missionaries in Kenya was a Shangaan from South Africa called Yohana Mbila. He stands in a line of spiritual giants from the continent, which include Yohana Owenga, Shadrack Mliwa, Molonket ole Sempele, Joseph Jara (1990:186). The expansion of Christianity in South Africa has also rested, formally and informally, on African witness of the likes of David Magatha (who was found preaching in remote parts of Thaba 'Nchu before white missionaries got there), Samuel Mathabathe (who pioneered Methodist mission in the northern Transvaal), Robert Matshaba (trained at the mission school of Lovedale and then headed for Mozambique where he founded nine mission stations and several schools) and Tiyo Soga (the first black South African to be ordained) (Hofmeyr & Pillay, 1994:131). Even relatively obscure Christian converts deserve mention, such as the Khoikhoi woman, Lena, who had come to faith through the ministry of the Moravian, Georg Schmidt, but who went on to hold religious services under a tree for her peers to whom she was witnessing (Elphick & Davenport, 1997:29). She is iconic in South Africa of the debt owed by missions in Africa to indigenous African converts.

So what did Christianity contribute to Africa? We can identify six elements (Hildebrandt, 1990:193; Venter: 2004:104):

1. The announcement of the Gospel which lifted the gloom of dark and fearful spiritual forces;
2. The codifying of spoken language into written forms for many languages on the continent which did not have an alphabet before 1878;
3. The establishment of schools which taught people to read and write, including men of such stature as Albert Luthuli and Nelson Mandela;
4. The establishment of hospitals to combat diseases that had held groups in bondage and debilitation;

5. New knowledge about farming;
6. The introduction of new technical and practical skills, such as tailoring and blacksmithing.

Hildebrandt's views are supported, in part, by Nürnberger who critiques the view that Christianity brought misery to Africa. From the Christian value-base sprang the very 'bug' of emancipatory notions that grew into the thirst for independence (Nürnberger, 2007:171). The difficulty was that in the minds of many people, missionaries were representatives of colonial powers by virtue of national and racial affiliation, and therefore it did not matter that benefits of colonialism, such as improved communications, opened up African countries; or that systems of administration might have played a part in reducing inter-tribal wars that pre-colonial authorities were seemingly incapable of defusing. The reality that colonists dictated to missionaries and churches, that they introduced European rivalries instead of African ones, that they attracted self-serving traders and immigrants who were insensitive to local conditions have all had the effect of tarnishing the Christian witness (Hildebrandt, 1990:96). The 'colonial slur' is a principle that has survived in a different form down to the present, for whenever Christian identity is connected to national or racial background – whether it be at the Cape in the 1800s (Elphick & Davenport, 1997:25), or in Soweto in the 21<sup>st</sup> century – the problem remains one of limited vision and diminished Christian witness. It then becomes easier for people to reject Christianity, when they might actually be rejecting something else, as Cape slaves did in rejecting the religion of their masters (1997:42).

If pastors in the present are to minister effectively, it behoves us to be aware of the 'colonial slur' that forms an underlay to the presentation of Christ on a continent somewhat suspicious of Christianity. Left unchecked, the aspersions tend suggest that the Gospel is tainted and therefore ought to be set aside in favour of more political options for the renewal of the continent. Subtly Baptist pastors can be manoeuvred into an embarrassed stance with respect to historical Christianity, as critics major on the encumbrances and not on the emancipations of the Christ-message. If this is true, it is unfortunate, since the nature of any worthwhile human enterprise is such that there is always a mixture of noble and ignoble expressions by people who are attempting to hold

a mystery. The message of Christ has been incarnational from the beginning, and as long as we continue to be incarnational, we run the inevitable risk of clumsiness and even confusion. Notwithstanding the perils, Baptist pastors maintain necessary attention on the liberation that there is in Christ, that comes from surrender of all we hope to be to the cause of Christ.

### **3.2.2 The marginalisation of the influence of Christianity in South Africa**

Due to the sensitivity of the 'colonial slur', it would seem to be expedient to marginalise Christianity from mainstream South Africa. Global trends coupled with a more secularised government in South Africa has inclined us towards such a diminution of the influence of Christianity. Yet in the face of such an intellectual movement, it is important to realise what a major role Christianity has played in orientating a nation towards hope.

The influence of Christianity has been poorly reflected in historical literature in South Africa, according to Elphick and Davenport (1997:2). Preoccupied with liberal and Marxist concerns over the struggle between White and Black, South African historiography has tended to sideline religion, and Christianity in particular. Yet, as Chapman notes (in Chapman & Spong, 2003:3), the role of Christianity is significant. Some of the earliest state officials had Christian background. Many politicians, later, on both sides of the apartheid fence had formal religious training, and the TRC was led by clerics rather than lawyers. When the political transition in the 1990s was gathering momentum, Christians in the National Peace Accord, for example, sought to create an ethos conducive to democratic engagement. With only nine days to go before the first democratic elections in South Africa, and against the terrifying genocide of Rwanda that was playing out at the same time, Buthelezi, the leader of the powerful Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) threatened to boycott the elections. Respected Christians prevailed on him to support the process. All the while, at an all-day Jesus Rally, some 30,000 Christians prayed above the room where the deal was struck (Chapman & Spong, 2003:9; Venter, 2004:109). Indeed, Christians have been **advocates of better social conditions**.

Though it may be convenient to paint missionaries and church leaders as politically obtuse and so culturally self-enraptured that they could not identify error, let alone do anything about it, the truth is more likely to be that they saw, with great distress, what was going on, but chose to respond using different methods. Missionaries were drawn inevitably into politics (Elphick & Davenport, 1997:79), in much the same way as later Christian leaders translated personal awareness into action, often jeopardising their own positions for the sake of justice. Bishop Colenso of Natal (1997:348), Trevor Huddleston (1956) and Catholic bishop, Denis Hurley (Elphick & Davenport, 1997:205) would be just three examples. Other Christians preferred to work less dramatically, such as the missionary Ray Philips, in whose home in 1929 eight South Africans met to form the South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR)(1997:362), an organisation that would exert its own kind of pressure on the apartheid government.

Missionaries did not operate in isolation, nor were they easily marginalised. They were geared towards assistance and community. Mission stations became the **locus of skills and practical help**, where a variety of proficiencies – agricultural, mechanical, medical – were taught and trades learned (1997:36, 130). From the 1950s, Dutch Reformed Church hospitals sprang up at a rate that exceeded any other church's endeavours, all funded in the beginning by Christian giving (1997:147).

"Africa," said Trevor Huddleston (1956:15), "is a cruel place rather than a beautiful one. She lives by extremes. Her storms and her sunshine are both fierce. Life itself is precarious and has to find a foothold by struggling against that barren rock, those scorching winds, that arid, sandy soil". In such an inhospitable context, the missionaries, and their mission stations, emerged as **refreshing centres of hope and reconstruction**. For the Khoisan, whose economic prospects had been undermined by successive settler invasions, the mission stations offered a chance to regain some authority over their lives (Elphick & Davenport, 1997:35). Confidence could be restored, respectability rebuilt and women protected from exploitation (1997:46, 50, 49). They became 'foci of change' (Bundy, in Elphick & Davenport, 1997:84), affording dislocated peoples the opportunity of



reordering their lives and taking on a kind of upward mobility. For Afrikaners scattered in rural areas, church Communion services (*nagmaal*) forged and strengthened links between them as a people. For others, community was fostered by church groups, especially as apartheid took its toll in lives. Funerals, organised by Christian leaders, drew shattered communities together and also helped to mobilise them for action (1997:165). As Huddleston remarked (1956:103) with respect to the black urban experience in the 1950s: "The only thing that is meeting the need for a sense of 'community' , of 'belonging', in a broken and shattered tribalism of the town-dwelling African is the Church." Even as late as 1992, Christian churches were still popular assembly points for young people, catering for 80% of all South African youth, compared to only 15% who were members of political parties (Elphick & Davenport, 1997:147). Pentecostal churches, notably Indian and Afrikaner Pentecostals, adapted themselves to the needs of their poor, and became centres of hope for the disenfranchised Indians and for the poor Whites (1997:230, 294). In its missionary efforts among Blacks through the 1970s, the Dutch Reformed Church (NGK) found surprising success. Christian outreach in those ambiguous days managed to set the scene for unique and deep bonds of friendship across colour lines that Elphick and Davenport (1997:148) believe to be part of the reason why South Africa did not plunge into civil war. In a very different era, the church today is still offering hope, as it leads the way in the fight against AIDS (Dixon, 2004:11), a disease that is fragmenting community on a grand scale.

Christianity has been **the nurturer of profound values** of which society has been the recipient. For white settlers, the church was the hothouse for political ideas to the point that it has been said that South Africans "debated issues of segregation and integration in their churches earlier than they did in their legislatures" (Elphick & Davenport, 1997:5). Many of the later ANC leaders were educated by church-based institutions. Men such as Albert Luthuli acknowledges his indebtedness to a Christian upbringing and identified the road to freedom as being through the Cross (Luthuli, 1962:25, 208). Back in 1931, D.D.T. Jabavu, the co-founder of the All African Convention, remarked that "every [South African] black man who is a leader of any importance is a product of missionary work.

Outside of missionary work there is no leadership" (in Elphick & Davenport, 1997:362). Further indicators of the influence of Christianity in our national life can be seen in the ANC anthem which is now part of the South African National Anthem (*Nkosi, sikelel' i Afrika* – Lord bless Africa). It was originally the first stanza and chorus of a poem composed in 1897 by Enoch Sontonga that was first sung in 1899 at the ordination of Rev. Boweni, a Shangaan Methodist minister. The poem seeks the blessing of God on the leaders, men, youth, wives, ministers, land and efforts of Africa. It recognises that there is wickedness on the continent, but implores God to blot evil out and bless Africa (Gray, 1989:149). The principles adopted by the ANC Congress in 1923 affirmed Christian liberal values that had been taught in mission schools (Elphick & Davenport, 1997:156) and Christian perspectives infused the liberation struggle and gave courage to political activism (1997:386, 14). Leadership of the liberation struggle that was severely decimated by security clampdowns and banishments, found temporary substitute in the form of Christian leaders like Tutu who sustained the voice of political dissent in the absence of exiled leadership.

Christianity and missions have played a significant role, therefore, in the development of this country. At times seen as forceful in setting an agenda in social life, at other times unobtrusive, it has predisposed a vast majority of the population (80%, according to the *International Religious Freedom Report 2006*) to its message and principles, however vaguely those principles might sometimes be expressed in daily life. Baptist pastors have not inherited a tradition which easily accepts marginalisation. There is an impetus within Baptists, probably birthed in historical struggle against overwhelming odds, that refuses to see so valuable a perspective on life and eternity relegated to the fringes of society. Fully cognisant that to speak up may position pastors unflatteringly among the many voices on the stage, Baptist pastors will continue to find their voice and let it be heard. Whatever the changes we might yet see ahead, a considerable religious platform has been laid that cannot be ignored.

### **3.2.3 The cultural integration of Christian churches**

The issue of separation versus integration has had a long history in South Africa. Its implications have been seen in the life of churches across the span of denominations. Most of the churches that arose as a result of missionary effort had multi-racial membership, but few had integrated congregations (Hofmeyr & Pillay, 1994:88). Attitudes to segregation in churches consolidated with the 1912 manifesto of the splinter National Party under General Hertzog, which called for white supremacy on the basis of Christian trusteeship. Former differences in the white groups seemed to subside around a common working goal, though little thought was given to the implication of such a manifesto in sidelining Blacks (1994:202). Strengthened by the views of liberal Christian welfare workers, several affiliated to the American Mission Board, who foresaw explosive black urbanisation and the consequent need to manage the situation compartmentally, churches embraced segregationist positions. There were instances of expressed discomfort with the racially divided state of the church, as I can recall from tense church business meetings in Baptist churches where the subject of racial discrimination was raised, but by and large it would seem that some justification must have been found by the rank and file church member to stave off a guilty conscience. Dividedness persisted until the late 70s when, as Hexham & Powe-Hexham (1988:739) noted, groups such as the Independent Charismatics began to cross denominational lines in different ways: "Since 1979, hundreds of new, independent charismatic churches have formed throughout South Africa. They bridge racial barriers as no other groups do. For years mainline churches like the Anglicans, Lutherans and Roman Catholics have talked about reconciliation and multiracialism, but their weekly services have achieved only tokenism". What Hexham and Powe-Hexham believe to be the difference in the case of the independent Charismatics is that the grassroots membership took steps to integrate, rather than relying on the clergy to take a stand, as was more the trend in the mainline churches.

Since 1994 and the changing demographics of residential areas, Baptist churches have been presented with the opportunity of multi-cultural integration. Some (both formerly



white and formerly black churches) still resist, claiming that language and cultural comfort make it preferable to hold separate services. Yet, where congregations have made deliberate effort to reach each other over uncomfortable differences, the rewards of growing unity are unsurpassed. Baptist pastors have a choice as to whether they will impede this endeavour, or to support cross-cultural purposes.

### **3.2.4 A changing agenda within churches (and within Baptist churches)**

Of course, with mixed congregations come huge challenges. One of them revolves around who will set the agenda, and once clarity has come with respect to power issues between the various groups, a second hurdle has to be mounted as to whether a congregation is really prepared to let the biblical mandate set the primary agenda, or merely issues of social upliftment or historical redress.

#### **3.2.4.1 Shift from white to black Christian agenda**

Dr Maake Misangu, a black Presbyterian minister who in 1995 was appointed to the all-white congregation of St Giles in the north-eastern suburbs of Johannesburg, speaks of the adjustments for both the congregation and for himself. The Whites were fearful that a black agenda would prevail, and Dr Misangu feared he would lose his Africanness and begin to act as a white person by ministering in a white congregation (in Chapman & Spong, 2003:107). Black ministers, historically, have found themselves in ambivalent situations, since both Whites and fellow-blacks have treated them with suspicion (Hofmeyr & Pillay, 1994:175). Increasingly now, churches are having to take account of a profound shift in agendas – regarding pastoral care, budgeting, types of ministries and personnel – from white-Christian priorities to black-Christian priorities. There is the sobering realisation that whatever the opportunities that may have been afforded to white Christians to take responsibility for ministry during the apartheid years, this is the era of the black Christian in South Africa. If we are to learn from history where insufficient thought was given to the ongoing need to hand over to capable black leaders (1994:131), preparation needs to take place as thoroughly as possible, and as soon as possible in this matter.

As all groups come to terms with the shift, there is another realisation before us. Over the years the Christian church has had to deal with various emphases that have swept through its teaching and its ranks. The 'Social Gospel', liberation theology and the 'prosperity Gospel' have all had an impact on church strategy. Now faced with the momentous challenges of integration and economic disparity, the church is once more faced with the question: For whom is the Gospel good news, and therefore, who will set the agenda of the church into the future of our country? Hesselgrave (2005:117) identifies the tension between holism (that a person's physical needs are equally as important as his/her spiritual needs) and prioritism (that prioritises spiritual needs without losing sight of material ones) as being one of the ten most pressing questions of missions in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. He classifies four responses open to the church:

1. **Radical liberation theology**, which sees the mission of the church to be the promotion of justice in society and the establishment of Shalom on earth.
2. **Revisionist holism**, which seeks to minister to society without disrupting the unity of body and soul.
3. **Restrained holism**, which seeks to minister to society socially and spiritually while giving marginal emphasis to evangelism.
4. **Traditional prioritism**, which rates evangelism as primary, and other Christian social ministries as good but secondary and supportive of the primary one (Hesselgrave, 2005:122).

It is the contention of this thesis that Baptists generally have opted for traditional prioritism, but are being questioned by a generation of opinion that favours holism. The issue is one of emphasis rather than radical departures. Nevertheless, the priority of missions and evangelism that the BU has set itself is an attempt to preserve the long-range Great Commission (Mt 28) from suffering any reduction as a result of circumstantial urgencies which will always be insistent. Baptist ecclesiology does not regard the church – in the first instance – to be a social welfare organisation, trying desperately to respond to never-ending need in a continent of deprivation. Its message of new life in Christ might be filtered through its agency of social upliftment (DOLM – Deeds of Love Ministries) and through the many efforts of local churches to be compassionate and practical, but the message needs to be heard, in much the same way as a herald seeks to be registered. To what extent this perspective has been a white Christian agenda or a comprehensive

Christian agenda will be worked out in the years ahead by pastors and congregations who will be forced to hold their identity as Christ-followers amid pressing social agony.

#### 3.2.4.2 Shift from male to female agenda

If the previous shift centred on racial disparities, the next one has to do with gender. Increasingly the pattern of male dominance in religious affairs, especially with respect to the role of women in ministry and the role of women in leadership, is being questioned and challenged. It is a change that affects all denominations, not least of all the Baptists. They have also shifted their position to some extent by noting back in 1999/00 (presumably with respect to leadership) that greater gender equality is to be sought on the basis of giftedness. It remains to be seen, however, what level of support will be forthcoming from individual churches on this explosive issue. Barker (2005:42) is right to conclude that, in many churches within the BU, women do not hold leadership positions and that this is congruent with the theological position taken by most men and many women within the church. Attitudes are changing with respect to female deacons, of course, and many churches now have women functioning in those roles, but the issue of female pastors / elders is a matter that will not shift easily, unless there is a radical liberalisation of theological perspective in the denomination and one that, one suspects, will go hand-in-hand with changed perspectives on the authority of Scripture. Just as there might be a relaxing of attitude on women in eldership-leadership, there is likely to be a strengthening resistance to women elders, of the kind that is being expressed, gently, in the Danvers Statement (in Piper & Grudem, 2006:469).

#### 3.2.4.3 Shift from adult to youth agenda

For the most part, ministry has been something that adults do without young people, or alternatively to young people. With population figures in South Africa reflecting the 'bubble' of young people coming through (43.2% of the population in 2001 was under 19 years of age – *Census 2001 Census in brief*, 2003:30), the extent to which the youth are expected to fulfil significant roles, even of leadership and service, is about to be another transition the churches will be compelled to negotiate urgently. Instead of isolating youth concerns to parachurch groups such as Youth for Christ, Scripture Union or Students'

Christian Association, the youth agenda is set to return to the mainstream of church life in ways that we may not quite have imagined. Not only will youth problems, such as the three identified by Giliomme's study (2000) (depression, substance abuse and verbal, physical and sexual abuse) receive greater attention, but youth competencies for multigenerational ministry will also be open for exploration. Of course, the intergenerational conflicts and tensions identified by Codrington (2000) are likely to manifest themselves. The vastly different worldviews that are post-industrial, post-literate, increasingly postmodern, post-colonial and post-Christian (Codrington, 2000:51), and even post-apartheid, will mean that multigenerational ministry will be much more than a 'programme', but rather a mindset. Without pandering to the never-ending generational idiosyncrasies, as Hesselgrave (2005:222) warns, it envisages genuine benefit for the whole church when the age groups are brought together in a partnership that respects the presence of the youth in responsibilities of worship, planning, service and outreach. It is worth reminding ourselves of John Mott's call to the youth to join him in the responsibility for the evangelisation of the world: "We need not only more money, but also more of our best young men and women for this work" (in Winter & Hawthorne, 1981:269).

Baptists are attempting to focus more resources on teens and children, arising from the Way Ahead Millennium Conference in 1990/00. There is a growing realisation of just how critical this age-bracket is for the future of the country.

### **3.2.5 A clash of loyalties: Christ and culture**

Opening up church and mission to the meaningful participation of young people naturally will bring with it a variety of potential clashes, but none is as eminent as the clash of loyalties that are represented in the collision of Christ and culture. During the apartheid years, one culture was elevated above all others, but today there is some uncertainty as to how to cope with the arrival of cultures on the church doorstep. Since Niebuhr (1951) analysed Christ and culture back in the 1950s and produced the framework of Christ *against* culture, the Christ *of* culture, Christ *above* culture, Christ and culture *in paradox*,

and Christ *transforming* culture, we have seen a resurgence of interest in the role of culture in Christian life, with Christians adopting positions similar to those outlined by Niebuhr. We recall that the advent of the African Independent Churches (AICs) occurred in 1892 because of frustration over the slow pace of Africanisation, with undertones of leadership power struggles (Hildebrandt, 1990:175; Elphick & Davenport, 1997:119, 211).

Most South Africans, say Elphick and Davenport (1997:11), conduct their religious life within tightly bounded enclaves of race, of ethnicity, or of class. Through our history, the church has dismissed African worldview and practices (1997:187), not always because of imperialistic reasons. Sometimes it has been the product of a different understanding of spirituality, as was the case when missionaries among the Xhosa emphasised a change of heart and were opposed by a people committed to a holistic self-understanding (1997:74). Nürnberger (2007:152) has delivered an incisive comparison of crucial tenets of the Christian faith with those of African traditionalism and has demonstrated that for black Africans to follow Christ it will involve a radical departure from cultural understandings at several points. Inevitably, the differences reveal themselves as a contest of loyalties that are often cast in the guise of loyalties to individual personalities, or to political ideologies, when, in fact, they go deeper, to a choice between Christ or human systems. The complaint of Mpande, the successor to Dingane, highlights the struggle for allegiance that will play itself out in the hearts of contemporary South Africans coming to Christ:

The missionary came to me, and I welcomed him, and allowed him to select a location where he pleased. He built there. I told the people to go to meeting and attend to his instructions. But the people soon began to call themselves the people of the missionary, and refused to obey me.... The missionary should have told the people in the beginning that he could not be their captain. I have been obliged to kill several of those people, and much mischief has resulted from the mission established there (in Elphick & Davenport, 1997:92).

While the loyalty ought never to be to the missionary, but rather to Christ, the fact remains that for many South Africans who make room, constitutionally, for Christianity within the kaleidoscope of worldviews, they are going to be challenged whenever Christ is presented, authentically, to the community. Loyalties will have to shift from cultural dependencies (of whatever culture) to a firm and uncompromising faith in Christ for all of

life. We might wish that this process would take place in a smooth and accommodating fashion, but the chances are high that the awkwardness, dislocation and even the conflict associated with that shift will be felt most keenly when dearly-held convictions, such as ancestor worship, are challenged by biblical truth. Hesselgrave (1978), who wrote a landmark work on the communication of Christ cross-culturally has followed this up in 2005 with one that expects that the future of missions in the 21<sup>st</sup> century will need to appreciate the fundamental clash between God and Satan, with its two primary dimensions of the clash related to power and authority, and to truth and rightness. He calls them "power encounters" and "truth encounters" (Hesselgrave, 2005:168), from the depiction of Christ as "the power of God and the wisdom [truth] of God" (1 Co 1:24).

### **3.2.6 A gap for perversions and deviancy**

Within the radically changing South African context, there has developed a growing gap for perversions and deviancy. There is a pseudo-tolerance for pornography and a tendency towards individualistic libertarianism and little judgement over explicit sex and violence in the media, for example, all of which intensifies the danger that 'anything goes'. Already UNESCO (2007:17) has identified South Africa as a preferred hub for human trafficking, citing as one of the main reasons for the phenomenon the liberalisation of cultural / social mores. Many Baptists would agree with Venter (2004:190) who observes:

The perversion of male and female relationships has all but destroyed the image of God from the planet. Today we have every contrary permutation of identity, 'orientation' and relationship available to the human imagination. And worse, most of them are perfectly acceptable to society, and even protected by law: homosexual, lesbian, bisexual, transsexual, transvestite – not to mention the proliferating forms of so-called heterosexual sins and brokenness. I predict that it is merely a matter of time before paedophilia, bestiality and necrophilia become acceptable. I hope I am proved wrong.

Baptist pastors are especially attuned to issues of individual and personal morality and behaviour, sometimes at the expense of broader socio-political questions. It has been a criticism of the Baptist denomination that it has ignored larger challenges of poverty and racism so current in our society (Kretzschmar, 1992). Yet critics often fail to recognise the Pietistic roots of Baptist denominationalism that seeks for wider social regeneration to commence with personal conquest.

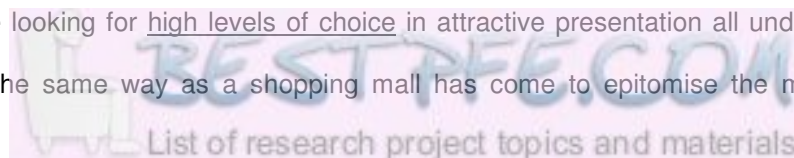
### 3.2.7 The attraction of the megachurch

Image might be everything in communities starved of role models. But in the church there is a discernible pull exerted by the image of being a successful church. Perhaps more so as a result of globalisation's increased media coverage and comparisons, churches are faced with 'bottom line' assessments and viability expectations. While Baptist churches may not be the kind with an obvious desire for bigness (the average size of Baptist churches in South Africa has remained consistently under 100 members for the past decade, according to Baptist Union Handbooks), other denominations such as the charismatic churches in South Africa have tended to opt for 'supersize' (Sims, 2004), if Rhema and New Covenant Churches are anything to go by. With their style of visionary leadership, mandated to 'possess the land', and that is clearly impressed by the Church Growth Movement in America, churches are expected to grow to a size "big enough to provide the range of services that meet the needs and expectations of its members" and "a membership drawn primarily from one homogeneous unit" (McKellar, 1997:141).

Baptists might want to dismiss the attraction of the megachurch phenomenon because of our traditional patterns, but the lure of the megachurch is an attraction with which even Baptist pastors must contend in a changing environment. As Thumma (in Dart, 2001:13) explains, though megachurches in America constitute less than one percent of Protestant churches, their impact is immense, for every aspiring big-church pastors reads about what megachurches are doing. Pastors of all sized churches look to the programmatic characteristics of the megachurch for clues about what they should be doing.

Megachurches are changing the face of church in the eyes not only of existing Christians, but also for the unchurched in secular society. It is usually, if not exclusively, the megachurches that broadcast on DSTV religion channels, presenting a brand of Christianity that stamps 'church' in the mind of non-churchgoers.

According to Thumma's research (1996) into the phenomenon, megachurches appeal to people who are looking for high levels of choice in attractive presentation all under one roof, in much the same way as a shopping mall has come to epitomise the modern



shopping experience. Worshippers drawn to megachurches are searching for large-group experiences where they can attach themselves to a narrative, an identity and a community presence that helps to ground them in an otherwise rootless world. Also, people desire quality of experience, whether it be in the music, creative arts, the message and the organisational flow. Megachurches strive for excellence and usually achieve it, such that worshippers do not need to be apologetic about Christian efforts at communication and presentation.

As such, megachurches represent a modern religious benchmark of 'success' that has exerted a powerful influence on expectations of what the church is to be.

### **3.3 BAPTIST DENOMINATIONAL CHANGES**

The Baptist denomination is a relatively small one in South Africa, not even warranting separate mention in the latest government census statistics, but simply subsumed under 'other Christian churches'. Comprising two main indigenous groups, Baptists are divided into the larger Baptist Union of Southern Africa and the much smaller Baptist Convention (there are even smaller numbers of Free Baptists and Independent Baptists) (*Baptist World Alliance. Statistical Report 2007*). The Convention was formed in 1987 when it withdrew its associational status from the Baptist Union, in reaction to the collusion by the Baptist Union with segregationist state policies (Barker, 2005:36). Since those days the Convention has adopted a more socially vocal stance and one that has been persistently critical of the Baptist Union (Makoro & Mathibedi, in Chapman & Spong, 2003:24), while the Baptist Union has opted for a concentration on mission and evangelism as "the central thrust" (*South African Baptist Handbook 2000-2001:184*). Efforts at reconciling the two groups have been ongoing, but have not produced the desired unification. Perhaps it has something to do with a fear that the Convention will be swamped again by the larger Baptist Union. Makoro and Mathibedi seem acutely proud of the Convention's 'international' status and at the same time seem irritated by the fact that African pastors



are not impressed by that international status and are joining the Baptist Union rather than the Convention. They say:

We wish the Baptist Union to realise the importance and the fruitful contribution that the Baptist Convention is involved in, especially the evangelisation of the world. The Baptist Convention is no longer a national Baptist Convention but a world Baptist Convention. We have been admitted and been given international platforms. This is not the case in the present Baptist Union [not true].... We wish some other African pastors who are in the Baptist Union could understand that they are being left behind while the Baptist Convention pastors are at a very advanced stage" (Makoro & Mathibedi, in Chapman & Spong, 2003:24).

So successful has been the promotion of the Convention as leading the way in all things Baptist that when the government appointed Baptists to the National Religious Leaders Forum, they were under the illusion that the Convention represented all Baptists in the country. It was only in 2003 that the matter was rectified (*South African Baptist Handbook 2004-2005*:232). It may be that the obstacles to Baptist reunification have more to do with human pride and personalities than they might have to do with real theological differences and insurmountable historical issues, as Makoro and Mathibedi seem to claim (in Chapman & Spong, 2003:22).

Louise Kretzschmar has written from the perspective of the Convention (in Kretzschmar, Msiza & Nthane, 1997), so this thesis will concentrate, instead, on the changes in the Baptist Union (BU).

In reflecting a position of Baptists, one must take into account that there is a structural obstacle to locating an authoritative position that can be called 'Baptist'. Baptists do not favour a centralised system of organisation, so there is no archbishop, for example, who is permitted to speak on behalf of the denomination. The Baptist understanding of the autonomy of the local church prohibits a central body from speaking for all. The closest we might get to an authoritative statement will come from the annual Baptist Union Assemblies, and the report of a particular President's term of office. These are reflected in the South African Baptist Handbooks for the preceding year. If we scrutinise these reports, we notice the following trends over a period of sixteen years, from 1990 to 2006.

### **3.3.1 Changing attitudes to social issues**

In the early days, there might have been occasional responses from Baptists to social issues, but by the 1950s social criticism had 'gone into remission' (Hale, 2006:767), despite the stand that Dr C.M. Doke took to the apartheid government in his presidential address to the Baptist Union in 1949 (Hudson-Reid, 1997:13). There might have been faint recognition in 1990/91 that change was underway in the country and that a response was going to be required of Baptists. The then BU president, Andre van den Aardweg, chose as his theme for the year, "The unchanging Gospel's answer to a changing society" (*South African Baptist Handbook 1991-1992:90*), and he laid stress on the need for working for change in society and the need for unity in the Baptist family. From the rest of the report and from living through those years as a Baptist church member, I was not aware of the real emphasis resting on change in society as much as it did on concern and appreciation for what we could call 'family upkeep', or activities that built the (segregated) Baptist family.

### **3.3.2 Unsettled by socio-political events**

The denomination appears to have been unsettled by the watershed changes in the country around 1994, since the themes of BU presidents focussed on what to cling to in the midst of fear: "Faith conquers fear" (1993-1994), "No other name" (1996-1997), "Christ our only hope" (1999-2000).

### **3.3.3 New emphasis on social action since 1994**

New emphasis on social action began to emerge after 1994, first with the launch in 1995/96 of BU CARE (now called DOLM, or Deeds of Love Ministries), the social outreach arm of the BU, which seeks to provide relief for HIV/AIDS sufferers, to provide employment empowerment and to provide disaster relief. Then in 1999/00, a Way Ahead Millennium Conference was convened to assess the effectiveness of BU ministries over the past decade, and to suggest improvement. Among those areas of need were greater social action on the part of Baptists. Yet by 2005/06, only 8% of Baptist church reportedly had some practical social ministry, and only 2.2% had some form of ministry to AIDS

sufferers (*South African Baptist Handbook, 2006-2007:202*). Of course, what definitions were used to categorise such ministries is unknown at this time, for not every Baptist church reports to the BU on all its ministries.

### **3.3.4 Formal objections to government**

Following in a long tradition of objections to government over media abuses and social ethical problems, the denomination has continued its campaign to register objection to various community matters, such as crime, abortion, the changes to the Marriage Act to make way for gay unions, and opposition to the legalisation of prostitution. Now since 2003, it has representation on the National Religious Leaders Forum, through which objections may find expression.

### **3.3.5 Continued priority of missions and evangelism**

Missions and evangelism continues to be a priority for the denomination, with delight expressed every year at more and more churches being planted. It was reported in 1999/00 that during the past decade (1990-2000), 245 new Baptist churches had been planted (*South African Baptist Handbook, 2000-2001:184*). Many of those church would have become formally constituted churches subsequent to 2000, as they move from fellowships (church plants) to constitutional affiliates of the BU. In the last six years, promising signs of wider Baptist networking with groups in Africa, America and Canada have seen useful partnerships and alliances that have stimulated mission penetration within South Africa and beyond.

### **3.3.6 Restructuring of the denomination**

Since 2002/03, the denomination has undergone the rumblings of restructuring. The year was called "a year of reflection and introspection" (*South African Baptist Handbook, 2003-2004:217*), as the denomination pondered its future direction. Spurred into action by a growing internal crisis that saw the BU hit a distressing deficit of R800,000 by 2005/06, and six of its seven Area Co-ordinators leaving their areas in 2004/05, denominational leaders contemplated major restructuring and sought to define the changes through

several 'bosberaads' (conferences) and commissions. Proposals in that regard, however, ran aground on the rocks of disagreement, another evidence of the disparate views that manage to be held together under the broader umbrella of the Union. By 2005/06 the work of the BU Commission into restructuring was described as "marking time" (*South African Baptist Handbook, 2006-2007*:198). It is hoped that visionary leadership will emerge that will unite the denomination around worthy structural goals.

### **3.3.7 Varied, low-key community impact**

The Baptist witness is varied and often low-key in its designs to affect, positively, the communities in which churches find themselves. Together, there are initiatives into the prisons, the emergency services, and the police; as well as support of Bible translation, theological education and publications. Churches are assisted by combined youth programmes, spearheaded by the Baptist Youth of South Africa (BYSA). A low-profile but active Conflict Resolution Network assists pastors and churches where relationship has broken down into unhealthy conflict. Efforts are made to address national issues through representation on the National Religious Leaders Forum, as well as through bodies such as the Evangelical Alliance and the Christian Citizenship Committee. As commendable as each one is in its own right, one still has a distinct impression that something is lacking.

## **3.4 THE SEARCH FOR A NEW IDENTITY AS SOUTH AFRICAN CHRISTIANS AND BAPTISTS**

The search for something that is missing goes wider than any denomination in this country. During the apartheid years, as turbulent as they were, there emerged a cohering vision of what the church needed to do. The cause of justice and freedom gave the church an identity that mobilised resources, streamlined arguments, prioritised action and reinvigorated flagging spirits. There was a goal that was spoken about frequently, dreamed about over and over again, and prayed through from every possible angle, until there was a clarity of vision that sustained all kinds of religious perspectives in the face of a common threat.

Now that the goal has been achieved, certainly the first-fruits of that goal, the church is floundering in search of a new identity. What the new cause will be that will galvanise religious people is something that has not yet been well established. As Masango says: "The church fought for liberation, and after that we were confused. We did not know what to do. The enemy was gone" (in Chapman & Spong, 2003:103). Even our current Minister of Safety and Security cited the lack of a sense of shared identity among our culture groups as problematic in making progress against crime (*News24*, 21 Sept 2007).

Nürnberg (2007:6) does not believe that the time when Whites and Blacks are called upon to struggle for the truth together is over. He would argue that the church is before an opportunity to analyse cultural beliefs, such as ancestor worship, in the light of Christian principles, so that truth can be found together. Harold Froise ([sa]:12) would agree as he demonstrates how our post-apartheid South Africa is showing signs of a return to spiritism, not just in African Traditional Religions where one might have expected such syncretism, but also in mainline Christian churches, in government, among academics and in the media. To bear out the widening diversity of spiritual alternatives that contend with the truth of Christianity, Alexandra Levin (2003) has compiled a collection of representatives of twenty-six spiritual alternatives to Christianity currently in South Africa.

As Baptist pastors and congregations courageously evaluate culture, they are joined by Tshilenga (2005:31ff.) who calls for an honest confrontation of the collective sins in Africa (social sins, structural sins and cultural sins). We can respond to collective sins in one or more of the following five ways, he says, following O'Gorman:

1. We can use the **band-aid approach**, which characterises much of the social action in our world today, and that simply doles out assistance to the needy thereby prolonging the agony.
2. We can use the **ladder approach**, which addresses social needs by teaching strategies, advancing needy people up a ladder of progress.
3. We can use the **patchwork approach**, which responds to need in a haphazard fashion, but which still, like the previous two, avoids criticism of the underlying causes of need.
4. We can use the **beehive approach**, which demands a re-organisation of society from within, but does nothing to address the structural forces perpetuating need.

5. We can use the **beacon approach**, which takes constructive action through denouncing the outcome and causes of need as created by social structures (Tshilenga, 2005:190).

The church down the centuries has employed all five in various ways in its efforts to transform and reform society, two critical functions, Tshilenga says, that the church ought to embrace in its mission (2005:179). The church is a 'prophetic collective' (2005:195) that deliberately pulls society away from its collective sin and exerts a critical balance in favour of what is biblically good and right (2005:194).

He is sceptical of the prophetic role that black theologians and liberation theologians can play in accomplishing this critical balance, for they are in power in South Africa (2005:192). It will need to be the role of the church in its collectivity, utilising the strengths of its evangelists, pastors and prophets – in the mode of the spiritual antagonist – in order to achieve the immensely valuable task of transforming and reforming the soul of the nation. For Nürnberger (2007:40), an important component of that transformatory task will be accomplished as church leaders acknowledge the deficient impact of the Gospel on African religion, and then proceed to listen to several voices (of African spirituality, the biblical witness, the Reformation, modernity and the global future). His stance of attentiveness is apposite, especially when pastoring can easily be misconstrued to be dominated by telling people what to believe.

The task before the church in South Africa could easily remain at the level of social upliftment; and the church would have enough to do until Christ returns, to be sure. But, as Masango points out, the church is called upon now to recognise the spiritual hunger of a society that is bereft of moral strength (in Chapman & Spong, 2003:103). It cannot apply its enormously powerful spiritual resources merely to the adjustment and improvement of a structure that has been birthed by socio-political forces and undergirded by religious sentiments. For all Venter's insightful contribution to our thinking of what lies ahead in the search for a new identity (2004:241), he settles for a social theology that is limited by the task of repair. He argues, quite rightly, that the church must go beyond dismantling racism and ministering reconciliation and healing. But then he

blunts his argument by suggesting that a comprehensive (not a preliminary) social theology would have to address the three levels of social engagement of mercy ministry (relief aid), justice ministry (tackling public policy) and development ministry (teaching practical skills). The enticement of the Social Gospel beckons, as he submerges heart-change towards God in a sea of social reconstruction. Granted, he does highlight critical challenges for the church in 'doing reconciliation', such as church unity, a correct view of culture, establishing multicultural congregations, dealing with other faiths, dealing the state, challenging the low character of African political leadership, globalisation, poverty, AIDS, violence and crime, emigrations, sexism, racism and the family in crisis (2004:242ff.). All of these would necessitate a renewal of the mind to conform us to God's way of thinking (2004:239), but one cannot escape Venter's constraints of historically specific reconstruction in his vision of God's way of thinking.

The spiritual antagonist, proposed by this thesis, is going to see further than the reconstruction of the present. He will, with Guthrie (2006), Hildebrandt (1990:244) and Hesselgrave (2005:330), ensure that external pressures from a social agenda and a consciously more holistic approach to missions and ministry do not obscure the preaching of forgiveness of sins through Christ's death and resurrection. The spiritual antagonist will be fired by the enigma of God's ways that do not conform themselves to political ideology, as great as we may think those ideologies to be. The spiritual antagonist will range through the dark recesses of 'my traitor's heart', as Rian Malan (1990) does in order to exorcise the demons of his white heritage. The spiritual antagonist will struggle with the agonising dilemma between pietism and activism, as Geoffrey Clayton, a former Archbishop of Cape Town did all his life (in Paton, 1973:52). And the spiritual antagonist will never settle for the short-term gain of popular social approval, when his heart is gripped by the expansiveness of what is eternal. "That," said Alan Paton, "is the never-ending struggle of the Christian, to do what he believes to be right, and not what is expedient, convenient, less frightening, more advantageous. In him there should always be a tension between what he is and what he aspires to be" (1973:131). That, this thesis contends, is the personal struggle of the spiritual antagonist

– for his own life and for the lives of the people about whom he cares. If the Baptist pastor is going to embrace the identity of the spiritual antagonist, then this personal struggle will become his as well.

We have looked at the socio-political and religious changes that form the context of ministry for Baptist pastors in South Africa. After surveying all that has shaped us, and in the face of inducements to afro-pessimism, Christians have to ask the searching question: Does South African Christianity have anything to offer in our search for a new identity?

To respond to that question, the Rt. Rev. Dr. David Niringiye, assistant bishop of Kampala in the Church of Uganda and protégé of John Stott, once spoke of the differences between North American Christians and African Christians (Crouch, 2006:32). He said that one of the gravest threats facing American Christians was the deception of power – the deception of being at the centre, where they believe that the future belongs to them, that they are the shapers of tomorrow. But just as Nathaniel was led to realise after he had brushed Christ aside (Can anything good come from Nazareth, rather than from the centre, from Jerusalem?), God often works far from the centre. The wonderful realisation of us African Christians is that **there is life at the margins**, that God is pleased to work in the most surprising of places; and the work he does is an authentic work of heaven.

Africa, in itself, has little to offer the rest of the world that the world really desires. Who, after all, wants our high levels of crime and abuse, illness and disease, or poverty and desperation? But since we, in Africa, have to do daily battle with hope versus despair, **we have learned a truth about the all-sufficiency of Christ** that is obscured in other parts of the world where there is order and affluence. Christ really is our hope!

The truths we have learned by walking with God on this continent are not the kind that are removed from reality. Rather, for the very reason that we are faced with glaring social



problems every day, we are compelled to keep our faith relevant to real issues of survival. We have developed a **grassroots theology** that is by and large practical, rather than esoteric, and it does not rest on high intellectualism or extensive education.

Because Africa is steeped in spiritism, our brand of faith is confronted by the ever-present reality of darkness. It is 'in your face', as it were. The result is that the alternative to vibrant, committed faith is not just comfortable selfishness. It is a return to agonizing darkness and spiritual bondage; therefore the **choice before us is more extreme** than it might be elsewhere.

As we interact with the range of cultural diversity on this continent, the differences of language, nationality and culture are unavoidable. Our brand of Christianity is compelled, therefore, to **take seriously the 'here'** rather than the 'out there' of exotic, overseas missions. A Christian in Africa has to be somewhat obtuse not to sense the heart of God for the nations.

Particularly in South Africa, we have lived through a miracle that rescued us from the prospect of a bloody civil war. While it is true that we are in danger of squandering the miracle of 1994 (Venter, 2004:110), we live with a sense of second chances, with a **sense of grace**. Grace is no longer a dry theological term. We have seen its implications nationally and it has left its deposit of purpose.

We are a people who are experiencing a **purging of the heart**. Former Archbishop Clayton once charged his diocese of Cape Town on 5 December 1956, during those bitter days when apartheid was in the ascendancy, with these words:

Don't let yourself get converted to apartheid. And try to get a Christian sense of proportion. I know it isn't easy. But it is true that what really matters about you is not what you possess, or what others think of you; but what you are yourself in the sight of God. Who steals my purse steals trash. Who steals my vote steals something that is not much better. But if a man impairs your integrity, he has done you real harm. If you grow bitter, if hatred or desire for revenge comes into your heart, then you have let him do you real harm. Don't let that happen (in Paton, 1973:273).



No matter the colour of our skin, we all are undergoing a purging of the heart from racism, pride, inferiority and arrogance. The process is not yet complete. Some of us are having to confront the fact that we are confirmed racists, suppressed racists, recovering racists or pre-racists (Venter, 2004:124). It is only the deluded, like Reverend Dick Khosa, who believe that a black man cannot be a racist (in Chapman & Spong, 2003:157), but for the rest of us the purging goes on.

The purging cuts through the cries of our petty wounds, in order to hear the cries of the village. If indeed it takes 'a church to raise a village', as Mitchell (2001) suggests, then the church in Africa has already taken significant steps towards looking past its own injuries, where we cease to make idols out of our own pain, so that we can give ourselves to others (2001:35). The **other-centredness**, itself a profoundly Christian orientation, but appreciated by African notions of 'ubuntu', is still close to the experience of African Christians.

Our sense of history, as painful as it has been through all the abuses of colonialism, nationalism and those of post-independence, have given us **a sense of 'journey'**. We have travelled long, and there have been many companions along the way. Our brand of faith has a long cry and a long laugh. It echoes and re-echoes, reminding us that we are an extraordinary band of fellow travellers. Our eyes will always be on Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith, but we journey to him, and with him, in a vast and diverse company of men, women and children. Thus our question, posed somewhat cynically perhaps, of whether South African Christianity have anything to offer has been answered, startlingly perhaps, in terms of a rich heritage of Christian identity.

Our summary of the context in this chapter has alerted us to the powerful forces that have shaped us and our ministry. These characterisations have given us an identity (a South African Christian identity) that we have assumed and against which we might have to contend for the sake of a better persona. The contextual impetus has also compelled us to face up to a new stage upon which to act. Now we need to consider the audience, in

particular those voices of expectation that we have heard and believed, and which, themselves, have fashioned what we think a Baptist pastor ought to be. They, also, have shaped our identity. This is the subject of our next two chapters.

# **CHAPTER FOUR**

## **ECHOES OF PAST PERFORMANCES – BIBLICAL AND CHURCH-HISTORICAL EXPECTATIONS SHAPING THE PASTOR**

### **4.1 AN IMPORTANT AUDIENCE IN THE GALLERY**

Actors are aware of their audience all the time, for the audience fills the room and asks – even demands – to be considered. Some members of the audience are obvious to the actors, since they are vocal and they are centrally placed. We will discuss the clamour of such an audience in the following chapter.

There are two other groups in the audience, however, who for the most part sit quietly in the gallery, further from the action, but they are just as commanding as the people in the stalls. One set of voices registers the expectations of a significant primary group (the Scriptures) and another the expectations of a significant secondary group (church history). Their cumulative expectation gathers momentum from years gone by. We need to consider the expectations from these two quarters in this chapter. At this point, the researcher is again making use of Zerfass's amended model, as he moves to another component of the deliberate research, viz. the influential contributions of the religious community, which draws together scriptural tradition and church tradition.

### **4.2 THE PERSUASION OF A PARTICULAR INTERPRETATION OF SCRIPTURE (THE VOICE OF A SIGNIFICANT PRIMARY GROUP)**

When we choose to act as pastors, we are shaped most profoundly by the expectations of the Scriptures, or at least by the expectations of a particular interpretation of the Scriptures. Inevitably this thesis will give evidence of such an approach to the Bible, as the researcher presents a Baptist perspective. Baptists believe that the Scriptures ought to have the final authority over all life and practice, and therefore the expectation of the

biblical record is a commanding one in our efforts to come to terms with the role of the pastor.

#### **4.2.1            Developing the terminology through biblical history**

The pastoral office that impresses itself upon Baptist pastors today has a long development that reaches back to the Old Testament where religious leaders comprised Priests and Levites, the Wise Men and the Prophets (Elwell, 1988:1754). The Priests took care of the worship of the God of the covenant, the Levites took care of the temple logistics (the distinction between Priest and Levite is not entirely clear), the Wise Men had secular duties of governance, but were involved in educating the people in the moral requirements of the covenant, and the Prophets called a delinquent people back to the terms of the covenant.

During the New Testament period, Jewish religious leadership was exercised by the Priests (drawn from the Sadducees who had responsibility for the temple), the Scribes and Teachers of the Law operating in the synagogue (drawn from the Pharisees), and the Elders who enforced Jewish law in the community by judging and settling disputes and by giving advice on proper moral conduct. All together they made up the Sanhedrin, or the ruling council, of the Jews (Lea, 1996:54; Harris, 1998:42; Elwell & Yarbrough, 2005:56; Bixby, 2005:7; Douglas, 1982:1070; Bailey, 1989:42).

The Early Church did not seem to adopt the same pattern as Judaism. In fact, according to Volz (1989:359), the New Testament had no exclusive form or terminology for ministry, but saw a variety of ministries emerge, prompted by gifting. Then, in the early stages of development, the Church appears to have established two loosely arranged triads of leadership: (a) apostles, prophets and teachers; (b) bishops, elders and deacons. Bishops, in time, took on a more senior standing above elders, after the Hellenistic pattern of overseers, rather than after any biblical impetus towards seniority. The elevated status of the bishop from 'lead elder' to overseer of several churches was reinforced by the Constantinian investiture of bishops with civil duties and privileges

(1989:364). The idea of categories of leader roles was picked up by the Reformer, John Calvin. Starting from Ephesians 4:11, Calvin recognised apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. However, he highlighted pastor and teacher as having "an ordinary office in the church", whilst apostle, prophet and evangelist were classified as temporary offices that God raised up at the beginning of his Kingdom and from time to time thereafter for special reasons (Calvin, 1960: 1056). While Calvin's division causes other problems where Baptists have tended to dismiss the roles of apostles and prophets, it does distinguish those offices that were local-church-based (pastors and teachers) from those that ranged beyond the local church (apostles, prophets, evangelists) to build the kingdom of God.

In dealing with local-church offices, the apostle Paul addresses eldership (in Acts 20:17 & 28) and combines the concepts of elder (*presbuteros*) with overseer / bishop (*episkopos*) and with shepherd / pastor (*poimaino* / from *poimen*). These four terms are used interchangeably to refer to a common phenomenon. Having said that, there is still much to commend the separation in our minds of the office of pastor (perhaps better referred to as 'elder', so long as the associated denotation of priest is omitted) from the role of pastoring. By confusing the two, Baptists have emphasised a role-function (pastoring) by elevating it to the level of office, and by so doing have prioritised one dimension of the composite role, such that pastors and people come to expect one thing more than another from pastors. Baptist terminology has set us up for the characteristic expectation of pastors to be that of shepherding / pastoring. While that expectation might not be a bad thing, it is restrictive in the light of the many roles that pastors are called upon to perform today. This is not merely a matter of idle semantics. Names are powerful in determining direction of thought, as Collins acknowledges (1988:112). Pappas, too, uses the name to guide his thinking about what the essential role of the pastor ought to be: "Pastoring is what its name says it is: shepherding. Caring for the flock" (1995:65). As Young (1985:330) points out so well, the words 'elder', 'bishop' and 'pastor' carry certain associations, and unless we recognise that imprecise use of terms ferments hidden role agendas, pastors of Baptist churches will forever find themselves contending with role

ambiguity and role conflict (these terms will be discussed below). For that reason, therefore, it might be beneficial for Baptist pastors to be known as elders, though the term 'pastor' has become so entrenched that one wonders how easily its dominance could be dislodged from Baptist thinking. For convenience, here, I shall continue to use the term 'pastor'.

The trend to be noted is that, over time, a gradual movement took place from a multiplicity of ministries, towards a more fixed pattern of functionaries or office-bearers. The priesthood, long associated with Christian roots in Judaism, was seen to be vested in the corporate body, rather than in any individual, according to 1 Peter 2:5, 9. Nowhere in Acts, in the English language, do we have the Early Church leaders referred to as priests (Küng, 1972:28), though in terms of word derivation, the word 'priest' is identical in origin to the word 'elder' (Elwell, 1984:874). Probably because the Church found itself locked in dispute with the priests of Judaism right from the days of Christ, and later during the Reformation it was the priests of Catholicism against whom the Reformers were pitted in their determination to purge the church of abuses (cf. Calvin, 1960:1050), the term 'priest' has not carried through equally. Probably also, because of a widening concept of the role of leadership within the local assembly of believers, beyond the liturgical, the designation of priest was set aside by certain branches of Protestant churches, including the Baptists.

Scripture sets the precedent in the formation of role expectation of pastors, by employing certain terminology. To the Scriptures we will now turn for assistance in clarifying how Baptist pastors have come to see themselves. For convenience within the constraints of a thesis such as this, we shall focus, along the way, more on the letter of Paul to Titus, because it captures many of the pastoral themes elsewhere in the Bible.

#### **4.2.2 Scriptural indicators concerning the divine appointment, characteristics and tasks of elders / pastors**

The role of pastoring, and indeed its power especially during demotivating seasons of ministry, has been regarded as having divine appointment, rather than sociological

appreciation. This sense of call is close to the hearts of Baptist pastors, as can be seen in the empirical research (Fig. 5/8). Timothy could say (1 Ti 1:12): "I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength, that he considered me faithful, appointing me to his service." What renewed his strength was a sense of being appointed, despite human doubt about whether he was faithful or adequate to the task. The appointment, or the call, to a specific ministry-role builds on the general call to all Christians to belong to God. We see this pattern in Paul's opening lines to the Romans (1:1-7):

Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, *called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God—*<sup>2</sup> the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures<sup>3</sup> regarding his Son....Through him and for his name's sake, we received grace and apostleship *to call people* from among all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith.<sup>6</sup> *And you also are among those who are called to belong to Jesus Christ.*<sup>7</sup> To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ (my italics).

The special call to ministry is not neutralised – nor should it be neutralised – by the general call that pertains to all believers; in much the same way as the role of evangelist and the spiritual gift of evangelism is not negated by the fact that all Christians are expected to share the good news and to make disciples of all nations.

As Paul writes to Titus, he is mindful of his own standing before God, as a servant and apostle (1:1), under command (1:3) to carry out several tasks. The faith and the knowledge of the truth, for which he has been mandated to give his life, both rest on God-inspired realities and God-initiated actions. They rest on the hope of eternal life which God promised and executed (1:2-3). The "grace of God" (2:11) and the "kindness and love of God our Saviour" (3:4) have entered the realm of human experience, instituting one of the most thorough reconstitutions of human nature imaginable: that people who were enslaved by "passions and pleasures" could be washed and renewed to be worthy bearers of the hope of eternal life (3:3-7). Throughout the letter, Paul imparts an awareness of the divine undergirding that sustains any further discussion of the character of an elder, or the tasks of an elder within a social setting.

The letter to Titus bears one of the clearest depictions of the character of elders (1:6-9). They are to be **blameless, or above reproach, in the way they conduct themselves**



**among people**, i.e. not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain; but rather hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. They are to be **blameless, or above reproach, in the way they handle the Scriptures**, holding firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught (i.e. with respect for the way it was first presented, apostolically). They are to be **faithful and committed, maritaly**. There are two related issues here that influence Baptist preferences with respect to eldership. One is that Paul talks of husbands having but one wife, not a wife having one husband. For this reason, a preference in favour of male eldership is understood. The other issue pertains to divorced and remarried men being excluded from eldership on the grounds that they find themselves no longer in a position to husband their former wife (if they are divorced) and that they cannot be the husband of but one wife (if they have married a second time). They are to **parent their own children adequately**, ensuring proper respect and orderliness, and in that way demonstrating, microcosmically, their ability to integrate principles of 'parenting' that will apply to the wider church 'family'.

The description in Titus is accompanied, of course, by other passages that expect elders not to use deceptive tactics in ministry (2 Co 4:2), to be trustworthy in the handling of Scripture, with due cognisance of the fact that God's approval rather than human approval is paramount (1 The 2:4), to act commendably through all the vicissitudes of this life (2 Co 6:4-10), so that others will be able to follow an inspirational role-model (2 The 3:9), regardless of age (1 Ti 4:12). If we work mainly from Paul's letter to Timothy, elder qualifications can be grouped under the headings of maturity (1 Ti 3:6), discipline (1 Ti 3:6), parenthood (1 Ti 3:5), emotional stability (1 Ti 3:3), healthy personality and calling (Walker, 1974:243)

Not only is an elder to be someone in terms of character and spiritual development, but he is expected to carry out certain tasks, according to Paul in Titus. He is to **preach** (1:3), to **straighten** out what was left unfinished and **appoint** elders (1:5), to **encourage** and to **refute** using sound doctrine (1:9; 2:6, 15). He must also **silence** rebellious and corrupting

people and not allow them a platform to teach or communicate their distorted ideas (1:11). He must on occasion **rebuke sharply** (1:13), at other times **teach** (2:1), at all times **set an example** (2:7). He must **remind** the people about what is appropriate (3:1). He must **emphasise** spiritual realities (3:8), **avoid** unhelpful controversy (3:9) and **warn** divisive people before confirming their fundamentally different purposes and direction (3:10).

Another way of approaching these tasks is to classify them into the traditional functions of preaching (Mt 10:7, 27; Ac 5:20; 2 Ti 4:2), shepherding (Jer 3:15, 23:4; Eze 34:23; 1 Pe 5:2), being watchmen (Isa 62:6; Heb 13:17), and teaching (Mt 28:20; 1 Ti 4:11).

Infusing all the tasks is an esteem for the value and function of the Scripture that is "God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Ti 3:16-17).

#### **4.2.3 A scriptural theme – Intentional ministry**

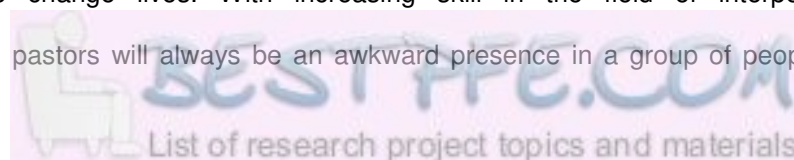
Paul's letter to Titus introduces a final feature that is significant within the ambit of this thesis. The ministry that he envisages for Titus anticipates that believers will not only prove to be "sound in the faith" (1:13) as a result of pastoral action, but that they will be able to live self-controlled and godly lives amidst the ungodliness and worldliness of their social context (2:12). What ought to result from pastoral influence is a careful devotion to "doing what is good" (3:8) and providing for daily necessities and not living unproductive lives (3:14). The practical relevance of shaping Christian people to function well in society seems to be a high priority in the letter to Titus. Paul resolutely grounds spiritual realities in the kind of social transformation that will make the teaching about God our Saviour attractive (2:10). Paul astutely points out that there are rebellious talkers (1:10) and those who in their rejection of biblical truth are now chasing religious myths and commanding that others follow them in their waywardness (1:14-16). Paul picks up a highly charged modern concept of slavery and deals with it in a way that frustrates modern sentiment, for he does not take the opportunity to condemn it, but rather overlooks it to major on

conducting ourselves in such terrible conditions so that God is honoured (2:9-10). Society might be unjust, it might be hostile (3:3) and it might be concentrating on unwholesome things (3:14), but the Gospel empowers anyone in such deplorable circumstances to live well in God's eyes, because such faithfulness is not bound by circumstances. Thus the tension between honouring God and living in 'the real world' is integrated in a vision of godliness that is stimulated by the role and function of the elder or pastor.

Paul himself acknowledged that his own role of servant and apostle had a distinct purpose. It was "for the faith of God's elect and the knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness" (1:1). Ministry was not for its own sake. It was purposeful, intentional and socially relevant, but in a way that perhaps would be interpreted awkwardly by society, for it would undermine self-centred indulgence and humanistic causes, and it would promote practical and attractive functionality in a decaying context. The elders, functioning in that milieu, were to be men under control, who were focussed on stimulating all ranges of people (2:1-10) towards attractive, productive spirituality.

Paul was keenly aware of the electric interplay between words, spiritual power and real-life example. He expressed it like this in speaking to the Thessalonians (1 Th 1:5-7): "Our gospel came to you not simply with words, but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction. You know how we lived among you for your sake. You became imitators of us and of the Lord; in spite of severe suffering, you welcomed the message with the joy given by the Holy Spirit. And so you became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia." We shall return to this matter of words full of power, later, in chapter six.

Pastoral work is meant to change lives, not just a key concept here or there. It would seem from Paul's letter to Titus, therefore, that elders / pastors cannot just 'be'. They are to be, with a purpose. Pastors do not just 'hang out' with people. They are with the people intentionally, to change lives. With increasing skill in the field of interpersonal communication, pastors will always be an awkward presence in a group of people, for



whether they open their mouths or not, whether they refer to Scripture or not, they challenge something deeply embedded in the human condition. Perhaps it is for this reason that Paul ends his first letter to the Thessalonians on a note of respect for pastoral leadership, for it is instinctive to be dismissive of leadership that does not confirm the status quo, and to discount the godly qualities that they enjoyed:

<sup>12</sup> Now we ask you, brothers, to respect those who work hard among you, who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you. <sup>13</sup> Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other. <sup>14</sup> And we urge you, brothers, warn those who are idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone. <sup>15</sup> Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always try to be kind to each other and to everyone else.

<sup>16</sup> Be joyful always; <sup>17</sup> pray continually; <sup>18</sup> give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

<sup>19</sup> Do not put out the Spirit's fire; <sup>20</sup> do not treat prophecies with contempt. <sup>21</sup> Test everything. Hold on to the good. <sup>22</sup> Avoid every kind of evil (1 Th 5: 12-21)

Our brief biblical investigation has pointed us in the direction of traditional roles of the pastor, but it has also identified another feature of that role that needs to be given fresh attention. Chapter eight will pursue the intentional-stimulatory feature more fully, as we consider the pastor working dissonantly (para. 8.5.6) and engaging from the side (para. 8.7). Before we move on, though, we need to take account of a further perspective that shapes the expectations of pastors: that of the wider church, including the Baptist denomination.

### **4.3 THE PERSUASION OF THE WIDER CHURCH (THE VOICE OF A SIGNIFICANT SECONDARY GROUP)**

#### **4.3.1 Traditional core roles of the pastor**

Our theorising about the pastoral role, at this point, sustains itself by drawing strength interchangeably from theological roots and historical ones (Heyns, 1993:354). The biblical examination above has fed into the theological root, but we need to keep in touch, again, with the historical, particularly of the kind that has developed since the Early Church with respect to the pastoral role. What emerges during this period of history adds the voice of a significant secondary group to the clamour of the audience in the drama of the pastor.

A review of the literature in the field, that draws from a variety of denominational traditions (Anglican, Baptist, Brethren, Catholic, Episcopal, Lutheran, Pentecostal, Presbyterian and Reformed), has yielded a set of traditional roles that are expected of the pastor. They are listed below with several variant nomenclatures. They include being a **Priest** (Person of prayer / Leader of worship / Celebrator), **Preacher, Teacher** (Theologian / Writer / Academic), **Prophet** (Politician), **Shepherd** (Counsellor / Healer / Carer / Watchman of souls / Visitor / Servant / Comforter / Friend), **Leader** (Fellowship-builder / Equipper / Enabler / Motivator / Visionary / Reconciler / Cross-culturalist), **Evangelist** (Church planter / Increaser) and **Administrator** (Organiser / Promoter / Builder) (Walker, 1974:244; Pappas, 1995:59; Kay, 2000:121; Merrill, 1984:12; Collins, 1988:114; Schippers, 1983:35; Shelley, 1995:35; Stultz, 1980:112; Reilly, 1975:354; Dobson & Hindson, 1983:10; Berghoef & De Koster, 1979:67ff.; Turnbull, 1967:297ff.; Nauta, 1993:24; Francis & Jones, 1996:66, 70, 89; Osborn in Berquist, 1994:18; Bennink, 1969:60; Van Voorst, 1993:190, 193).

These traditional roles, as difficult as they are to agree on, could be regarded as the core tasks and responsibilities that make up the role of pastor, as seen through the eyes of the wider church. The research carried out in this thesis among Baptist pastors reveals a similar configuration of core roles (see chapter six for a detailed analysis).

#### **4.3.2 Recent psychological interests in the pastoral role**

The pastoral office for the most part has majored on the variety of skills that comprise the dexterity of the pastor. In more recent time, however, the wider church has become interested in understanding the role of the pastor psychologically, and this preoccupation has contributed an additional set of expectations. There are several parts to this interest. First, personality characteristics are being examined as people try to work out what they need in a pastor. A long time ago, the top three qualities most desired in a pastor were that he be a good mixer, sociable and agreeable, and with a pleasing personality (Middleton, 1959:201). This early list paved the way to a more comprehensive research that revealed the following highly rated characteristics (Francis & Jones, 1996:6).

1. Pastoral sensitivity – is empathetic, has a comfortable demeanour
2. Administrative skills – able to run a parish / church smoothly and efficiently
3. Scholarship – knowledgeable about religion and life
4. Personal integrity – has moral stature that can be emulated

5. Innovation – can be creative and can be supportive of other people's good ideas
6. Personal spirituality – has a personal friendship with God
7. Meaningfulness of church services – has ability to handle church services well, especially to preach well
8. Laity involvement – can involve the laity easily and trust them to do a good job

Second, when it came to the reasons for pastors entering the ministry, psychology is adding to the usual theological reason of 'calling by God' by revealing complex psychological forces that direct people towards the pastorate. To note such motivations creates a heightened self-consciousness – and strain – for pastors. There are family-related unconscious reasons for choosing the ministry, e.g. wanting to please the family (Hartung, 1976:307) and there is the desire to project a self-that-one-wants-to-be rather than a self-that-one-is. Also at an unconscious level is the attempt to deal with human anger and rage by incorporating it into a holy cause (1976:308) or allowing it to pressurise one to be somebody (Kok, 1978:72). Though the study by Plante, Manuel and Tandez (1996:39) is limited by its small sample, the researchers found that applicants to the Catholic priesthood were basically well adjusted, even if they did display signs of defensiveness and coping with negative impulses such as rage and hostility, or just generally introverted (Francis & Jones, 1996:66).

Third, and more disturbing, is the assertion of Meloy (1986) that the pastoral office provides ample support for pathological narcissism, in that a grandiose self-concept is legitimised by the sense of divine calling, and it is perpetuated by primitive defence mechanisms of 'splitting' (separating people into good and bad), denial (masking deficiencies of presentation by reference to the Word of God) and entitlement (the person is owed admiration and attention, regardless of behaviour, by virtue of office).

Despite the bleak assessment of pastors, the point is that the wider community is aware of a range of psychological factors that affect the understanding of the pastor's role. Moreover, there is appreciation for the fact that pastors who offer assistance towards emotional health (all the resources of life functioning together in balanced proportion) are themselves often in need of emotional health maintenance (Johnson, 1970:50). Of particular relevance is the identity crisis that pastors experience, the pressure to be

perfect that lies within biblical teaching (Mt 5:48), the priority complex whereby he is set up as trustworthy, honourable and good by the congregation, the martyr complex whereby he is repeatedly induced to reflect on how much he has sacrificed to be a minister, and the problematic sense of belonging whereby the pastor is unsure of where he really belongs and to whom he belongs.

The pastor would be helped enormously, Kruijne (in Faber, 1983:59) believes, if he would see his role on a broader range of influence. Drawing on Erik Erikson's developmental tasks of generativity, Kruijne argues that if a pastor cannot feel that people need him, which issues in wanting to care for other people and wanting to pass on knowledge and traditions, there will be pastoral stagnation. In order to sense how the people need him (without it becoming narcissistic), the pastor should listen on two 'wavelengths': to what the congregation asks of him, and to what he asks of them. If he cannot separate what he needs from what the congregation needs, the real danger arises that the two will merge and he will come to see the congregation as his possession, serving his own needs.

Psychological considerations such as those above are interesting in their own right, perhaps, but they become even more important when we think ahead to the role-identity of the pastor as spiritual antagonist, for it is necessary then to keep in mind that there will be psychological dimensions to its formation and execution, just as there will be psychological pitfalls for the pastor if he / she is not careful. Though this thesis is not meant to be a psychological exploration, it is prudent for us, as practical-theologians, to keep such psychological dynamics in mind as we proceed, or to bring the psychological realities onto the stage, as it were. Jernigan (1991:222) has said that the formation of pastoral identity is a lifelong task, during which a person measures what inner and outer expectations are operating (Hansen, 1984:79; Davey & Bird, 1984:74), what is needed and what can be offered from a position of authentic strength, in order to stimulate vitality in congregational life (Davidson, 1990:28). As we later consider the metaphor of the pastor as spiritual antagonist, we will need to understand our own life journey, who we are, what drives us (recognising such unconscious motivators as anger, fear, guilt)

(McBurney & McCasland, 1984:31) and what we authentically can offer for the purpose of constructive change and vitality.

#### **4.3.3 New roles for the pastor in recent times**

In more recent times, with a rising curiosity in models of leadership in the business world, the pastor as **leader** has attracted interest as well. Recognising that the heart of leadership is influencing people (Sanders, 1967:19; Brewster et.al., 2003:46), Christian thinkers have cast such an initial definition of leadership in terms of the servant model of Jesus who incarnated a messianic suffering-servanthood (Richards & Hoeldtke, 1980:103; Dale, 1986:25). This image of the leader has been picked up by Baptists as a fundamental starting point for any discussion of leadership (Parnell, 1991:28 & 1980:30). Alongside the acceptance of the biblical image of the servant-leader has gone an appreciation for godly qualities such as competence, courage, clarity, coaching and character (Stanley, 2003). Alternatively the effective pastor-as-leader has been seen to be one who balances leadership qualities (being persuasive, cool under pressure, task-orientated, controlling, accurate in predicting, relations-orientated, integrative, tolerant of uncertainty and freedom) spread across four styles of leadership (professional, personal, public and managerial) (Nauss, in Francis & Jones, 1996). The position of servanthood has been reconfigured so as to minimise the 'doormat' associations that often attach to the notion of the servant. The process of discovering newer dimensions of leadership has paid attention to the leader's interior attitude, as well as his visionary capability. Shawchuck and Heuser (1993:29) discuss four inner qualities of religious leadership, and they place 'servant' along with childlikeness, poverty of spirit and self-examination. In emphasising vision, the pastor is expected to possess three-dimensional vision (1993:70), and be able to guard the corporate vision of the congregation (1993:139).

Church leadership is certainly evolving in the direction of greater levels of visionary leadership. John Maxwell, whose books enjoy a reasonable popularity among Baptist pastors in South Africa, speaks of vision as "the indispensable quality of leadership" (1993:139). This indispensable quality has been expressed more deliberately within



charismatic churches, whose 'new breed' of visionary leadership is undergirded by a strong prophetic dimension (Daniel, 1993:36; McKellar, 1997:101). Their brand of leadership may not always be desired by Baptist pastors, but they offer a pattern that prefers vision-based leadership over managerial leadership (Brewster et.al., 2003:46), the latter of which is seen by Charles de Jongh, a former lecturer at the Baptist Theological College in Johannesburg, to be a growing trend of (Baptist) 'senior pastors': "The contemporary trend appears to be toward Senior Pastors who focus on the management of the church and its ministries; often overseeing a larger pastoral team made up of so-called fulltime and part-time people" (2006:17).

Many of the writers referred to in the previous section noted that the role of the pastor is undergoing change. To further intensify the discomfort for pastors, the new currents in the context of ministry have added new demands to the role, not all of them theological, historical or psychological. **Practical skills**, or at least a working knowledge of the computer, finance, management, the media and the law are becoming more and more necessary.

**Administration**, long pilloried for its obstruction to 'proper' pastoral work just will not go away. In fact, administrative excellence is increasingly a requirement for ministry, especially as pastors work with growing bands of volunteers, diverse ministries and disparate interests within the church. Klimoski and Walters (1994) believe that the false notion that administration prevents a pastor from pastoring must be broken down if pastors are to move into any new experience of their role. They define administration as "the competent co-ordination of the talent and resources of a parish community so that the Gospel is served and people's lives are ultimately changed for the better" (1994:82). Framed this way, administration is embraced joyfully as a vital tool in creating the environment for people to understand the mystery of God.

Pastors cannot remain immune to what takes place in society. Consequently, and especially in South Africa with its precedent of clergy involvement in social issues, the

pastor will be called upon to be a **social participant**. It might start out as the pastor relating to the workplaces represented in his community. By his unexpected presence, he draws positive attention to the relevance of Christianity (Cleal, 1974:197). Thus, in relation to industry, education, hospital chaplaincy and the opportunities of performing the marriages and funerals of non-church people, the pastor is able to bring the presence of God into social life. Community ceremonies may also place the pastor in that reflective space where, as a 'community liturgist', he can call people to reflect on wider implications of social events (Barrett, 1998:51). Social involvement, of course, can be more pointed than a chaplaincy presence. It can make clear the implications of the Gospel to the everyday world of human affairs, and really addresses members of the church as they go out into the world. To preach Sunday after Sunday without making the application clear is simply avoidance of a pastor's very real responsibility (Temme, 1964:96) and may well lead to national horrors in a country with a high tally of Christian citizens much like we had in Nazi Germany (Pruden, 1968:307) and much like we have seen in the Congo and South Africa. Then, as the church enters into that dangerous and strained area of social criticism, the pastor finds himself initially dialoguing with social bodies such as local and national government, but as the urgency and the recalcitrance of institutions hardens, the pastor may take a cautionary or even a denunciatory stance, as Archbishop Desmond Tutu did when he wrote to the then Prime Minister, John Vorster in May 1976 to warn of his fear that violence and bloodshed would engulf the country. Five weeks later, the events of 16 June 1976 plunged the country into bloody revolt (Villa-Vicencio, in Hulley et.al., 1996:36). As deviant as political activism for pastors might be, since it attacks the vested interest of some of a pastor's own congregation and sets him up against them, the biblical training of pastors to think about the wellbeing of downcast people encourages pastors towards this role (Winter, 1973:179). Yet it is dangerous and fraught with risk.

Linked to the pastor as social participant is the role of pastor as **reconciler**, a role that is particularly pertinent in South Africa at the moment. Rowlingson (1966:62), writing from an earlier period of social strife in America, argued for pastors picking up their biblical role of reconciliation (2 Co 5:18-20). To do so, the pastor's own need to be reconciled to God

is paramount, after which the temptation to be a 'silent minister' must be resisted by speaking out against wrong ideas and actions (a prerequisite to genuine reconciliation). Finally, the pastor must go further to constructive rebuilding, mobilising groups and resources towards practical enterprises that will cement the once-estranged relationships in co-operative harmony.

Inevitably the pastor must deal with destructive forces that threaten to tear communities apart. As such he is looked to be a **conflict manager**, rescuing functional conflict from its dysfunctional counterpart (Kurtz, 1982:113). More will be said about this later.

The force of conflict on a church community can be relieved by the pastor, as he performs another new role, viz. the role of **clown**. Being vulnerable and transparent about his own doubts and frustrations, the pastor as clown deliberately avoids the image of being skilled and thereby reduces the distances between himself and warring parties in the group. His role humanises combatants to appreciate the aspects of one another that are easily lost in a fight (Castleman, 1976).

Presuming, of course, that a pastor's tenure is sufficiently long in one place, the pastor discovers another two roles that he performs. He is a **historian** who keeps track of larger processes in the life of families, church trends, denomination movements and continental issues (Siler, 1986:525). He helps people to understand what is going on, and as such, he fulfils yet another role of **namer**, or identifier, helping people to classify and bring under control some of those obscure and hard-to-reach experiences of life (1986, 532).

The function of filling in the blanks and uniting disjointed elements in the church is taken to a curious extreme by Litfin (1982) when he elevates the pastor as **completer**. Eschewing the shepherd model as incomplete, he offers the pastor as completer as a central motif to bind both task and maintenance behaviours that leadership theorists propose. Although the role is derived from William Schultz's social psychology and it attempts a sophistication of individual and corporate processes, it comes down to a

simple formula: "the leader's task is to complete what is lacking in the group" (1982:62). Humble though it may be, it really exacerbates the pastor's load, for now he must rush around 'plugging the gaps' where volunteers have grown tired of service or have become distracted by more exotic ambitions. To see the pastor's role in these terms also fosters an unhealthy correspondence between pastor and the saviour of the church, for he becomes the one that makes the difference and is therefore indispensable.

Understandably repelled by this menial, haphazard notion of the role of the pastor, one final alternative is making itself felt in church circles. It is the role of pastor as the **professional**. It has been the predominant model of ministry to emerge in the USA and one that was fuelled in part by the coinciding mode of human organisation in the secular world (Seymour, 1983:8). Oddly enough, the word 'professional' contains the word 'profess' which was used of religious orders in medieval time to describe people who would 'profess' their faith and make a concomitant commitment to a religious order (Campbell, 1983:21). Today the concept has been secularised to mean a full-time occupation which conforms to criteria of education, expertise and codes of ethics. Supported by a fascination with scientific accomplishments and with efficient methods of delivery that measured progress more quantifiably than a reliance on virtues, ministry began to adjust its perception of leadership away from spiritual virtue, as the ancients had understood it, to one of specialisation of knowledge and excellence of performance. Theological institutions designed curricula to produce pastoral specialists (Miller, 1991:27), who would be able to concentrate on different aspects of spirituality, and take heed of the objective data from the religious 'marketplace' of the kind that George Barna and the Gallup polls offer (Miller, 1995:120). At best we can say that the rise of professionalism was a genuine desire to do ministry excellently; at worst, it was an anxiety to present an institution already devalued by a sceptical society as having merit and equal standing with any secular institution.

Either way, four negative effects ensue. First, professionalism has created a hierarchy between those who deliver (the professionals) and those who receive (the clients).

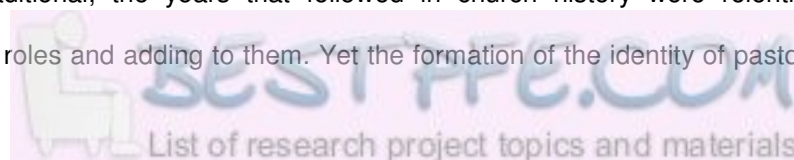
Second, professionalism has fragmented spirituality. Third, professionalism has replaced visionary leadership with management and co-ordination and, four, professionalism has urged pastors to judge themselves by professional rather than religious standards of success (Seymour, 1983:9). Christopherson (1994:222) notes that the work of secular professionals and semi-professionals have taken over territory that formerly belonged to the church, with the result that pastors "scurry about looking for something to do – and not incidentally, someone to be." What the pastor is to be might be depicted by exponents of professionalism as a skilled, successful practitioner. However, as Ford (1996:116) cautions, pastors ought to be faithful speakers of the word of God, not necessarily successful ones. They are not just skilled, successful practitioners. They are somewhat mysterious, symbolic figures, intimate with a pre-scientific past and yet grounded in modern concerns and struggles (Christopherson, 1994:233).

Not every pastor would agree that we ought to be more than skilled practitioners. For some, the issue of the pastor as professional is about as relevant to contemporary society as one can get. Pastors who accept this role configuration as the dominant one find themselves enmeshed in a market-driven ministry that demands the church repackage its message and method to accommodate a consumerist society, preoccupied with meeting felt-needs (Doran, 1996:57, 67).

#### **4.4 CONCLUSION**

The biblical record has orientated us to expect pastors to be people with a sense of divine appointment, called to bear certain characteristics and to carry out certain tasks in an intentional manner. This realisation has established a basis for proposing, later, a model of ministry that seeks to be true to these biblical underpinnings.

If the Bible has set up an initial configuration that led to a core cluster of roles that could be deemed traditional, the years that followed in church history were relentless in adjusting those roles and adding to them. Yet the formation of the identity of pastors has



continued in recent times, as our society (with its media and role models) persists in shaping the expectations of the pastoral role. Our attention now turns to consider the persuasiveness of a key element of our modern society, as we contemplate the affirmation that the modern audience seeks to introduce in the next chapter.

# **CHAPTER FIVE**

## **THE APPLAUSE OF A MODERN AUDIENCE - PRESENT EXPECTATIONS SHAPING THE PASTOR**

### **5.1 MODERN THEATRE OF THE MIND AND EMOTIONS**

The audience filtering into a theatre to watch a stage production does not come in without certain preconceived notions of what they can expect of the production, its theme, its technicalities, its limitations and finally its anticipated impact. The actors, themselves, believe that they perform within the broad range of public demand, unless they act within a specialist genre that seeks to overturn every convention possible. The Belgian symbolist, Maurice Maeterlinck (1862-1949), contrasted what he experienced when he attended then-modern dramatic renditions of Shakespeare's plays, compared with what he expected to experience:

When I go to the theatre, I feel as though I were spending a few hours with my ancestors, who conceived life as something that was primitive, arid, and brutal... I am shown a deceived husband killing his wife, a woman poisoning her lover, a son avenging his father, a father slaughtering his children, children putting their father to death, murdered kings, ravished virgins, imprisoned citizens – in a word, all the sublimity of tradition, but alas, how superficial and material...!

I had hoped to be shown some act of life, traced back to its sources and to its mystery by connecting links, that my daily occupations afford me neither power nor occasion to study. I had gone there hoping that the beauty, the grandeur, and the earnestness of my humble day-to-day existence would, for one instant, be revealed to me, that I should be shown the I know not what presence, power, or God that is ever with me in my room. I was yearning for one of the strange moments of a higher life that flit unperceived through my dreariest hours; whereas, almost invariably, all that I beheld was but a man who would tell me, at wearisome length, why he was jealous, why he poisoned, or why he killed (in Cole, 1960:30).

Intangibly within the theatre, expectations thrive and jostle. Some are defeated and banished for a season, even if they smart in the wings, awaiting their immanent return. A pastor, pouring his energy into his role, finds that it is conditioned by a long tradition, mediated by several forces that combine social prescription and personal aspiration.

This chapter seeks to enter the 'theatre of the mind and the emotions' and examine the expectations that shape the role of the pastor, by featuring two persuasions that contend, viz. the persuasion of the media (the voice of society), and the persuasion of pastoral role models (the voice of own experience). Again, in terms of Zerfass's amended model, we are considering at this stage of the deliberate research certain social factors that shape the role expectation of pastors.

## **5.2 THE PERSUASIVENESS OF THE MEDIA (THE VOICE OF SOCIETY)**

### **5.2.1 Cinema and television as modern theatre**

Ancient theatre once merged the interests of entertainment, instruction and worship, as its craft exerted a credible influence over the mind and expectations of the populace. While theatre in the modern era has moved to the specialist fringe of society, another art form has taken over as a conditioner of popular expectations. The mass media, more especially cinema and television, now occupies a powerful position in the lives of so many of us, in general, and many members of Baptist congregations, in particular.

While radios are found in 73% of South African households, a television set is rapidly coming to be regarded as an essential domestic appliance. There are more television sets in South African households (53.8%) than there are refrigerators (51.2%) (*Census 2001 Census in brief*. 2003:98). It would seem that we are drawn inexorably to the world of media communications, to the point that we play with the notion of merging with the media so imperceptibly that our lives become one long reality show, as Jim Carey 'realises' in the movie, *The Truman Show* (1998).

The effects of mass communication is a matter of ongoing research. Mass communication mechanisms assist us wittingly and unwittingly in the process of constructing meaning. Through our exposure to cinema and television, we assemble four cognitive structures to make sense of people around us (Wood, 2004:153): **Prototypes** – idealised examples of representatives of a particular group; **personal constructs** – bipolar measurements of selected qualities e.g. wise-naïve, flexible-rigid; **stereotypes** –



predictive generalisations; and **scripts** – kinds of behaviours and sequences of behaviours that are deemed appropriate.

Fourie (2001:291) has noted that the media can affect our behaviour by altering the way we think about something (cognitive effect), the way we feel about something (affective effect) and the way we will something into being, or translate something into action (conative effect). It sends us so much information that we can suffer from information-overload and cultural fragmentation. Also, the media puts images of ourselves and our world together in a particular sequence, in order to interpret reality for us (McDonnell, 1994:181). Replacing our parents, who used to be the ones to tell us stories, the media exerts its influence in either a short-term or a long-term fashion. For our purposes, here, it is argued that social perceptions concerning the pastor are subject to long-term conditioning, after the manner of stereotyping (Fourie, 2001:303). A stereotype, according to Grobler et.al. (2002:47) is "a fixed, distorted generalisation about the members of a group." It stems from primary diversity (e.g. race, gender, age), as well as other attributes that are deliberately incomplete, exaggerated or distorted. Stereotyping is different to generalisations (traits worked out across the group as a result of direct, personal experience), since they are imposed from the outside by selective presentation.

By adapting the insights of DeFleur and Dennis (in Fourie, 2001:303), in conjunction with those of Grobler et.al. (2002:48), we can set out five essential elements of stereotyping that might affect our understanding of pastors:

1. Through entertainment, we are presented with content concerning pastors.
2. These portrayals tend to be consistently negative, showing more undesirable characteristics and fewer positive characteristics than the dominant group in the media presentation.
3. Such portrayals of pastors are similar among the various media, thereby providing corroboration.
4. These portrayals provide constructions of meaning, particularly for those viewers who have only limited contact with actual pastors.
5. Viewers deposit these meanings into their memories as relatively inflexible interpretations of what pastors are like, regardless of actual personal characteristics. When acted on, stereotypes negate a pastor's individuality and limit his potential.

Stereotypes, of whatever person or group, are activated (to become prejudice) in response to perceived threat, following the view that we all are involved in a complex

social categorisation of people into 'us versus them', where the categorisation goes too far (Aronson, Wilson & Akert, 2005:440; Paul, 1998:2). Stereotypes of pastors in film and television can be regarded as a multi-layered response of Hollywood to the perceived threat of the Christian message, as personified by its leaders, i.e. pastors. After all, the mind behind the media is not necessarily supportive of Christian values, as the religious beliefs of Hollywood might show.

### **5.2.2 The mind behind the script – Belief systems and the media**

As far back as 1983, Lichter and Rothman's survey demonstrated that Hollywood is a highly secularised community. Their research revealed that 93% of the entertainment elite seldom or never attended church services (in Billingsley, 1989:116), and their penchant for the non-traditional and unconventional is suggested by the fact that only 33% believed adultery was wrong, only 5% said that homosexual behaviour was wrong and 91% favoured abortion. Billingsley comments that, for the most part, Hollywood operates on the constitutional principle of separation of church and screen, wanting to be left alone to pursue its own way (1989:119). That way believes that the fittest and the strongest survive, that power is centralised, that happiness consists of limitless material possession, that progress is good and that there exists in society a free flow of information. Closely aligned to these five myths are the values of power, wealth, property, consumerism, narcissism and immediate gratification (Fore, 1987:64). La Haye and Noebel (2000:177) have demonstrated how the media has adopted the humanist agenda with its five tenets of atheism, evolution, amorality, autonomous man and global socialism, and in America has sought resolutely to communicate its message through the educational system, through humanist organisations, through government and – more importantly here – through the media. Mixed with an ambivalent capitalism, and driven by a quest for anything that has changed significantly (Dowd, 1994:199), is an inclination towards Eastern mysticism and New Age teachings. Together Hollywood's hostility to the Judeo-Christian worldview in general, and conservative Christianity in particular, has meant that if movies are going to endorse any religious persona at all, it is more likely to be characters representing liberation theology's social stance, since there is a favouring of utopian programmes characteristic of left-wing politics (Billingsley, 1989:130, 143,

120). For the most part, however, Hollywood ignores religion as though it does not matter to modern people, or it exploits religion in a sensationalist fashion (*The Da Vinci Code*), but never lacking in substituting its own 'saviour' figures (*Spiderman*, *The Legend of Zorro*). The media environment confers legitimacy and power to particular ways of viewing the world. It does so by creating values (even if it must overturn existing ones in order to create new ones) and by selecting particular values already in society (or in a segment of society) and then re-projecting these values, as though they are common to everyone, amplifying them in the process (Fore, 1987:43). As such, therefore, the media becomes a major source of authority in society as to who we are and what we are, which Fore labels as the 'hidden role' of television (1987:21), a role that Christians might still believe to be an important function of the church in society.

We are realising as we proceed, here, that the impact of the media is measured in at least three ways. Firstly, **its underlying belief system**, as explained above, exerts a tremendous influence over what we will believe, but secondly, the **power of images** (its visual medium) induces a response by penetrating to an emotional level that often bypasses critical thinking. We will say something about this feature in a moment. Then, thirdly, the **length of exposure** to this powerful message extends the allure of the media and is bound to alter our perceptions over time.

### **5.2.3 Inducing the response – The power of images**

Goodness, it seems, is hard to depict on film. Characters motivated by goodness come across as controlled, normal and boring, while characters motivated by evil appear out-of-control, abnormal and interesting, with the result that evil acts are cinematically riveting (Billingsley, 1989:71). To a target audience of 16-25 year-olds (Marsh & Ortiz, 1997:9), such a counter-culture orientation is highly appealing.

Films are stimulating, visually diverse and sometimes unpredictable, and the sophisticated special effects are guaranteed to amaze and stun the audience. Films amuse. Ironically, the word betrays a non-thinking foundation. To 'muse' is to think or to

ponder. By prefixing the word with an 'a' strips the word of its original, thinking dimension, and renders the new word, 'amuse', as 'not to think' or to be prevented from thinking (Billingsley, 1989:69). The power of film, compared to print, lies in its ability to utilise images, rather than words, in order to solicit an emotional reaction. Stanley Kubrick, the maker of several blockbuster films in the 1980s, described how film operates at a level other than cognitive: "I think an audience watching a film or a play is in a state very similar to dreaming, and that the dramatic experience becomes a kind of controlled dream.... But the important point here is that the film communicates on a subconscious level, and the audience responds to the basic shape of the story on a subconscious level, as it responds to a dream" (in Fore, 1987:60). His views on film's persuasive engagement with the emotions are shared by David Graham, who says that film is "much more immediately affective than cognitive, engaging our feelings before it does our logic and rationality" (in Fore, 1987:38).

#### **5.2.4 Extending the allure – The power of the length of exposure to the visual media**

As the media world creates images that persuade us about how life is, we would be able, usually, to withstand these messages much easier if it were not for the prolonged exposure to them. Considering the length of time people spend in front of the television – in 1985 the average viewer spent 4½ hours per day (Nielson in Fore, 1987:16) – it is little wonder, therefore, that the steady invasion of the media worldview, coupled with its powerful presentation, will achieve staggering results in shaping our imaginations and informing our thinking.

As cynical as theologians may get about the effect of the media, it would seem to be the case that society's views about God, life and the church are being formed not by theological faculties, but by movie studios. Though the 'theology' that is being imparted is not systematic by any means, it is nonetheless a "theology by negotiation", to use Jasper's phrase (in Marsh & Ortiz, 1997:248, 237), one that can stimulate viewers to

contemplate certain metaphysical realities in an emotionally arresting and entertaining setting. Along the way, worldview is progressively modified.

### **5.2.5 Portrayals of pastors**

To a cinematic culture, pastors and priests have been portrayed in less-than-flattering form in the movies and television. To be sure, the manipulations of televangelists have not helped the cause. According to Michael Horton (1990:250), who has endeavoured to expose the flawed 'gospel' and the self-centred appeals of some television preachers, evangelicalism is in need of a Second Reformation.

Despite the derision that some religious figures have called down on their own heads, the media is also adding its own slant of pastors as fools and incompetents (Schmalenberger, 1993:306). In the television series, *Ballykissangel* (2004), the young Catholic priest is portrayed as cute and naïve, even if he is also repressed and ineffective. Father Farley the older, popular Catholic priest in *Mass Appeal* (1984) struggles to detach himself from his obsessive need for congregational approval, to the point that he compromises integrity for the sake of ingratiating himself. Only when the apprentice priest, Mark Dolson, challenges the status quo does Farley make a brave decision to stand up for what is right, but by the end of the film the priesthood has suffered extensively in the eyes of the audience.

Where the clergy is presented in a stronger light, it is often posed in a socially unhealthy form, where priests molest and cover up (*Absolution* – 2006). Alternatively, religious leaders are seen to exploit the religious sensitivities of vulnerable people for personal gain (*The Apostle* – 1997; *The Da Vinci Code* – 2006), and more than that, they take advantage of people sexually (*Glory! Glory!* – 1990). In the tradition of celebrity preachers, Reverend Charles Frank in *The Gospel* (2005) is exposed as ego-obsessed and determined to refashion the New Revelation Church into a commercially viable enterprise. The patent lack of spirituality is evident in some religious figures, replaced rather expeditiously by cunning and intellectual sharpness in the 'whodunit' tradition (*The*

*name of the rose* – 1986). Attempts at spirituality do not come across as inspirational or commendable, but rather as weird and out of place in *Holy Man* (1998), for example. Then again, spirituality is seen as acutely socio-political, after the style of liberation theologians (*Romero* – 1989). Even in a movie such as *The Mission* (1986) that leaves audiences genuinely challenged by Christian commitment, the commitment of some of the priests is tempered by the duplicity of religious superiors who are prepared to sacrifice communities for the sake of political alliances. Then there are those depictions of spirituality that are socially unconventional in a way that suggests that the only choice before religious people is between biblical morality, on the one hand, and social relevance, on the other (*The Missionary* – 1983). In an age of increasing reduction of religion to cultural precincts, *Keeping the Faith* (2000) places a rabbi and a Christian priest together around a mutual childhood playmate, who has since grown into an attractive woman. Their religion is adapted to conform to the demands of interfaith tolerance that allows each of them to find happiness with respect to the girl they both pursue. When it comes to sexuality, religious leaders are fair game for the movies. *Priest* (1995) examines, amongst other church tensions, the homosexual identity of a Catholic priest whose orientation is expected to be endorsed by compassionate followers of Christ in the Eucharistic conclusion of the movie. Within a resoundingly negative portrayal of priests and church laws in *Priest*, probably the only thing to emerge with transformatory power is the Eucharist (Auffill, 1998:28). The *Thorn Birds* (1983) draws viewers into the agonising love which grows between a celibate Catholic cardinal and a young girl in whom he takes a special interest, and after we are encouraged to appreciate the dilemma of Catholic celibacy, we are inclined to hope for the priest's faith in God to broaden sufficiently, and permissively, to take in the love of a woman. More recently, *Licence to Wed* (2007) presents a pastor who tries to be relevant to modern partner patterns in a humorous and confrontational manner, but who is seen nonetheless to be eccentric, unconventional and meddling. Viewers are drawn to speak of him as a strange character, rather than as one who brings eternal things closer to earthly ones.

To be sure, the church has not been an all-round model of integrity. In an actual dispute over the church's handling of sexual abuses by certain Catholic priests, Fr. Dominic Grassi, a Chicago pastor, expressed his sense of feeling 'compromised' by the crisis. What he said of the Catholic Church is a sentiment that could easily be attached to the outcome of media treatments of the church. He said that he now has constantly to earn trust from his parishioners that once was taken for granted (Roberts, 1996:4).

The movies help to shape perceptions of pastors on two levels. First, they inform general perceptions of the role of pastors as being people who are essentially irrelevant, but if we must have them in society, they are expected to be out of touch, weak or overly dogmatic in the interests of some exotic cause. Despite applauding the mysterious grace of the priesthood to create a hero out of an ordinary man, as Nicolosi (2002:7) tries to argue with respect to *The Mission*, *Romero*, *On the Waterfront* and *The Scarlet and the Black*, pastors, after the movies have finished with them, are readily presented as a nuisance in society, and embarrassing to deal with, if at the very last resort we have to deal with them at all. Members of society imbibe these perceptions of pastors and, like scripts mentioned earlier (cf. Wood, 2004:153), they condition the interaction they have with pastors in the real world.

On a second level, media perceptions create a heightened sensitivity amongst pastors. For fear of being seen by society as irrelevant, dull and low-powered, pastors can overreact by wanting to become highly professional and business-like, and in the process lose some of the spiritual dimensions of the pastoral function. John Piper's aim in writing the book, *Brothers, we are not professionals* (2002), is to resist the fretful desire of pastors to fit into the respectable professional image: "The title of this book," says Piper, "is meant to shake us loose from the pressure to fit in to the cultural expectations of professionalism.... to sound the alarm... against the borrowing of paradigms from the professional world" (xii).



Applicable to both levels, above, is another consequence of the media and mass communications in our day. Not only are the perceptions held by society and pastors formed so persuasively by the media, but the basis of judging has also been affected. Until the age of global communications, pastors were compared only with their predecessors or colleagues across town. Now a religious celebrity across the world becomes the standard of pastoral excellence, locally. Evangelistic success is measured against the latest DVD series, and a neighbourhood pastor's teaching has to compete with the resources and the unusually concentrated preparation of the keynote speaker at the latest conference. The counselling techniques of pastoral psychologists become the norm, and the weekly preaching that is prepared in conjunction with other weekly needs comes up against the likes of Joyce Meyers, Rick Warren and Bill Hybels. A subtle effect of the media has been to demand that pastors be specialists in almost every field (Shelley, 1995:36).

The clamour of this sector of the audience is for the actors to satisfy the demands of society. Yet the actors – in this case, pastors – are hearing other voices in the crowd.

### **5.3 THE PERSUASION OF PASTORAL ROLE MODELS (THE VOICE OF ONE'S OWN EXPERIENCE)**

For many people, if not most, the media will shape their perceptions profoundly. However, we would be foolish to assume that we are merely passive victims of the impact of media portrayals of pastors, for we are thinking beings with the capacity to reflect and choose, and thereby to endorse or modify a particular view of pastors. Our participation in the communicative process would thus be in keeping with Pieterse's concept of reciprocity that is inherent in communicative preaching (1987:81) and with Abbey's view of communication as a dynamic process in which there is a continuous change and interaction between the participants and among the elements in their communicative behaviour (1973:39).



For all that, we would be equally naïve to assume that we create our role definition entirely through our own intellectual construction. We have had role models who have acted with distinction before us, and we have had role models who have disappointed as well. In the formation of pastoral expectations, some of us will have had memorable, real pastors who have made a dramatic impression on our understanding of what a pastor is like. Each pastor's individual impact will not be the same, but together, they will generate a range of characteristics that will moderate the onslaught of media portrayals. The role models become members of the audience, as it were, with their own expectations of what is acceptable for the role being performed on the stage. Measuring the personal effect of significant pastoral role models is a necessary component of our research at this point, for it acknowledges a key factor of Christian communication, viz. the power of modelling (1 Co 11:1; Php 3:17, 4:9; Heb 13:7).

For many Baptists there have been actual pastors who have contributed to their appreciation of the role of pastor. An example of such a role model for Baptists would be Rex Mathie. Well known in Baptist circles, Rev. Dr Rex Mathie exerted an enormous influence over generations of Baptist pastors. He was a consummate orator, who filled the pulpit not only with his ample frame, but also with his preaching presence. He inspired so many younger pastors with his ability to memorise Scripture and with his remarkable ability to make theology practical. As he once said: "Someone once asked me what my ambition in life was. I said it was to take Theology out of academia and into the pew, so that both the plumber and the philosopher could understand it" (Tilbury, 2004:27). He possessed an ease in widely interdenominational settings that frustrated die-hard denominationalists and surprised non-Baptists who expected a leading Baptist figure to be fundamentalist. While his Baptist roots committed him to the authority of the Scriptures, he succeeded in challenging denominationalists to rethink what was patently Christian rather than merely denominational. With theatrical ease, Dr Mathie found a way even to pray that caused people to pause in their rush to success to reflect on what God would want from a life. His much-loved refrain that we humans would do well to "think the

thoughts of God after him" quietly flouted human arrogance, as much as it awakened a desire to be led by God.

The contribution of pastors who enjoyed either a high profile or a low profile in the denomination should be understood rather uniquely here. The persuasiveness of their lives becomes what Konstantin Stanislavsky, the great teacher of drama, referred to as 'emotional memory' (in Bentley, 1968:252). Their examples are received as a collection of external traits which we have observed and kept buried in our memory until the moment for them to be combined in the delineation of a character. We may all have such emotional memory that exercises powerful motivation and constraint as we work out how best to fulfil our respective roles. Even if the impetus is primarily reactionary – reacting to unpleasant examples – the power of emotional memory is considerable. Paul Cedar, the senior pastor of Lake Avenue Congregational Church in Pasadena, was asked what helped to shape his values about style and image as a young minister many years before. He answered by describing the kinds of leaders he had seen who occupied places of leadership simply because of politics rather than spiritual characteristics. His experience became emotional memory of the kind that gave him a revulsion for secular-styled leadership in the church, and – in reaction – a deep commitment to God-initiated leadership (Merrill, 1984:14).

#### **5.4 ROLE CONFLICT AND ROLE AMBIGUITY**

Coping with biblical-traditional roles, church-historical ones, as well as newer ones that are imposed by our society has heightened the likelihood of stress for the pastor. He experiences role conflict and role ambiguity. Role conflict has been defined by Eysenck (in Kay, 2000:119) as "the problem which arises when someone occupies two social roles at the same time" that compete with each other. Adapting Anderson's framework (1971:11), it can occur within the role configuration between, for example, administrator and teacher (intrapersonal), it can occur between the accepted role configuration of the pastor and congregational expectations of the role of pastor (inter-personal) and it can occur between the accepted role configuration of the pastor and the wider social

expectation (inter-situational). Malefyt (1974) has given some examples of conflicting roles, including scholar-administrator, prophet-priest and preacher-counsellor, traditional-contemporary leader, and saint-sinner.

Role ambiguity, on the other hand, is usually caused by a lack of information about what a role requires (Kay, 2000:119), or when the role occupant is unable to determine which of several concomitant roles will prove to be appropriate or inappropriate to his/her performance (Alutto, 1968:107). Juggling the core (traditional) roles of the pastor is stressful enough, but add the newer roles to the cluster and pastors will find that there will be increasing incidence of conflict and ambiguity with respect to their roles. Catholics may find the anguish of such conflict and ambiguity reduced through what Dewey (1971:29) calls the 'reference group method' (conforming one's role according to the wishes of the bishop). Baptists must find another way, since the denomination is not structured hierarchically. The Baptist principle of autonomy of the local church might have many benefits, but in this case it does not aid the pastor in sifting through the many role expectations. He must find a cohering centre, an integrating hub by means of which he will be able to referee the role cluster.

## **5.5 LACK OF A PASTORAL CENTRE**

Indeed, the lack of a centre for pastoral identity has already been acknowledged. Siler (1986:523) has marvelled at the amount of energy pastors spend in the search for role clarity, when they are really in search of a centre of identity, a matter to which we return time and again in this thesis. Boyd (1995:195) is aware of the need for a new model that will embed theological convictions and virtues in a community. Though he does not offer one, he looks forward to one emerging. Aleshire (1995:25), too, has noticed that an identity centre is missing and has observed that pastors have tried to find this centre by gathering as many capacities, or skills, around them as they can manage, in the belief that they can be the 'well-rounded pastor'. Instead, says Aleshire, pastoral identity is linked to living and interpreting life theologically in ways that enable the community of faith to live and interpret life theologically. Aleshire is attempting to locate the pastoral

centre, not in skills, but in 'being'. His approach finds sympathy with two perspectives: one represented by character (Parrott, 2001) and the other by spirituality (Le Roux, 1991).

Character, as an integrating factor for pastoral leadership identity, invites pastors to conform their lives to sound moral character in the belief that a leader will be one who consistently demonstrates quality of character and is therefore rewarded with followers who place trust in their leader. But moral character makes one a good person. It does not necessarily make one a good leader (Parrott, 2001:23).

Spirituality, as an integrating factor for pastoral identity, by contrast, views the pastor's spirituality as bringing about a greater congruence between the content of belief and the life of belief, and by so doing deepening the pastor's spiritual life and forming an experiential pastoral identity (Le Roux, 1991:180).

## **5.6 IDENTITY**

It is right that we conclude this chapter with the issue of identity, for many Baptist pastors today find themselves struggling to define themselves in the face of so many insistent expectations. It is crucial that the issue of identity be resolved, otherwise the spectre of role conflict and role ambiguity will threaten to undermine the effectiveness of our spiritual leaders. Some Baptist pastors – as we have mentioned above – have sought definition by projecting a certain 'being' (character and/or spirituality) that may have been conditioned by role models or biblical precedent. Alternatively they have sought to define themselves through the accumulation of skills, likely induced by the demand of social expectation or wider church insistence. To seek pastoral identity through being or skills is helpful, yet there seems to be missing an active component that will combine spirituality with action, contextually. It is in this connection that the metaphor of the pastor as spiritual antagonist offers a significant step forward.

However, before we contemplate the spiritual antagonist in chapter seven, we need to reflect on how Baptist pastors in South Africa might be understanding their role. To the results of the empirical research we must now turn, in the next chapter.

# **CHAPTER SIX**

## **VOICES FROM THE STAGE – RESPONSES FROM BAPTIST PASTORS**

### **6.1 INTRODUCTION**

To hear the actors on the stage has a powerful impact. To hear from my colleagues in the pastorate has an equivalent potency. Some have reached the end of their long drama, while others are in mid-career and others, still, are just beginning. Together they have a presence that is unavoidable. This chapter seeks to let their voices be heard about what it means to be a Baptist pastor in South Africa in the early years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. All of them, even the college lecturers whose ministry has restricted focus, have spoken from a pastoral perspective. The 52 pastors, almost exclusively from the Gauteng province, stand as a compelling representative of the remainder of our South African Baptist pastors. Some of them have pastored in other provinces of the country, and others have taken their place on denominational committees and forums that seek to serve the denomination countrywide and not merely in one province.

This chapter connects with Zeffass's amended model (Fig. 1/1), insofar as it represents the incorporation of data from an empirical situational analysis into the deliberate research. Extensive use of graphs and tables has been made to depict the data, but first the instrumentation of the empirical analysis will need to be explained.

### **6.2 THE DESIGN OF THE EMPIRICAL INSTRUMENTS**

#### **6.2.1 Initial conception**

Conducting empirical situational research encompasses a range of deliberations and decisions that are best reflected upon openly at this stage. Gravetter and Forzano (2006:6) discuss five methods of acquiring knowledge that can lead to research: the **method of tenacity** (habit or tradition), the **method of intuition**, the **method of authority** (an expert provides us with information), the **rational method** and the **empirical method** (using direct observation or personal experience). The formulation of

the original research idea in the case of the current thesis was derived from two of the above methods: from personal experience and from intuition (the empirical method and the method intuition in Gravetter and Forzano's framework), as the probability of pastoral need began to emerge. As a result of earlier academic study and personal interest in English literature, the elements of the emerging problem were already being interpreted against a backdrop of dramatic personas and theatrical dynamics, all of which generated the broad notion of the spiritual 'antagonist'. The research idea led on to the formulation of a research question.

Once the research question had been conceived, it was subjected to a preliminary verification, which added a third method of acquiring knowledge (the method of authority), when denominational 'experts' were consulted with respect to the incidence of congregational conflict among Baptist churches. In this process of conceptualisation, insights from reading in the field of conflict resolution and of pastoral identity, along with later comments from my thesis supervisor, helped to clarify the particular focus of the research question. Systematically one's definition of key components of the thesis began to take direction in conjunction with one's presuppositional framework (metatheory). Both Babbie (1983:95) and De Vos (1998:39) would agree that what had been accomplished by this stage of the research process included the choice of a research problem, the defining of the research problem and the conceptualisation of the enterprise. What remained was to operationalise the project, i.e. to decide how actually to investigate the problem and how to gather the data.

If a problem was perceived to be present in the ecclesiology and pastoral role identity of Baptist pastors, then it would require an investigation of how Baptist pastors understood their role. In this regard the first phase of the research instrument (the questionnaire) polled their insights (see Appendix 1 and 2). In keeping with quantitative research methodology, the questionnaire, entitled "Roles of a Baptist pastor" (Appendix 1) focussed on the perceptions that each pastor had of his own role, and the perceptions he had of the current views of society towards pastors. The questionnaire itself posed closed

questions, open questions, dichotomous questions, scaled questions and one follow-up question (De Vos, 1998:160). It also made use of a 'mood board' (Appendix 2), which comprised a variety of pictures depicting perceptions of pastors, from which respondents could choose.

After soliciting the assistance of each respondent by means of a face-to-face explanation and appeal, or by means of a telephonic explanation and appeal, it was ensured that each person received a copy of the questionnaire, mostly by hand-delivery (though four received theirs by email). Despite the advantages and disadvantages of various types of questionnaires (e.g. mailed, telephonic, personal, hand-delivered, group-administered) of the kind explained by De Vos (1998:153), the lengthier, personal approach was preferred, because it afforded greater co-operation from respondents and it capitalised on a collegial relationship between the researcher and his fellow pastors.

At the same time as undertaking a survey of the insights of Baptist pastors, it would be necessary to inquire into what Baptist pastors thought about an alternative role definition (the spiritual antagonist). Such data would expose what might be lacking in the antagonist model, as well as reveal what advantages or disadvantages could be expected if the model were to be offered at this juncture in denominational history in this country. To accomplish this second phase of the research, and to inform the theory-building, a further dimension was incorporated, namely the one-on-one interview (see Appendix 3). The second component, in keeping with qualitative methodology (De Vos, 1998:90), set up an in-depth interview of approximately one hour with each of the respondents who earlier had been surveyed by means of the questionnaire. After each had been given a few days to complete the questionnaire, an appointment was made for the interview to be conducted. Before commencing the interview, the completed questionnaire was collected, thereby ensuring a 100% return rate. No respondent was accepted for the research if he could not fulfil both components. For example, one respondent only managed to complete the questionnaire before being hospitalised after suffering a heart attack. In his case, his questionnaire was rejected. As a participant-as-observer (1998:260), the



interviewer read a standardised role profile of the pastor as spiritual antagonist (see para. 6.2.2 below) to each interviewee, before asking a standard set of open-ended questions (Appendix 3).

### **6.2.2 The standardised role profile of the pastor as spiritual antagonist**

It would assist our engagement with the strategic metaphor of this thesis if the standardised role profile of the pastor as spiritual antagonist were to be appreciated at this point. Its delineation is understandably preliminary, since the fuller discussion of the metaphor will be undertaken in chapters seven and eight.

The term “antagonist” is drawn from the world of drama. It represents a character who stands in opposition to the main character (or “protagonist”) of a play / story. As a result of the presence of the antagonist, the main action of the story begins to unfold. The task of the antagonist is to develop certain characteristics in the protagonist. While the antagonist might be seen, initially, as one who obstructs or frustrates the actions of the protagonist, he/she does not have to be the villain. The antagonist can simply offer a perspective that clashes with the already established perspective of the protagonist. As a result of the clash of perspectives, conflict may arise, out of which several key choices present themselves for the protagonist to act on, in order to grow and develop as a fully rounded character of the story.

If we adapt this term for use in ministry, we can say that God uses people to develop godliness in us. Their role may not be a smooth and comforting one; in fact, they might be seen to be somewhat confrontational (even ‘hard’), because they unashamedly place a view of life and spirituality that contradicts our own at that moment in our lives. To approach the role of the pastor as spiritual antagonist is to recognise that he will disturb and make uncomfortable. He will do so, not because he has failed to learn how to relate skilfully with people. Rather, by his presentation of an alternative pattern of valuing and living that congregants have not seriously considered, he will produce a certain amount of friction. Frequently, however, the pastor is expected always to have a ‘soft’ role, one that

'strokes' us and encourages us to get comfortable with our lot in life, until death releases us, or until Christ comes again. The pastor as spiritual antagonist, by contrast, will overturn this expectation of the pastoral role, in his attempts to stimulate his people to develop, grow and become biblically effective.

A further feature of the role of spiritual antagonist is its suitability to a post-modern context. No longer is the pastor the 'expert' in areas of child-rearing, psychology, education and spirituality. With the expansion of knowledge, many of the people in the congregation have specialised skills and better education than many of our Baptist pastors. Also it would be futile for pastors to try to become better qualified in every area of expertise, because there is not enough time and opportunity to do so. One of the effects of post-modernism on the church has been to undermine the authority of the church's view of issues, especially since sectors of the church will hold such divergent views on marriage, sexuality, ethics and doctrine that no fixed view can easily be found to represent the view of 'the church'. The suspicion of society is that there is no longer a fixed view of reality and that we each must construct our own reality by piecing together various items of information. The pastor can no longer approach people in terms of his recognised authority, or in terms of a generally accepted worldview. Instead, he can approach people in terms of their chosen views and stimulate them to consider perspectives hitherto unrecognised. Through various means, he will challenge the integrity and consistency of their positions, while simultaneously offering a component of faith to replace the undermined one. The exchange will not always take place in a smooth fashion. Because deeper strata of human existence are being scrutinised, people will quickly become defensive and conflictual. It may be that the motives of the pastor over the short-term will be doubted, but in time some of the congregants will come to see the opportunity that was offered to them by the presence of the pastor in their midst.

### **6.2.3 The sample population**

With regard to the sample population, to whom the standardised profile was presented, the research needed to probe pastors, rather than anyone else. They are the ones

carrying out the role of pastoring and they are the ones with strategic influence in changing the pattern for the future. This is all the more so, when one considers that lecturers at the denominational training institution (where future pastors are trained) are usually pastors with postgraduate education. Together, pastors and lecturers, then, would give a fair indication of how matters are perceived. Furthermore, decisions were taken as to which pastors would be included, since to attempt to reach all South African Baptist pastors would be unfeasible, given the resources and time available to the researcher. Realising that Gauteng was where the researcher lived and worked, and realising, too, that the province is generally regarded to be strategic economically, politically and even denominationally (the main theological training institution and the denominational headquarters are located there), the opinion of Gauteng pastors would not likely be out of line with denominational trends. Additionally, Baptist pastors move to pastorates in other parts of the country, so the chance of pockets of unusual opinion occurring in Gauteng, for example, is highly improbable. Having made those decisions affecting the population, it was deemed to be adequate to poll at least 10% of the total number of Baptist pastors and to select the sample from those pastors with relational links to Gauteng ministry who were willing to participate. According to the *South African Baptist Handbook 2005-2006*, upon which the research instrument is based, the denomination had 495 constituted Baptist churches in South Africa, as at 31 December 2004, excluding unconstituted churches and fellowships. It was decided to poll at least 10% of the existing pastors (50 pastors), all of which would have ministry links to Gauteng province. In the end, 52 pastors were polled. In addition, a pilot study using an further two pastors was conducted, in order to refine the research instrument (the third pilot-respondent emigrated before the process could be completed). As such the sampling started out as purposive sampling (De Vos, 1998:198), but took on the qualitative characteristics of strategic sampling (Mason, 2002:123).

#### **6.2.4 Research methodology**

Decisions needed to be taken with respect to research methodology. Here the project was faced with the choice between quantitative and qualitative methodologies. The major

differences have been adequately set out by writers such as Babbie (1983), Mouton and Marais (1990), and De Vos (1998). De Vos's generalised differentiation serves to outline the basic differences.

The quantitative paradigm is based on positivism which takes scientific explanation to be nomothetic (i.e. based on universal laws). Its main aims are to objectively measure the social world, to test hypotheses and to predict and control human behaviour. In contrast, the qualitative paradigm stems from an antipositivistic, interpretative approach, is idiographic, thus holistic in nature, and the main aim is to understand social life and the meaning that people attach to everyday life (1998:241).

This thesis, however, was founded on a research-design conviction that, at once, appreciated, and was also sceptical of, strict empirical analysis from the quantitative paradigm. Human nature, perceptions and responses to perceptions are not always easily quantified, as quantitative approaches might seek to do. At the same time, we can benefit by clear structure as well, of the kind offered by quantitative priorities. Rather than impose just one method on the investigation, and thereby possibly restrict the outcome, therefore, this work proposed to utilise elements of both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. It is as De Vos says: "By adopting a point of view of convergence and complementarity we may eventually be in a position to understand more about human nature and social reality"(1998:359). Cresswell's third model of combining the two methods, one of 'mixed methodology design' (in De Vos, 1998:361) was therefore embraced here.

A further reason in favour of the mixed methodology came from the nature of the questioning. Restricted questions (a quantitative type) were useful for the biographical detail, while rating scale questions lent themselves to investigation of intensity (e.g. To what extent do you experience anger arising from the fulfilment of your role?). Yet the researcher was keen to explore the territory of pastoral identity, rather than to predetermine the range of possibilities that might emerge. For that reason, the researcher needed to include qualitative styles of data-collection. Notwithstanding the difficulties of collating the information, as Gravetter and Forzano (2006:333) note, the research gave more scope to open-ended questions. Of course, open-ended questioning is not unique to qualitative methodology, but it certainly moves towards the style of information-

gathering that is more comfortable in the qualitative mode. Coupled with in-depth, face-to-face interviewing (a qualitative method, according to De Vos, 1998:90), which was the basis of the second phase of the research instrument, and incorporating the mood board (another qualitative technique similar to the analysis of audio-visual material – 1998:90), the overall decision was made to combine the methodologies.

Within the broader decision to combine the two methodologies lay a further decision with respect to the purpose of the research. While it is noted, with Babbie (1989:82), that most studies contain elements of all three purposes (descriptive, exploratory and explanatory), this one adopted a deliberate exploratory focus (1989:80; Mouton & Marais, 1990:43). It did so arising from the attempt to understand the phenomenon of pastoral role, as some pastors articulate it, and then to introduce – and monitor – a new element (the praxis-metaphor) within the perceptions of the pastoral situation.

In order to accomplish this exploration, several key concepts were tested during the first phase of the research, such as role expectation, role fulfilment, role determination, role priority, role change, role impact and role motivation. During the second phase of the research instrument, the role of the pastor as spiritual antagonist was presented and tested in terms of the affinity Baptist pastors might have with the new role, the affinity Baptist congregations might have with the new role, the impact of the new role on pastors, the contextual imperatives that make it necessary to implement a new role, the relationship between the new role and other traditional pastoral roles, the checks and balances to ensure optimal implementation of the new role, and the training suggestions that would be preferable if the new role were to be put into effect. It was fully appreciated by the researcher that the respondents might not have had any prior acquaintance with the metaphor. Nevertheless, the presentation of the metaphor through the reading of the standardised role profile gave the respondents the capability and freedom to relate to it, discuss it and critique it.

### 6.2.5 Issues of validity

Mason (2002:38) makes the point that qualitative research has often resisted notions of validity, because such research is essentially anti-positivistic and anti-modernist, yet there is a case to be made for qualitative research checking itself so that its method and interpretation of results relate to (measure) what is being studied. De Vos (1998:83) adds that instead of validity, we ought rather to speak of validities, such as content validity (How well does the instrument measure what we want it to measure?), criterion validity (How well does this instrument compare with other criteria purporting to measure the same thing?) and construct validity (What is the instrument measuring?).

In reflecting on the instruments used in the first phase of our study, we note that the survey sought to identify how pastors understood themselves with respect to their roles. In a valid manner, the questions probed exactly that concern, asking questions that inquired as to the **general** roles of Baptist pastors (*What do you consider to be some of the roles that Baptist pastors are expected to fulfil in Baptist churches today?*), the **typical** roles of Baptist pastors (*What would you say is the typical role that Baptist pastors tend to fulfil these days?*), and the **personal** roles of Baptist pastors (*Which one of the roles listed under question 2.2 are you fulfilling most prominently at the moment?*). The broad base of role definition was extended by further investigation **into how roles are determined** for Baptist pastors (*Who or what determines what a pastor's role ought to be?*), **how roles have changed** (*How have pastoral roles undergone change, if any, during your experience / tenure?*), the **core roles**, regardless of change or outside influence (*What do you consider to be your most important role(s) as a pastor, regardless of whether you are managing to fulfil it at the moment or not?*), and the **logistical execution** of the core roles (*What difficulties have you encountered in fulfilling your role as a pastor? To what extent do you experience anger arising from the fulfilment of your role? What enables you to continue fulfilling your role?*). The last segment of the survey tried to get respondents to step outside of themselves to assess how pastors project themselves in society, or in other words, how the pastoral role might be perceived more widely than by the pastor alone. To accomplish this abstraction, a creative question

involving a 'mood board' was employed (Question 2.10), along with a follow-up question (Question 2.11) that clarified any vagueness inherent in the creativity of the mood board. Both in terms of content and construct validity, then, the research instrument is valid. Its criterion validity is harder to assess. The only comparable Baptist study was undertaken by Baston (2005), but his quantitative measurement of the influence of church role expectations in undermining a pastor's ministry identity set up pre-determined options from which pastors were compelled to select. The current thesis, by contrast, has not restricted the respondents to the same extent at all, yet has explored similar territory.

#### **6.2.6 Issues of reliability**

Issues of validity are not the only matters that concern quantitative researchers. Reliability is an additional concern. It refers to the consistency of the measurement of the research instrument, so that if the same individuals were tested under the same conditions, an identical (or nearly identical) result would be forthcoming (Gravetter and Forzano, 2006:72; Babbie, 1989:121; De Vos, 1998:86; Mason, 2002:39). Qualitative investigators are usually highly sceptical of issues of reliability, since the fluid nature of the investigation generally renders issues of reliability nonsensical (Mason, 2002:187). However, the concern with accuracy, rather than replication, is a feature of reliability that can be upheld in qualitative research. To that end, the current thesis put in place several accuracy checks. One of them was present in the form of the pilot study that was performed on two pastors for the sake of ascertaining whether the questioning was accurately probing the areas the researcher intended. A full 'dress rehearsal' of the research was carried out, rather than a pre-test of certain features only (De Vos, 1998:179). The pilot study allowed the researcher to make adjustments to the final instrument.

A second accuracy check was present in the fact that all interviews were recorded and notes were taken during the interviews. If there were any doubt as to what the respondent meant, the researcher could replay the recording and relive the exchange for greater clarity, and compare it with the notes taken.

A third check emerged as the researcher worked with two volunteer assistants on the data categorisation. Categories created by the researcher for answers yielded by the open-ended questions were found to be similar to the categories by the other two assistants as they grouped the answers.

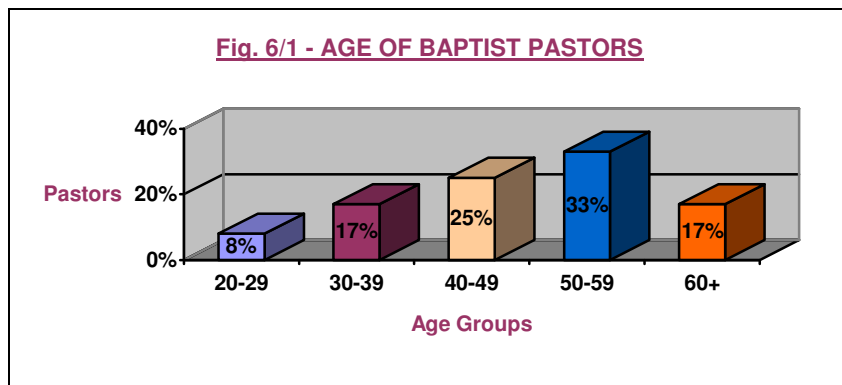
A fourth check resulted from the fact that the researcher insisted on enquiring into the respondents' views, rather than applying his own strict framework to the interchange. Respondents were free to give their views in a way that they would be able to speak consistently from their own perspective if asked a similar question by a different researcher.

Now that the research design has been explained, we can proceed to the results themselves.

### 6.3 BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

#### 6.3.1 The pastors themselves

All but one of the pastors in the Gauteng area were male. The questionnaire did not ask for information on their marital status, but if needed this information could be gleaned from denominational records. Their ages (Fig. 6/1, below) revealed a concentration (33%) between 50-59 years of age. Given the lowest representation (8%) in the 20-29 age group, one might want to conclude that the denomination is staffed with an aging leadership. However, two factors might need to be taken into consideration in evaluating

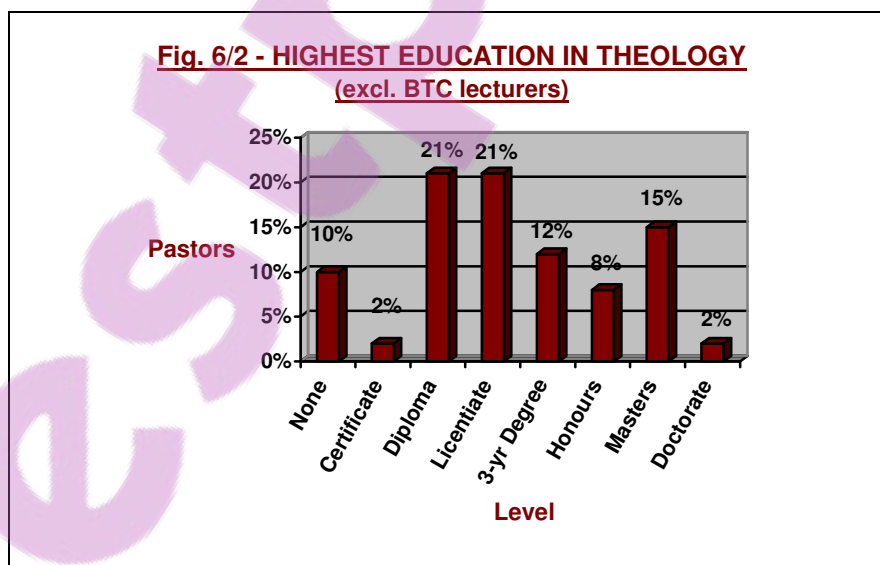




this trend. First, the role of a pastor / elder in a Baptist church, as an older and hopefully wiser person, is one that prizes age more highly than youth. Second, pastors are not usually recruited straight out of school. In fact, at one time, candidates for pastoral training at the denominational college (BTC) were expected to work in the secular world first, before entering full-time study, in the belief that pastors would need to gain valuable experience and credibility in the working world, if they were to minister effectively to working people.

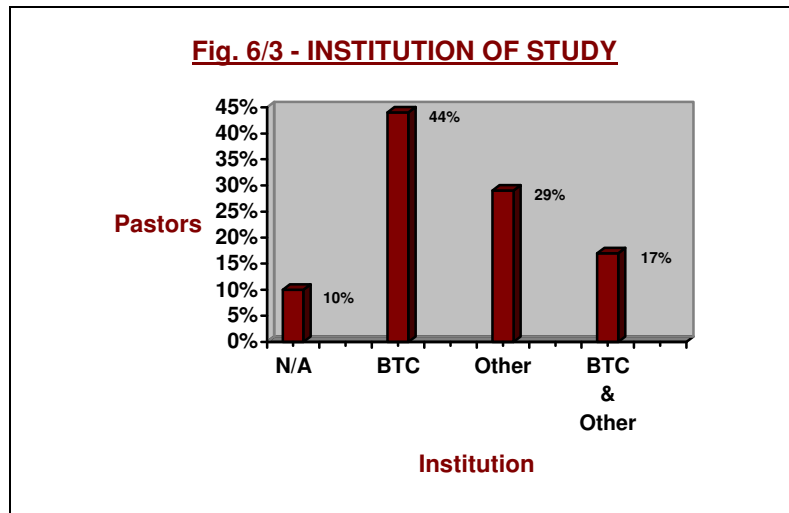
### 6.3.2 Their preparation for ministry

According to the Regulations Governing Recognition for Ministry (as revised by the 1998 Assembly), Baptist churches can appoint any one of its members to perform any of the roles usually undertaken by a pastor, but if that person wishes to have wider denominational recognition, a minimum of two years of theological training is deemed adequate (*South African Baptist Handbook 2006/7:396*). While there are still a relatively large number of pastors without any theological qualification (10%), most have the diploma or licentiate from BTC as an entry-level qualification (42%). However, there is a significant number (25%) who have gone on to higher academic levels of an honours degree or above (see Fig. 6/2, below).



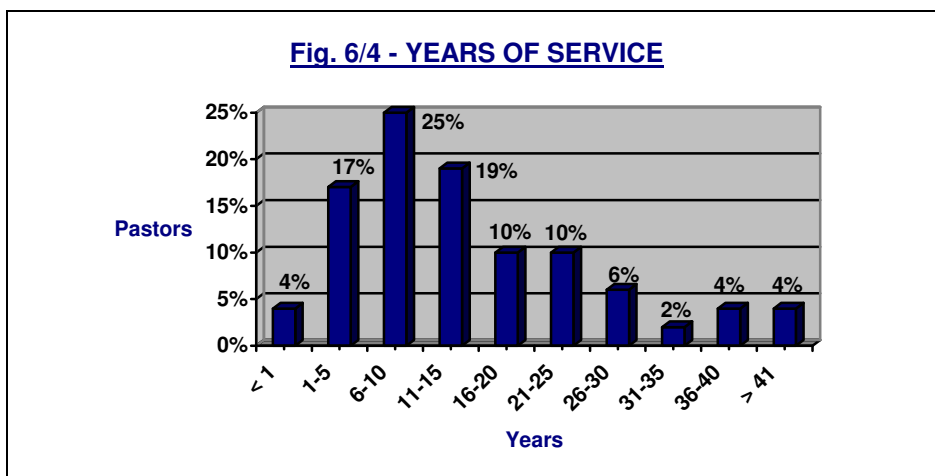
Most Baptist pastors (44%) trained at the denominational college (BTC), but a significant number trained elsewhere (29%), or added qualifications from other institutions to their

BTC qualification (17%) (see Fig. 6/3, below). It remains to be seen if this trend will introduce new elements to the theological perspectives of future pastors in South Africa.

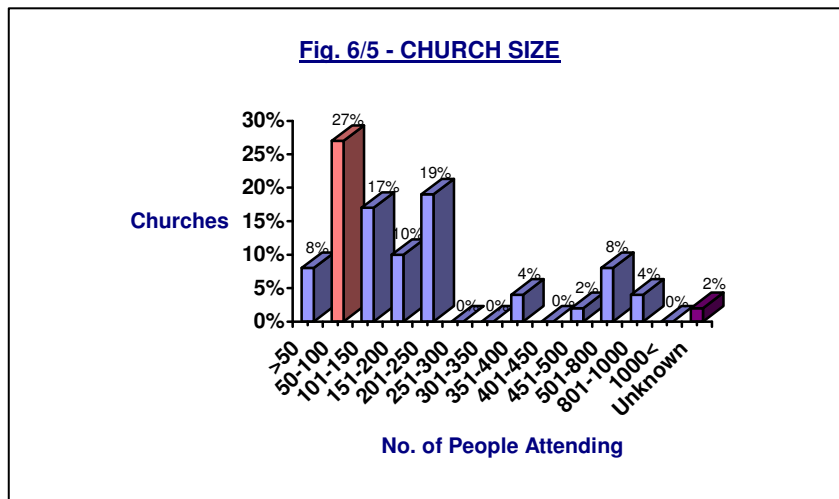


### 6.3.3 Their churches

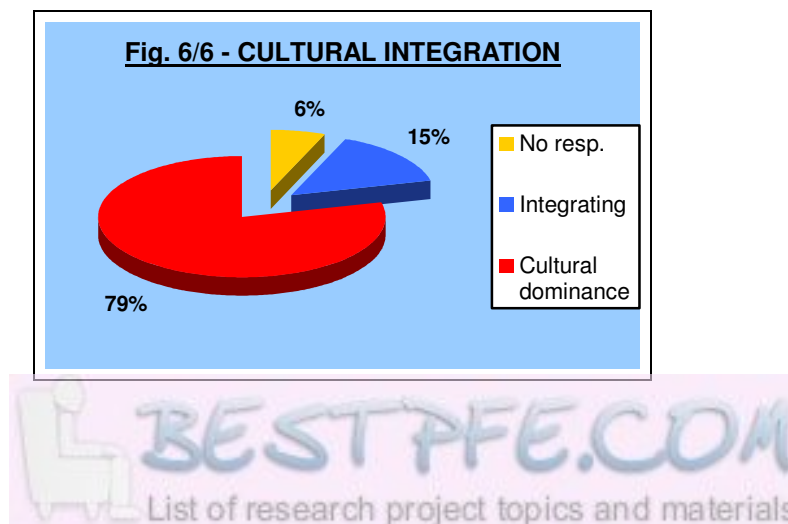
Most pastors surveyed have been in their pastorates for a period of one to fifteen years (61%), with tenures of from six to ten years being the highest individual incidence (25%) (see Fig. 6/4, below). By comparison with Pierce's findings in 1998, the tenure of Baptist pastors in South Africa would seem to be improving, if this sample group is at all representative. Pierce found that the average tenure of South African Baptist pastors was 5 years and 2 months (already, then, an improvement on Australian Baptist tenures of 3-4 years, or American Southern Baptist tenures of 9 months) (1998:26).



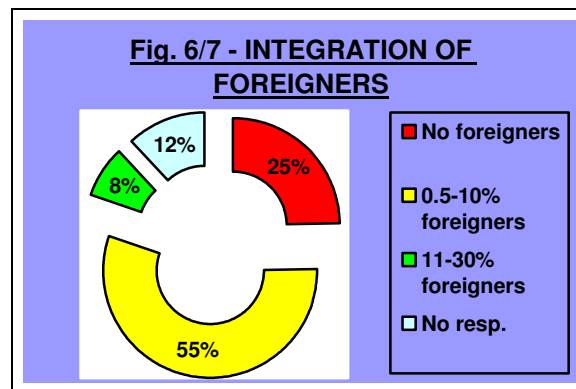
The most common size of Baptist churches represented by the pastors who were surveyed ranged between 50 and 100 attenders (27%). This result, depicted below (Fig. 6/5), is in line with the national average for Baptist churches, countrywide (cf. para. 3.2.7 above). The level of cultural integration seems still to be in the early days, with most churches displaying a cultural dominance depending on their residential location.



Churches reporting a singular cultural dominance in excess of 70% of the congregation comprised 79% of the sample. Only 15% of churches registered at least a tri-cultural integration, with one cultural group dominating the mixture by no more than 65% of the congregation. (6% of respondents ignored this question entirely – see Fig. 6/6, below.) One church displayed a remarkable level of integration between four groups (32% Chinese, 25% White, 18% Coloured, 13% Indian and 12% Black), but this appeared to be the exception. Presumably, as residential areas become more mixed, the chances will be higher that churches will reflect a corresponding demographic.



As can be expected, all the churches have a majority of local people, but what is thought-provoking, given the massive influx of foreigners to South Africa in recent years, especially to Gauteng province, is that few churches have managed to integrate these foreigners (see Fig. 6/7, below). For 25% of the churches represented in the sample, no foreigners were reported to be present in the congregation at all. In 55.7% of the churches, a range of between 0.5-10% of foreigners were recorded, and in 8% of the churches a range of between 11-30% were identified (12% of respondents did not answer the question at all, or made contradictory responses). It would be fair to say, therefore, that established Baptist churches are not managing to reach the masses of foreigners to



our province. The situation of foreigners is perilous at the best of times, given their xenophobic reception and their vulnerability to exploitation by predatory opportunists and state officials (Mbelle, 2005:15, 36). Among the number of foreigners to Gauteng, one anticipates there to be Christian brothers and sisters, but even with the Christian contingent set aside, the foreigners as a whole represents an enormous and extremely needy subculture in our cities that would benefit by a steady, safe and prudent community of local believers.

The churches in the sample were largely well-established in years, with 75% in existence for between 21-75 years. The economic character of the congregations did not reveal any significant trend, other than to say that there were sizable elements of every socio-economic group (struggling, artisan, small business, big business, service providers and professionals) in most of the churches. It had been my suspicion that Baptist churches were not targeting the professional contingent, but the research did not bear this out.

## 6.4 THE PASTOR'S ROLE CLUSTER

By means of several questions in the questionnaire to pastors, it was possible to identify what they considered to be the core roles of the pastoral office, as well as what other roles they are finding are adhering to the role.

### 6.4.1 Core roles of a pastor

Respondents were asked (Quest 2.2) to identify the typical role of a Baptist pastor. Unlike Baston's recent thesis (2005:57) in which a set of predetermined roles was imposed on the research, the question was an open-ended one that allowed respondents to volunteer whatever role they wished to identify. Consequently, the following core roles were listed in order of frequency with which they were mentioned (not necessarily in order of importance to pastors):

|  |                     |
|--|---------------------|
| 1. <b>Shepherd</b> , counsellor, pastor, problem solver, stress-reliever, people-pleaser ..... | 77%                 |
| 2. <b>Preacher</b> , motivational speaker .....  | 75%                 |
| 3. <b>Teacher</b> .....  | 48%                 |
| 4. <b>Leader</b> , equipper, visionary, mentor, manager, strategist, sergeant .....            | 48%                 |
| 5. <b>Administrator</b> .....  | 33%                 |
| 6. <b>Priest</b> – weddings & funerals, leading worship, prayer .....                          | 10%                 |
| 7. <b>Evangelist</b> , missions, church planting .....   | 10%                 |
| 8. <b>Community figure</b> .....   | 2%                  |
|  | [No responses – 4%] |

Based on these core roles, pastors felt (Quest. 2.6) that the following list represented the most important ones that they need to perform in order to be good pastors:

|                                 |     |
|---------------------------------|-----|
| 1. <b>Shepherd</b> .....        | 67% |
| 2. <b>Preacher</b> .....        | 56% |
| 3. <b>Teacher</b> .....         | 48% |
| 4. <b>Leader</b> .....          | 42% |
| 5. <b>Priest</b> .....          | 15% |
| 6. <b>Evangelist</b> .....      | 8%  |
| 7. <b>Lover of people</b> ..... | 6%  |
| 8. <b>Growth agent</b> .....    | 4%  |
| 9. <b>Administrator</b> .....   | 2%  |
| 10. <b>Generalist</b> .....     | 2%  |

### 6.4.2 The experience of the pastoral role

Despite their aspirations, the pastors recognised that they were not fulfilling that list of important roles exactly (Quest. 2.3). Instead, they ranked the following list according to

how they were fulfilling the roles. It is interesting to note that the role of preacher has moved from second to the top position, the role of evangelist has dropped to the bottom of the list and the role of priest does not even feature:

|                               |     |
|-------------------------------|-----|
| 1. <b>Preacher</b> .....      | 44% |
| 2. <b>Shepherd</b> .....      | 23% |
| 3. <b>Leader</b> .....        | 13% |
| 4. <b>Teacher</b> .....       | 8%  |
| 5. <b>Administrator</b> ..... | 5%  |
| 6. <b>Evangelism</b> .....    | 4%  |

Pastors felt (Quest. 2.4) that the following influences determined what the pastor's role ought to be, according to their experience:

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| 1. The <b>congregation</b> , its needs and constitution, and domineering people within the congregation ..... | 60% |
| 2. The <b>Bible</b> .....   | 56% |
| 3. The <b>pastor's vision &amp; giftedness</b> .....  | 38% |
| 4. The <b>church leadership</b> (council, elders, deacons) .....  | 27% |
| 5. <b>BTC training</b> / denomination .....   | 4%  |
| 6. The <b>needs of the wider community</b> .....  | 4%  |
| 7. <b>Latest trends</b> in society .....  | 2%  |

When asked (Quest. 2.5) to comment on the changes that the pastoral role cluster has undergone during their tenure, the pastors offered some interesting observations. The most common three observations were:

1. That the role has changed from that of a preacher, or shepherd, to that of Chief Executive Officer of the church (23%);
2. That the role must now cope with greater non-clergy (lay) involvement (15%);
3. That pastors have to cope with structural changes in the denomination, in the movement from one pastor to many in one church, and in the insistence on women pastors (13%).

There were other insights that ought to be mentioned.

1. Respondents believed that pastors' authority is diminishing, as they are being removed from the 'pedestal' and expected to walk alongside members through human trials. A less authoritative servanthood is coming into being, in which the pastor's authority is being questioned more and more.
2. Pastors have become less concerned with visitation and seeing to the spiritual needs of church members, largely as a result of an increased workload. One of the consequences of this trend is that prayer has diminished in the life of the pastor.
3. Administration has increased and become more computer-bound.
4. Preaching has shifted from expository to topical.
5. More leadership in social development is being expected of pastors.
6. Church members are busier than before and have less time to attend meetings. They are also more in need now of encouraging and mentoring.
7. Greater pressure on pastors and their families due to changes in society.
8. Pastors are being caught up in general church maintenance.

9. There is strong influence from charismatic sources for pastors to adopt a charismatic style to their ministry.
10. Missions is on the decline, yet there is more emphasis on teaching and equipping now.
11. The focus of ministry is shifting from local to global issues.
12. Parents expect pastors to reach their kids for them (parents are no longer taking up their responsibility to evangelise their own children).
13. Worship styles have changed.
14. Increase in biblical illiteracy in the congregation.
15. Ministry is changing from being people-driven to programme-driven.
16. Pastors must learn to adapt to other cultures.

A surprising and somewhat disturbing number of respondents (25%) indicated that there had been no changes at all during their tenure. While it must be noted that 62% of those respondents were younger pastors, the corresponding point is that 38% of those respondents were older, seasoned pastors 50 years of age and above with long tenures! Perhaps it must be conceded that we have some pastors who are not focussing on the context of ministry at all, or who are not keeping up with wider issues in their ministry environments.

Certainly, the context of ministry provides ongoing feedback as to how the pastor is perceived by a secular society. Pastors might detect the social mood towards them through a number of cues, such as:

1. Whether or not they are appreciatively received at hospitals when they want to visit patients;
2. Remarks made by the media, or images portrayed by the media (cf. para.3.1 above);
3. Reactions to the disclosure of one's occupation at dinner parties;
4. The manner of interpersonal approach by people when they telephone the church or discuss ceremonies for which they require pastoral involvement;
5. Whether or not other helping professions dismiss pastoral input in crises and emergencies.

When the sample group was asked (Quest. 2.10 & 2.11) how pastors perceived modern society to regard them, the two most common pictures selected from the mood board were the following:



Picture # 1



Picture # 6

From answers to Question 2.11, it was apparent that the following characteristics were associated with these pictures:

Picture # 1: Religious businessman, CEO, successful, professional, leader, good administrator, well-groomed, confident, competent, smug, self-reliant, motivated, outgoing and welcoming, dynamic, visionary, inspirational, respected, knows it all, financially comfortable, glamorous, little remote, not a hard worker, unaware of how irrelevant he is, community-focussed, tele-preacher, bi-vocational.

Picture # 6: Preacher, spiritual leader, tramps on people's toes, has all the answers, the controller of crises, the paid one.

While there are seemingly complimentary descriptions attached to some of the pictures, there is still a strong sense of negativity about the way pastors expect to be viewed by society, with words such as 'irrelevant', 'a convenience' and 'out of touch' being mentioned repeatedly in the descriptions.

Understandably, the pastorate gives evidence of difficulties and obstacles to the fulfilment of the pastoral role cluster (Quest. 2.7). Respondents identified the following difficulties, ranked here in order of frequency with which the issue was raised:

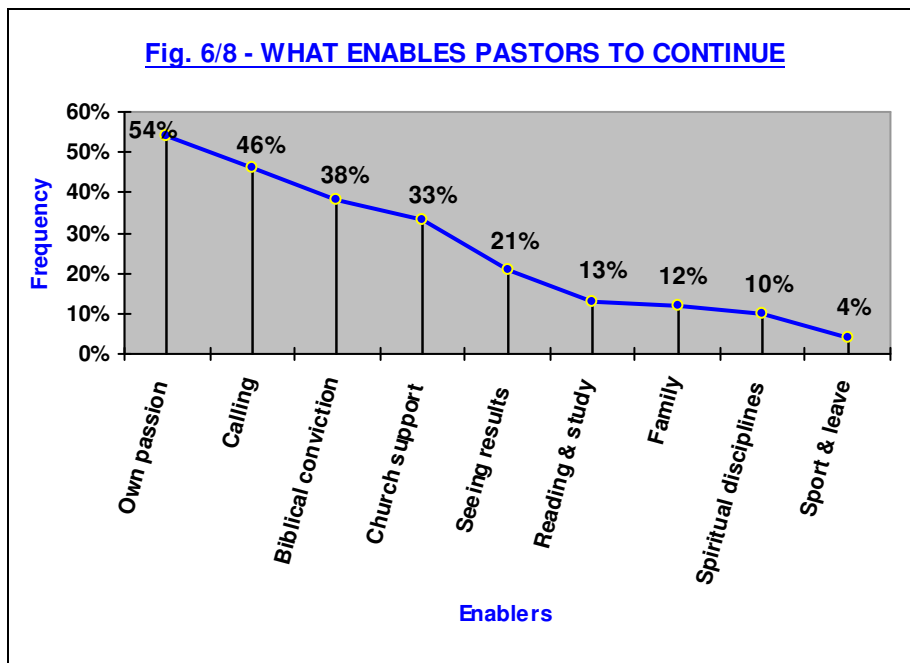
1. Too many meetings, needs, and roles and not enough time or assistance from other staff or lay involvement ..... 73%
2. Dogmatic, difficult people who oppose new ideas, or who distrust the pastor, or who hold unrealistic expectations, and who are given to conflict ..... 35%
3. Inconsistent involvement from people who are biblically illiterate, who do not read their Bibles or pray regularly and who oppose biblical principle as a result of their self-interest ..... 27%
4. Financial & resource constraints, along with competition from other professions ..... 15%
5. Personal issues, such as inadequacy, tragedy & family pressure ..... 13%
6. Contextual factors, such as location of the church and worldly standards of success that come from the surrounding context ..... 10%

Other individual insights included lack of denominational support and cultural differences.



What Baptist pastors are registering here resonates with Buffel's thesis among Lutheran black pastors (2002:130) that found the major stressors to include work overload, administrative work, conflict within the congregation, conflict with church authorities and salary constraints; as well as one that understandably was not cited by Baptists, viz. transfers or relocations.

The level of intense frustration, or anger, arising from the non-fulfilment of important roles was probed by question 2.8. The majority of respondents indicated that they were affected by anger only to a limited extent (sometimes, seldom, never) (88%), while a minority (12%) said that they were 'often' angry. If pastors were coping emotionally with the role pressure (and that statement might need to be examined critically in later research), the study was keen to find out what enabled pastors to continue fulfilling their role (Quest. 2.9). The responses were intriguing at two levels, viz. what was identified as an enabler, and how common that enabler was identified. Figure 6/8, below, reflects the enablers.



Pastors would seem to be turning to a range of resources to enable them to persevere in ministry:

1. Own passion and enjoyment, will, gifting, talents, love of a challenge, and their ability to love people (54%).
2. Their sense of calling to ministry by God (46%).

3. Biblical conviction and the endurance that comes from having made a commitment before people who now have expectations of them, as well as from anticipating the unseen rewards that God will bestow in due course (38%).
4. The support of the church (its leaders, mentors and the congregation) (33%).
5. Experiencing God at work and seeing the results of ministry (21%).
6. The stimulus that comes from reading and study (13%).
7. The support of family (12%).
8. The refreshment that ensues from practicing spiritual disciplines, such as retreats, days of prayer and fasting (10%).
9. The refreshment of sport and leave (4%).

One notices, of course, the priority given to the pastor's sense of calling and to biblical conviction and commitment. These are features that are stressed in the ordination sequence when a Baptist pastor is inducted (see the wording in the *Bilingual Ministers' Manual* written for use in Baptist churches – Hermanson & Lehmkuhl, [sa]:95). Notwithstanding this traditional emphasis on the call to ministry, pastors in our survey have turned to inner resources of enjoyment and capability to sustain them. Baston would be pleased to note this trend, since one of the recommendations of his recent thesis among Baptist pastors encouraged them to discover and affirm their personal ministry identities (2005:92). Central to that discovery, according to Baston, was the elevation of spiritual gifting, passion, personality and talents (2005:34).

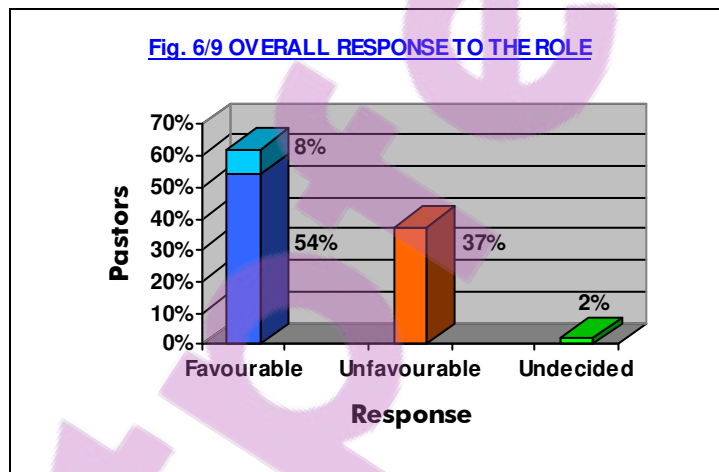
Furthermore, and to be expected, is the support of church and family, as well as spiritual disciplines and natural refreshment such as sport and leave. However, the item that is noteworthy is the reliance on seeing the results. Clearly this will work its salutary effect while ministry is going well, but what happens when ministry enters those dry times where the results are slim at best? If pastors are depending on results to sustain them, the likelihood of discouragement will be heightened and may prove overwhelming.

## **6.5 THEIR RESPONSE TO THE PROPOSED MODEL OF THE PASTOR AS SPIRITUAL ANTAGONIST**

Any reliance on results to sustain ministry motivation is likely to be even further eroded by a model of ministry that works quite deliberately in that awkward zone of spiritual provocation. Such a model was proposed in the second phase of the research as each pastor was presented with the standardised role profile of the pastor as spiritual antagonist and as each one was asked, in a one-on-one interview, to comment on

various aspects of that role. The perceptions that emerged were interesting, and they are reflected below. It must be borne in mind that – with the exception of the data for figures 6/9 and 6/10 – the percentages that follow are not quantitative scores, but rather indicate the frequency with which pastors identified a perspective in a particular concept cluster.

The majority of Baptist pastors who were surveyed approved of the role (54%), with a further 8% finding it favourable, depending on the congregation, or the personality of the pastor, or whether it were biblically-based. However, a significant number of pastors regarded the role of spiritual antagonist in an unfavourable light (37%), recognising that it might be a valid role, but one they could not relate to, had not thought of seriously, found to be odd or even dangerous, but certainly tough and fraught with difficulties. Only 2% were undecided, or had no opinion on the matter (see fig. 6/9 below).

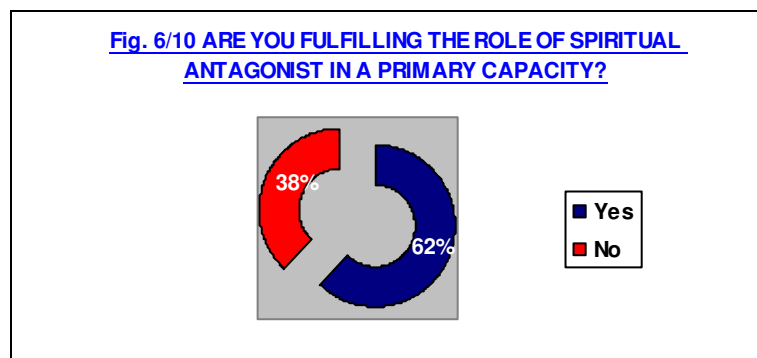


Casting the role of the pastor in terms of the spiritual antagonist appealed to the majority of the pastors for the following main reasons: (1) It offered a God-alternative and a way to challenge people (protagonists) about spiritual issues, at the same time as it helped pastors to understand their role in a modern world (31%); (2) It gave shape to a sense that God desires to communicate and confront in such a way that makes people (protagonists) think (12%).

They appreciated that the role possessed some features that seemed out of place in their estimation of pastoring: (1) It could lead to unnecessary conflict, a loss of effectiveness and a tendency for pastors to adopt a dogmatic stance (15%); (2) It could be

overwhelming for pastors to implement, it could be inconsistently applied, it was too new, and therefore it would need to be handled extremely carefully (12%); (3) It confused the roles of pastor and prophet, and it blurred the distinctive functions of pastor and Holy Spirit, because it ought not to be seen as the only role (10%).

As to whether they were fulfilling the role of spiritual antagonist in a primary capacity, most believed they were doing so (62%) (see fig. 6/10 below), even if they had to admit that the role was not easy to carry out (67%), or that the role was not clearly defined in their own experience.



Pastoring antagonistically was hard to implement, they said, because their personalities caused them to dislike confrontation (27%), they feared the negative reaction of their congregations (even losing their jobs) (21%), and because the role was deemed to be an unpredictable one, in a context that held wide variety of people (10%). Nevertheless, their sense of call enabled them to press on regardless of the often-negative response from people (13%).

To speak of the expectation of the congregation raises the issue of how pastors believed the role of spiritual antagonist would be received in their churches. The majority of pastors (54%) felt confident that the congregation would respond favourably in general, expecting a certain amount of 'strictness' from their pastors. A group of respondents anticipated the reaction to be mixed (19%), while a smaller contingent fully expected a negative response from a congregation that did not want to learn, or that was opposed to authority (10%). A number of pastors added that they felt that the reaction of the congregation would depend on the pastor's own vulnerability before the congregation, the

length of tenure at the church, how strong the pastor's case was, and how mature the congregational member was who was being confronted.

Those who were likely to respond well to the pastor as spiritual antagonist would be (1) Self-critical people, who would reflect on things, who would be humble listeners, and who were teachable, honest and capable of accepting rebuke (25%), (2) People with a real relationship with Jesus, who were serious about God and about studying the Scriptures (25%), (3) Women more so than men (23%), (4) People who were secure in themselves, and whose careers equipped them to debate (e.g. professionals) (12%), and (5) People who enjoyed a warm relationship of trust with the pastor before the confrontation, and people who possessed a sense of humour (12%).

By contrast, the kinds of people whom pastors felt would respond poorly to spiritual antagonism would be (1) Traditionalists who were not serious about growth or about God, and who preferred a diet of topical preaching (21%), (2) Dogmatic types who had other allegiances than to Christ (several pastors included Reformed Baptists in this dogmatic cluster) (19%), (3) Self-sufficient, unteachable people who thought they were competent at everything and with a strand of anti-authoritarianism woven into the mix (17%), (4) Criticisers who would not necessarily speak out appropriately about their discontent, but who would make sure that their objection was felt (17%), and (5) Complex people who had been hurt previously in life and who might also harbour bitterness and unconfessed sin (12%).

Understandably pastors found it easy to relate to congregants who were able to acknowledge error (21%), who were honest (21%), who asked questions (17%) and who gave warm feedback (17%). In these situations, pastors understood compliment to be a vote of trust, an affirmation, a validation of ministry and a support for the value of relationship. The positive reaction indicated a measure of success, which pastors desired to see in their ministry (17%). They felt that they could work with people who admitted their humanity (10%).



By contrast, aggressive confrontation (23%), dismissive responses (19%), personal attacks (17%) and non-acknowledgement of faults (12%) proved difficult for pastors to deal with. The unpleasant responses from the congregation had the effect of making the pastors feel like a failure, making them lose confidence in themselves and their effectiveness, and it caused them to question or doubt themselves and to feel that they lacked necessary skill (33%). Many of them took the criticism personally as a sign of rejection and as an undermining of their identity (19%). Pastors regarded themselves generally as soft-hearted lovers of people and of the Word, with the result that a dismissive response from the congregation towards them, or towards the Scriptures, affected them deeply (13%), draining them emotionally and wasting time and focus (12%).

Notwithstanding the possibility of a negative reception to the kind of challenge that the spiritual antagonist would bring, Baptist pastors realised that there were features of the contemporary context of ministry that made it essential for them to assume the role of spiritual antagonist. These included:

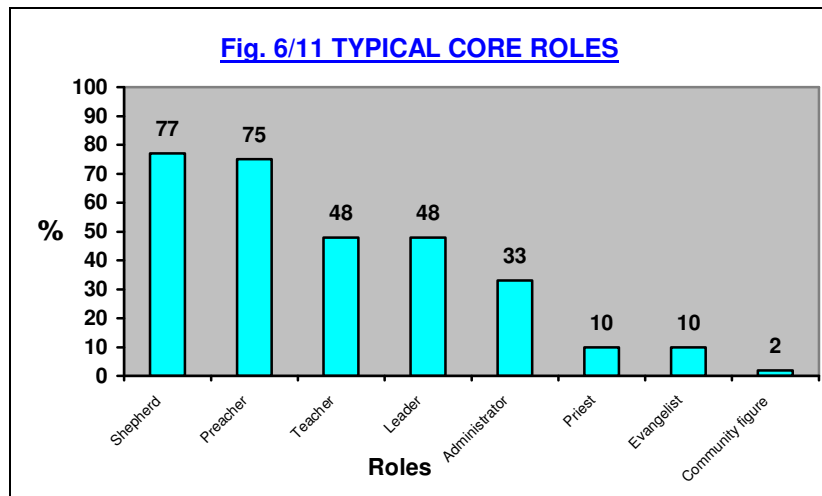
- (1) The challenge of culture in South Africa, with its multiculturalism, its cultural comfort zones, its multi-faith component to culture and its language diversity (31%);
- (2) The trend in South African society towards postmodernism and relativistic pluralism. The dismantling of absolutes and boundaries, as well as the penchant for negotiating anything that used to be accepted made pastors feel a sense of urgency about having to challenge society (29%);
- (3) Relativistic trends found a worrying echo within the church, as more and more people seemed to be biblically illiterate, or demonstrated poor spiritual integrity as biblical standards were less favourably held (29%);
- (4) Lawlessness, crime, corruption and matters of justice (25%);
- (5) The challenge of the homosexual issue (21%);
- (6) The resurgence of the self in the insistence on personal rights, in arrogance, in self-sufficiency and the redundancy of prayer (17%);

- (7) The moral decline and collapse of social fabric, evidenced in the ease with which more and more individuals have jettisoned biblical values and in the way government has set aside biblical principles (17%);
- (8) Poverty, wealth disparities and the way prosperity minimises trust in God (15%);
- (9) The political insecurity and the discouragement emanating from a liberal government and Constitution (13%);
- (10) Poor leadership role models both inside, and outside of, the church, including the devaluing of the role of the pastor in society (13%);
- (11) The continued prevalence of racism in our society (12%);
- (12) The spread of HIV-AIDS through our communities (12%);
- (13) The technological and media challenges to life and ministry (12%);
- (14) Family disintegration, abuse and poor parenting (10%);
- (15) The sense that South Africans feel of being in a life-death struggle for survival, which often entices them to withdraw into their own private worlds with little desire to be a lone voice against irregularities in society (10%).

Other features of the South African context of ministry that were identified by fewer pastors were: (1) Gender issues and sexual harassment; (2) Abortion; (3) Pornography and prostitution; (4) Declining educational standards; (5) The challenge to marriage from cohabitation and divorce; (6) The negative effect of Affirmative Action policies, BEE (Black Empowerment Enterprises), and political allegiances; (7) The influence of American Christianity on ministry (megachurches, the preference for the large and the spectacular); (8) The church not being politically relevant; (9) The way untruth has been recast as truth, and the rise of false teaching.

A small number of the sample group, but a disturbing presence among pastors, nonetheless, were the few spiritual leaders (6%) who admitted that they were out of touch with society and did not really know what people wanted or what the issues were for society!

It has already been said (in para. 6.4.1 earlier) that the pastor's role cluster comprises eight core roles depicted here in the next chart (fig. 6/11, below). As Baptist pastors in



the survey contemplated the interaction of spiritual antagonist with these traditional roles, it became clear that while most pastors could see the role of spiritual antagonist proving to be helpful in the exercise of their core, traditional roles of preaching and teaching (50%), a significant number (48%) acknowledged that an understanding of spiritual antagonism would most likely infuse all the other roles. Some pastors suggested that it was a useful way of describing THE role of the pastor, that reintroduced the thinking element to all pastoral interchanges.

As the pastors discussed the role in relation to other roles, they were careful to admit that as it infused other roles, there would be – for the most part – no undermining of traditional roles (40%), provided it was understood that the infusion would alter the experience of being a pastor among people (29%). The pastor stood the chance of becoming more remote in the eyes of the people and he would have to realise that some of the traditional roles (e.g. comforting, administration, maintainer of a small church) would necessitate that the antagonist role be softened to avoid the congregation feeling that they were being 'clubbed'.

To safeguard the pastoral exchange and maximise the effectiveness of the role of spiritual antagonist, the surveyed pastors suggested the following aspects should be kept in mind:



(1) The pastor should be compassionate, sensitive and discerning with respect to people and their differing circumstances (58%). It was important to identify with members of the congregation and not to be their judge all the time. Pastors exercising this role ought to have balance and know when to back off.

(2) Pastors must give attention to the establishment and nurture of relationship (48%), by means of which they are able to know their people and be trusted by them. For that reason, longer pastorates were superior to brief ones here.

(3) Pastors should ensure that the people know that they are loved by their pastors (35%) and that their pastors are prepared to be patient with them. One Reformed pastor felt that it was in this matter that his colleagues blundered, for "Reformed pastors become authoritarian and mess around in people's lives," he commented.

(4) It was vital that pastors fulfilling the role of spiritual antagonist should be rooted in truth, ready to obey God first and to know the Scriptures, so as to develop spiritual discernment (21%).

(5) Likewise, the pastor has to have a sense of timing, knowing when to say something and when to defer the discussion to another more appropriate time (21%).

(6) Throughout, he would need to be sure of his pastoral identity (17%).

(7) With a secure identity, he would be more inclined to respond humbly and not from anger (17%) when he is under fire from congregational or individual criticism.

When Baptist pastors in the sample group were probed as to what part of their training prepared them to take up the role of spiritual antagonist in their ministry, the results were interesting. The majority said that nothing in their formal theological training prepared them and that instead it was the influence of certain individuals, or the effect of watching their own pastors in action, or being in a mentoring relationship that gave them sufficient skill to begin to undertake antagonistic ministry (37%). A reduced number of pastors admitted that only certain components of their formal theological training were helpful (32%). A smaller number rated general experience, non-formal and non-theological training, or learning from their own failures, to be key factors in their preparation to be pastors of the kind proposed by this thesis (17%). The balance of the pastors spoke of

their own reading as being preparatory, while a few said that all of their formal theological training was what actually equipped them.

When asked what they thought would be necessary to include in the future training of pastors, most of them (60%) indicated the value of an internship, or mentorship, or on-site training with spiritual overseers nearby. A thorough grounding in the Bible was the next most commonly identified feature of future training (21%), followed by the need for personality testing, spiritual-giftedness profiling and a thorough proving of the call to ministry (17%). Whatever training they were to receive, it was felt, should bear an emphasis on relational, rather than informational, training (15%). Practical courses, such as dealing with conflict and church discipline, or with leadership and people-skills, would be hugely beneficial (13%). Throughout, they said, future pastors would need to be directed to commit to the role of pastor, rather than to the role of CEO or manager, as was seemingly popular with recent ministry candidates (10%).

Other points of interest that pastors raised included the following: (1) Pastors need courses on contemporary issues to enable them to keep up with current affairs; (2) There would be ongoing need for courses on counselling, apologetics, small-group work and ethics; (3) Opportunities to reflect on one's own culture would be appreciated; (4) Certain Baptist principles such as congregational church government disempowered pastors; (5) Lecturers at BTC should have pastoral experience before lecturing.

The value of the above feedback from actual pastors lies in the realisation that any metaphor of ministry has definite implications for people 'on the ground', and it would be advantageous, all round, if we took such implications seriously. As we do so, our new practical-theological theory will lead to a far more grounded and informed praxis. Also of value in the enormous range and insight emanating from the pastors surveyed was for us to become appreciatively aware of a group of men and one lady who were committed to doing the best they could, and doing it with courage and determination. Their stance will live on beyond this thesis to benefit many people in churches throughout our land.

## 6.6 SUMMARY

The research has suggested that Baptist pastors of generally seasoned age and from churches well-established and of typical size were aware of a core role-cluster, made up of an eight-fold configuration of shepherd, preacher, teacher, leader, administrator, priest, evangelist and community figure. If that core cluster could be regarded as traditional, then pastors were prioritising the importance of the cluster slightly differently to the traditional. Moreover, they were realising at a further level that they were not always living up to their own set of important roles, regardless of anyone else's expectations. Sensitive to how they might be perceived by society, and cognisant of the difficulties that beset the execution of the pastoral office, Baptist pastors were drawing strength from a range of resources to enable them to continue.

Their continuance has to be grasped within a context of ministry that is located in the socio-political and religious milieu already described in chapters two and three above. The heightened intercultural complexity in the new South Africa was identified as the main reason for Baptist pastors to consider the alternate role model of the spiritual antagonist. But as society attempts more and more to marginalise the pastor, the accumulation of roles, that have been identified already, will suffer severe damage, unless there is an overarching rationale to hold the roles together in creative flexibility. In all my discussions with Baptist pastors, I did not hear anyone speak of that rationale or metaphor, except to lament the fact that pastors no longer 'pastor', as though 'pastor' still defines who and what a pastor is. Clearly such a metaphor – if one exists for them – is not operating in the foreground of their ministry and ecclesiology.

While the pastors believed they were already functioning in the new role of spiritual antagonist, they might not have understood the provocative dimension of the role beyond the confines of the pulpit. Yet their eagerness to see themselves already in such a role is indicative of their readiness to locate an authentic pastoral centre from which to operate. Therefore, we would need to clarify what is involved in the metaphor of ministry, and it is to this matter that we now turn, as we explore a new practical-theological theory.

# **CHAPTER SEVEN**

## **SEARCHING THE STAGE – THE QUEST FOR A NEW METAPHOR OF MINISTRY**

### **7.1 THE SEARCH FOR A PRAXIS-METAPHOR**

Throughout this thesis, the attempt has been made to link the understanding of the role of the pastor to a literary base, in particular to the world of drama. The purpose of such a connection has been deliberate, because the correspondence between the two provides a fertile setting for emphasising various aspects of the praxis-metaphor that is being proposed for the pastor within a new practical-theological theory (cf. Zerfass' model).

The need for a praxis-metaphor has already been noted. In chapter five of this thesis it was pointed out by Aleshire (1995) and by Siler (1986) that we need a centre for pastoral identity. Allan Sager (1994), writing from a Lutheran perspective, has said much the same. He believes that "the choice of a dominant metaphor by which we as clergy refer to ourselves is critical today. Once we have chosen a metaphor by which we envision our calling, those questions... largely seem to answer themselves" (1994:20). Webb (1990:79) has commented that "the way I define myself and my sense of vocation determines the direction of my ministry and how I deal with people." Also, as a sample of Baptist pastors has been surveyed (in chapter six), the absence of an overarching image of ministry has become apparent.

The case to be made for an improved definition of ministry and a better pastoral relationship with people stems from the notion of what metaphor accomplishes. Despite modern scientific cynicism that the aesthetic dimension of life is imprecise and therefore unable to advance the pragmatic human cause, the imaginative initiative is worthy of consideration. Ricoeur joins his voice to the objection of Goodman against the view that scientific language has a monopoly over denotation, and that artistic endeavour is therefore relegated to connotation (Ricoeur in Crossan, 1975:86). Poetry, a feature of the artistic which also includes metaphor, "imitates reality only by recreating it at a mythical

level of discourse" (1975:87). Metaphor, too, imitates reality, but extends the denotation by a transference of labels to new objects which at first resist the transference and later surrender to it. In surrendering, metaphor splits the denotative value into the ambiguity of poetry, thereby setting up an artistic mechanism that organises reality. Metaphor becomes a vital means by which we come to grips with reality in new and creative configurations. Following Ramsey (1964:14) in his discussion of models which have important similarities to metaphors, metaphors are **'builders of discourse'** and consequently enable us to articulate. They **make sense of complexity** and they facilitate an engagement with, and stand proxy for, the mysterious. Memorable metaphors "bring two separate domains into cognitive and emotional relation by using language directly appropriate to the one as a lens for seeing the other" (1964:54). At heart, metaphors **expedite disclosure and prompt perception.**

Metaphor possesses another dimension that makes it especially responsive to theology. Metaphor **engenders commitment** and makes way for commitment. It transcends the mere imitation of the original, which scale models attempt to accomplish (Ramsey, 1964:10). The dominating principle of scale models might be isomorphic, but metaphor registers correspondence with the original and simultaneously generates insight that leads to disclosure. The addition of sudden illumination draws us to invest in the discovery and to desire to commit fresh energy and resources in the direction of the discovery. For that reason we are in search of a praxis-metaphor, not just an idle metaphor, for it will be a structure by means of which renewed, committed theological action may be contemplated. Ministry is in need of images that can generate new force, and thrust the people of God forward. The difficulty with some of the modern images of ministry is that they operate in bland, uninspiring ways: "They are far too conceptual and lack the poetic imagination of envisioning and challenging. Images like 'facilitator' or even 'professional' are sterile terms, unlikely to give birth to new forms of spiritual strength or new energies of motivation during times of crisis" (Messer, 1989:21).

As we deepen this matter of a praxis-metaphor and as we desire to draw energy from the influence of such images, we are inspired by the empirical research that reveals an enthusiasm among pastors to explore the new model. It seems helpful, then, to cast the role of pastor in dramatic terms and probe that association more deliberately.

## 7.2 THE ANTAGONIST OF LITERATURE

If we are to pursue pastoral identity and interchange into dramatic territory, we discover a seminal richness that provokes exciting and fruitful correspondences. Dramatic characterisation has fashioned the group, as well as the individual, to project the thoughtful action of re-enacted reality. The chorus – originally in ancient Greek drama a collection of men wearing masks, who danced, sang and chanted verse – assumed the function of commentators on the action and stood for traditional moral, religious or social opinion. The chorus in T.S. Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral* (1935) is a good example of such a function.

Choral presence ebbed and flowed in conjunction with the actions of the main character, or hero, of the play (the protagonist). Yet it could be said that without another character, the antagonist, the protagonist's profile would lack roundedness and development. The antagonist of literature need not necessarily be self-consciously influential, but is effective nonetheless. Admittedly not an example from the ambit of drama but rather of prose, Athol Fugard's *Tsotsi* (1979) shows the protagonist, a gangster of Johannesburg from a broken personal and social background, confronted with the possibility of remembering who he was before he descended into a life of crime. The catalytic presence of an unknown baby, thrust into his arms by a mother abandoning her child, brings Tsotsi, or David Madondo (his birth-name), to a place of compassionate humanity. The baby transforms him from a hardened criminal, preying on the vulnerability of South African township and suburb, to a 'father' who is opening up to another, softer and more connected reality. The baby, unwittingly, provokes him into a role he never thought he would adopt, and 'saves' him from utter insignificance.

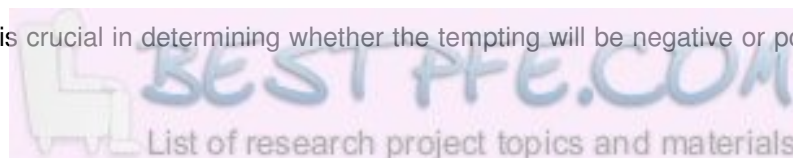
Dramatic antagonists, of course, were never conceived of in especially pastoral terms, so their entry to the stage is not often accompanied by an immediately recognisable positive presence. Often the antagonist appears in villainous garb, or at least to some extent in threatening form. Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral* recruits the potency of a series of 'tempters', who probe potential weaknesses in Archbishop Thomas Becket's character. He resists the options of ease and expediency offered by the First Tempter, the grasping for temporal might by the Second Tempter, the reliance upon powerful human allies by the Third Tempter, but is unprepared for the subtle temptation to spiritual power through martyrdom held out by the unexpected Fourth Tempter. Thomas Becket realises that "the last temptation is the greatest treason: To do the right deed for the wrong reason.... Sin grows with doing good" (1935:47). The chorus helps us, the audience, to appreciate the development of the cleric. Their assessment of Thomas' interior condition is given to us lyrically:

This man is obstinate, blind, intent  
On self-destruction,  
Passing from deception to deception,  
From grandeur to grandeur to final illusion,  
Lost in the wonder of his own greatness,  
The enemy of society, enemy of himself (1935:44).

After the antagonistic tempter's efforts to destabilise, Thomas comes to clarity of perspective and reflects the same in a later sermon when he says:

...for the true martyr is he who has become the instrument of God, who has lost his will in the will of God, and who no longer desires anything for himself, not even the glory of being a martyr (1935:53).

The antagonist has been instrumental in purging the Archbishop's soul of a deeper level of deception. Thomas is refined by the interaction with the tempter, and his vision of his destiny is clarified and purified. As villainous as the tempter may have been by intent, he becomes a vital element in the development and growth of the Archbishop. And when one considers that the Greek word for 'tempt' (πειράζω) contains positive associations of trying, testing and challenging (Balz & Schneider, 1990:64), it should be clear that tempting need not always be a destructive event. The motivation behind the one engaged in the tempting is crucial in determining whether the tempting will be negative or positive,



in much the same way as the antagonism of human interaction needs also to be assessed at the level of the heart.

A classic literary antagonist comes from the stage of *Antigone* by Sophocles (original Greek production c.442 B.C.; English translation 1947). Creon, king of Thebes, has given an order that the two sons of the defeated king Oedipus should be treated differently in death. One is to receive full burial honour, in recognition of his attitude to the state, while the other son is to be left to rot where he fell because of his treacherous actions. Creon issues the order, believing in all sincerity that it will contribute to the stabilisation of the already unsettled state of Thebes. Anyone refusing to obey the order to neglect the dishonoured son will be punishable by death. Antigone, the sister of the two fallen men, is deeply distressed by the order to forsake her brother's body and memory. Operating on higher principles of compassion and piety than of political expediency, she defies the order and covers the body. Her action brings her into confrontation with her sister who obeys the order, albeit uncomfortably. More importantly, it brings her into deadly opposition to King Creon. Antigone is not the only one to suffer the agony of conscience, for Creon's son, Haemon, who is betrothed to Antigone, finds himself having to choose his loyalties, and prefers to kill himself in protest at the misdirected order.

Antigone challenges the order of Theban reality and while inextricably participating in, and affected by, the plot, she compels key players (Ismene, Haemon, and Creon) to choose how they ought to respond. Their dramatic answers are vastly different and the dénouement is a tragic realisation that even in a principled human world there are not many satisfactory resolutions. Antigone's request to Ismene to help her bury the body, her appeals to Creon to reconsider the wisdom of the order in the light of deeper religious values, and her final acceptance of her fate propel other characters to positions they would not necessarily have elected for themselves. Her stance offers others a chance to embrace a reality that transcends simple principle and which favours a complex ambiguity of conflicting values and allegiances. Her dramatic presence is more penetrating even than the entry of the blind prophet, Teiresias. His blindness, depicting a



singular focus on unseen realities, only serves to entrench Creon's stubbornness, despite the clear warnings of impending heartache. In the tradition, perhaps, of the popular conception of the prophet, Teiresias fails to accomplish the level of engagement that Antigone does. The differences between them reflect the differences that will be suggested, below, between the metaphors of prophet and spiritual antagonist.

### **7.3 THE ANTAGONIST OF SCRIPTURE**

#### **7.3.1 *Mordecai***

Antagonists are expected in the world of drama. They are not often acknowledged in the Scriptures. Yet one of the clearest biblical instances of antagonistic influence takes shape through the dramatic sequence of the Book of Esther in the Old Testament. Esther, a Jewess who has successfully integrated into Gentile Persian society, is cast as the protagonist in a drama of intrigue and urgency, after she is propelled to a critical position in the court of Xerxes. A court official, Haman, manages to persuade the king to institute a murderous decree against the Jewish expatriate population. Mordecai, the godly man who had adopted Esther when she was a young girl, hears of the plot against the Jews. He embarks on a visual display of anguish that eventually attracts Esther's attention. Esther responds to Mordecai's distress and learns of the plot. However, she declines to get involved, citing court protocol that prevents her from communicating at will with the king (Est 4:11). Mordecai does not let matters rest there, and – in true antagonistic fashion – reminds Esther of her roots, points out the inevitable and direct impact that the events will have on her, alerts her to her dispensable position, but then poses the possible purpose of her elevation to opportunity (Est 4:13-14):

“<sup>13</sup>...Do not think that because you are in the king's house you alone of all the Jews will escape. <sup>14</sup> For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this?”

Mordecai's influence electrifies Esther's reticence into courageous intervention on behalf of a vulnerable people, which memorialises her in the Jewish tradition of Purim, and in the Judeo-Christian Scriptures, as a remarkable lady of faith and action. Yet while the

attention centres on Esther, our thesis seeks to record Mordecai's influence – the influence of an antagonist, who persists in shattering the illusion of normalcy and the oppression of fear. Without Mordecai, Esther might never have recognised her moment. Mordecai does not stand securely on the sidelines, instructing her in political cunning. Mordecai takes his own stand, bravely and passionately identifying with a threatened people. He participates in the process of redemption, as the antagonist shares in the dramatic action on the stage.

### **7.3.2            *Daniel***

Another example of the spiritual antagonist at work can be found in the Book of Daniel. Conscious of higher priorities than conforming to the value system of Babylon, Daniel challenges the prevailing ethic of success through conformity in chapter one (Brueggemann, 1989:115). By so doing he stimulates the court officials to face their own fear of offending the king. Daniel's actions prepare the way for the next scene whereby the king himself is challenged to reconsider the superiority of Yahweh among the gods (Dan 2:46-47). No sooner has that issue been settled than King Nebuchadnezzar finds his method and basis of governance resisted by Daniel and his friends (Dan 3). At every point, key role players are 'antagonised' by Daniel into facing a higher matrix of values and allegiances than they had previously accepted as the norm.

### **7.3.3            *The psalmist***

In similar antagonistic style, the psalmist observes the condition of humanity in his day (Ps 36:1-4), with its lack of godly fear and its self-deception, and by so doing poses the unspoken question of what can be done in the face of such social decline. The psalmist challenges the status quo by refocusing on the splendour of God, and thereby realigning the limiting thinking and the distorting words of the wicked towards the magnificence of God. It is precisely in such a setting that the spiritual antagonist plays such a crucial role.

### **7.3.4            *Jesus***

Jesus, too, carried himself before people as one prone to antagonistic engagement. From the early days of life and ministry, he surprised people with his perspective of

righteousness (John the Baptist – Mt 3:13-15) and with his authority (Mt 7:28-29). He noticed the marginalised of society (e.g. the lepers – Mt 8:1-4, a suffering woman – Mt 9:20-22). He acknowledged faith in the most unlikely places (the centurion – Mt 8:10-12) and he undermined the pompous but ineffective leadership of the Pharisees (Mt 9:1-8), sometimes by challenging their sin directly (Lk 11:37-54), sometimes by refusing to follow their rules (Mt 15:1-9), and sometimes by speaking with economy and imagination that left them confounded and curious, even if considerably agitated (Lk 4:16-30). For all his disruption of complacent faith, Jesus astounded with his priorities and vision, by crafting imaginative devices (parables) to throw open the vistas of heavenly reality. Apart from the parables, Jesus would sometimes retort by referring to natural signs and intriguing references to iconic figures of Old Testament history (Mt 16:1-4):

The Pharisees and Sadducees came to Jesus and tested him by asking him to show them a sign from heaven.

<sup>2</sup> He replied, “When evening comes, you say, ‘It will be fair weather, for the sky is red,’ <sup>3</sup> and in the morning, ‘Today it will be stormy, for the sky is red and overcast.’ You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times. <sup>4</sup> A wicked and adulterous generation looks for a miraculous sign, but none will be given it except the sign of Jonah.” Jesus then left them and went away.

It is characteristic of the spiritual antagonist to introduce an element of thought (in this case, the sign of Jonah) into the dialogue, before walking away and leaving the people pondering what the meaning of the 'sign of Jonah' actually was.

His supreme accomplishment on the cross exposed deeply-held attitudes and fears, bringing them to dramatic poignancy that gathered trauma and human pathos into its redemptive grasp. While not everyone chose to follow Christ with their lives, no one could have remained untouched by the events of his life (Lk 24:17-18).

### **7.3.5 Paul**

Elsewhere, the Pauline letters provide evidence of the antagonistic impulse. The apostle Paul himself operated in an antagonistic mode, as he sought to influence people in the direction of righteousness. His approach demonstrates much of the antagonistic methodology that we find in all the biblical examples. He was conscious of the motivations of the heart on the part of any aspiring antagonist, whereby it would be

necessary to combine truth with love. He was aware of the pressing imperatives of an eternal reality to which he felt called to take every thought captive. In fashioning his style of discourse, he used words in order to dispel falsehood and reveal truth.

### **7.3.6 Paul's antagonistic methodology**

If we elaborate on Paul's antagonistic methodology we note first the **motivations** of the heart. Paul says (2 Cor 2:4): "For I wrote you out of great distress and anguish of heart and with many tears, not to grieve you but to let you know the depth of my love for you." His communications were not prompted by anger or vengeful ill-discipline, but were impelled by grief at their error, love for them and a clear conviction of what was a better way of living. He pores over the letter and reflects on it after it has been sent, because he is careful to measure the impact:

<sup>8</sup> Even if I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it. Though I did regret it—I see that my letter hurt you, but only for a little while—<sup>9</sup> yet now I am happy, not because you were made sorry, but because your sorrow led you to repentance. For you became sorrowful as God intended and so were not harmed in any way by us. <sup>10</sup> Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death. <sup>11</sup> See what this godly sorrow has produced in you: what earnestness, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what concern, what readiness to see justice done. At every point you have proved yourselves to be innocent in this matter. <sup>12</sup> So even though I wrote to you, it was not on account of the one who did the wrong or of the injured party, but rather that before God you could see for yourselves how devoted to us you are (2 Cor 7:8-12).

His attitude of humility should be the same as Christ (Php 2:5-10), not daunted or intimidated by opposition but interpreting negative reaction for its sign-value (Php 1:28-30). Paul was determined "to stimulate and promote the faith of God's chosen ones and lead them on to accurate discernment and recognition of and acquaintance with the Truth which belongs to and harmonizes with and tends to godliness" (Tit 1:1 Amplified Bible).

Second, Paul understood that the circumstance of ministry – antagonistic ministry – operated in the twin realities of heaven and earth and that he needed to obey the **pressing imperatives of an eternal reality**. People had mistaken the two realities in the actions of Paul, just as they had mistaken the twin realities in the struggle for the transformed mind (2 Cor 10:1-7):

<sup>1</sup>By the meekness and gentleness of Christ, I appeal to you—I, Paul, who am “timid” when face-to-face with you, but “bold” when away! <sup>2</sup>I beg you that when I come I may not have to be as bold as I expect to be toward some people who think that we live by the standards of this world. <sup>3</sup>For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. <sup>4</sup>The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. <sup>5</sup>We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. <sup>6</sup>And we will be ready to punish every act of disobedience, once your obedience is complete. <sup>7</sup>You are looking only on the surface of things.

It is significant that Paul anticipates the real contest to be in the locus of the mind, where his efforts will have to be directed to demolishing arguments and pretensions, and taking thought captive to the patterns of Christ-obedience. As far as he is empowered to act unilaterally to enforce certain provisions of godliness, he will "punish every act of disobedience" only after a base level of obedience has been achieved, and in doing so he will not use the instruments of the world, such as violence, harassment and bullying.

As Paul prays for the people with whom he is in antagonistic relationship, his prayer reveals not only his longing for them, but also the persistent eternal reality (of love, knowledge, insight, discernment of what is best, fruit of righteousness) that commands his own perspective and that he fully expects to burst into their experience (Php 1:8):

<sup>8</sup>God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus. <sup>9</sup>And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, <sup>10</sup>so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, <sup>11</sup>filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.

If Paul eschews the weapons of the world in his struggle for the minds and lives of people, he appreciates, third, that he will not be regarded in the usual manner by opponents and onlookers. His **style of discourse** would be under review by a cynical world. For the most part, he will appear a "fool", one dull, stupid and sluggish (*μωρός* *mōrós*, from which we get our English word, 'moron' – Zodhiates, 1993:G3474). So intense will be the disparagement that Paul would describe his standing in people's eyes as "scum of the earth, the refuse of the world". Yet the impulse to answer kindly and to warn would stand (1 Cor 4:9-14):

<sup>9</sup>For it seems to me that God has put us apostles on display at the end of the procession, like men condemned to die in the arena. We have been made a spectacle to the whole universe, to angels as well as to men. <sup>10</sup>We

are fools for Christ, but you are so wise in Christ! We are weak, but you are strong! You are honoured, we are dishonoured! <sup>11</sup> To this very hour we go hungry and thirsty, we are in rags, we are brutally treated, we are homeless. <sup>12</sup> We work hard with our own hands. When we are cursed, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure it; <sup>13</sup> when we are slandered, we answer kindly. Up to this moment we have become the scum of the earth, the refuse of the world. <sup>14</sup> I am not writing this to shame you, but to warn you, as my dear children.

Unlike other players who might have spoken assertively and self-confidently, Paul's approach seems to have been lacking in outward bravado, but strong in inner conviction:

When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. <sup>2</sup> For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. <sup>3</sup> I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling. <sup>4</sup> My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, <sup>5</sup> so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power (1 Cor 2:1-5).

Paul could adapt to people so as to reduce unnecessary impediments to clear communication (1 Cor 9:19-23). The style of address was always gracious, but it was "seasoned with salt" (Col 4:6), adding a certain theme of sharpness that cured and flavoured the exchange. Capable of straight talk, of commanding people to desist from error (2 The 3:11-15; 1 Ti 1:3), and even expelling a divisive person (Tit 3:10), Paul was more eager to teach, urge and bid (Tit 2:1-10), to remind (Tit 3:1; 2Ti 2:14-19), to appeal (Phm 8-9; Eph 4:1), to dare to tell (2 The 2:1-6), and to entreat and advise (Php 4:2). Occasionally he asked leading questions to expose the fallacy of a Colossian standpoint that was based on rule-keeping rather than addressing human impulse and ethical behaviour (Col 2:20):

<sup>20</sup> Since you died with Christ to the basic principles of this world, why, as though you still belonged to it, do you submit to its rules: <sup>21</sup> "Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!"? <sup>22</sup> These are all destined to perish with use, because they are based on human commands and teachings. <sup>23</sup> Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence.

Paul counted on the relationship to persuade (Php 2:1-2 Amplified Bible):

So by whatever appeal to you there is in our mutual dwelling in Christ, by whatever strengthening and consoling and encouraging our relationship in Him affords, by whatever persuasive incentive there is in love, by whatever participation in the Holy Spirit we share and by whatever depth of affection and compassionate sympathy, fill up and complete my joy by living in harmony and being of the same mind and one in purpose, having the same love, being in full accord and of one harmonious mind and intention.

The authority of relationship, rather than authority of rank, was deemed to be more consistent with the injunction to elders about not lording it over the congregation (1 Pe 5:2): "Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock."

Fourth, Paul was cognisant of the power of **words**. When words were used destructively they brought swift ruin and ungodliness, both to the speakers and to the hearers (2 Ti 2:14-18):

Warn them before God against quarrelling about words; it is of no value, and only ruins those who listen. <sup>15</sup> Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth. <sup>16</sup> Avoid godless chatter, because those who indulge in it will become more and more ungodly. <sup>17</sup> Their teaching will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, <sup>18</sup> who have wandered away from the truth. They say that the resurrection has already taken place, and they destroy the faith of some.

By contrast, the words and Word of God contained energy, presence and spiritual content. Paul comments to the Thessalonians (1 The 1:5) on the Gospel that "came to you not simply with words, but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction." In 1 Corinthians 2:13, he elaborates on the uniqueness of these words: "This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words." It is this capacity that words possesses – of imparting to the hearer something that takes him/her beyond the realm of material constriction – that is a powerful attribute of the antagonist's influence, and one to which we shall return in due course.

Jesus was fond of saying, "I tell you the truth....", and his prayer for the church (Jn 17:17) included: "Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth." One of the key functions of the antagonist of Scripture and one that Paul embodied, fifth, is to speak **truth** – God's truth – rather than to practice scriptural distortion (2 Cor 4:2). In keeping with the biblical emphasis on truth, Paul says of ministry performance: "We have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the

contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God."

Finally, speaking the truth plainly, as Paul says, is **not guaranteed to be received favourably** by everyone. Even Paul's forays into truth-telling made enemies for him (Gal 4:16): "Have I now become your enemy by telling you the truth?" Truth is always a risky business. It is tested and compromised in the most unexpected situations, as happened in the episode between Paul and Peter. Peter's alliances betrayed a underlying premise that was not in accordance with the truth of the Gospel, and Paul calls Peter to account (Gal 2:14): "When I saw that they were not acting in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter in front of them all, 'You are a Jew, yet you live like a Gentile and not like a Jew. How is it, then, that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs?' "

#### **7.4 APPROACHING THE PASTOR AS SPIRITUAL ANTAGONIST**

So far in this chapter, then, we have made the point that metaphor is suggestive. We have identified the antagonist (a dramatic phenomenon) in several literary texts, before examining the Scriptures to locate the activity of the antagonist there. We are now ready to bring our consideration to a head by examining the pastor in dramatic terms, as we prepare for the new metaphor of pastoring.

##### **7.4.1 The role of the pastor in dramatic terms**

In exploring the pastoral potential of the dramatic, it is necessary to note some essentials of drama that will assist us to redefine the pastor.

###### **7.4.1.1 Action**

Drama is all about action. The Greek word for 'drama' means 'action' (Esslin, 1978:14). Drama is mimetic action, action imitating or representing human life. It has to be acted out, rather than read as a piece of prose, for it to be truly appreciated and for the dramatist's artistic intention to be given full value. The insistence on acting, rather than



reading, comes from the nature of the dynamic interplay between the characters, audience and the stage setting.

#### 7.4.1.2 Presence – Being with people

For all the limitations of the stage (physical events and movement) with which the dramatist must contend, drama embodies a presence that challenges us to think, to imagine, to dream and to test. We cannot easily ignore the presence of another on stage and in the audience. We are gripped by the flow of the events, the words and the suggestion, and our responses (even our thoughts) are elicited in a natural inevitability.

#### 7.4.1.3 Encounter

With such a presence exerting itself through the action of the dramatic event, drama brings people into encounter. Initially encountering the actors at face value, we move inexorably on to deeper and more complex encounters with heroes, antiheroes, archetypes and images of existential depth that we would not normally confront. The ability of drama to engage everyone involved heightens the possibility and range of participation. Passivity – that deadening condition of modern life – is thus minimised.

#### 7.4.1.4 Intensity

The complex interaction between character, audience and context sets up a synergic life that is impossible through the printed medium, and which has an immediacy and simultaneity that discursive writing can only hope to achieve accumulatively (Esslin, 1978:16-17). William Yeats explained his personal attraction to drama in terms of drama's capacity to hold "a moment of intense life" (in Cole, 1960:37). The action is stripped of distraction and becomes, as Yeats says, "an eddy of life purified from everything but itself." The intensity of the dramatic moment is therapeutic for our modern sensibilities, dulled by a steady diet of the mundane and the trivial. We are opened again to the charge of life where actions matter, where choices will determine the fate of another, and where humans have significance even in the asides of dramatic dialogue.



#### 7.4.1.5 An instrument of thought

Over the centuries, the value of drama has not been for entertainment only. There has also been a serious dimension that has pervaded even the pretence of drama. Through play and make-believe, children are socialised into the social codes and conventions that ensure the very survival of that society. That is a serious purpose. Also, drama offers an audience a chance to rehearse life situations in a relatively low-keyed fashion. According to Esslin (1978:19), one of the differences between play (make-believe) and reality "is that what happens in reality is irreversible, while in play it is possible to start again from scratch." Drama, therefore gives opportunity to think through some implications of our human predicaments, with the resultant chance to modify outcomes. Serious drama is "an instrument of thought" (1978:21) and a form of philosophising, premised on the question, 'What would happen if...?' (1978:22). What will make the question all the more pertinent is sharpened for us by the crises and conflicts of the plot, which themselves are necessary for dramatic action and development.

#### 7.4.1.6 Decision

Plays are grounded on a basic structure of clarification, where we are introduced to the characters and the situation of the play. The plot moves on to the first crisis that startles the audience with some new development. Thereafter, possibly with numerous crises ensuing from the initial one, the plot deepens into a stage of complication, before being brought to a denouement by some final decision, action or discovery (Boulton, 1960:43). Aristotle, whose classic work in the field of poetics laid the foundation for all subsequent drama, distinguished between simple dramatic action and complex dramatic action, and asserted it was the presence of 'peripety' (the change from happiness to misfortune, or vice versa) and discovery (the change from ignorance to knowledge, and consequently either to love or hate) that transformed simple dramatic action into complexity (*Aristotle's Poetics*, III.D.1). Essential to the definition of dramatic action, therefore, is the presence of decision and change. Apart from plays that are deliberately anti-structural, such as Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* (1956), most plays work with, and modify, that basic

structure that brings matters to a reasonable conclusion. Characters are brought to decision. Afterwards we might see the consequences of those decisions enacted for us.

Furthermore, the audience in a serious dramatic work is also propelled towards decision. Athol Fugard's plays, for example, did not attempt to explain apartheid, but gave us instead a clear experience of what it was like to be a black person in South Africa. We, the audience, found ourselves before another of those multilayered decisions that help to shift human perspective in the direction of something better.

Real characters, as opposed to flat characters, are those who grow and develop. Inherent in any kind of growth is decision. The best of characters embody this depth and those who stimulate that kind of personal expansion in others are characters who are vital for the integrity of the plot.

#### 7.4.1.7 Dramatic pastoring: Gauging the pastoral potential of the dramatic

Drama and religion have had a historic association. Primitive communities danced or mimed the capture of an animal, or danced and chanted their appeal to the gods of rain and sun. Formal drama grew out of religious festivals, with Greek drama invoking the god Dionysius. Drama has been used in non-literate communities to depict elements of the Easter celebration. The earliest actors were priests and their assistants, but with an expanding cast, secular actors had to be recruited (Boulton, 1960:194). The consequent secularisation of theatre caused the church to distance itself from drama, with the result that dramatic productions moved out of the church and took on independent status.

To speak of the pastor in terms of the vocabulary of drama is to position pastoral work within a rich setting, drawing in the resources and disciplines that are commensurate with the shared purposes of ministry and dramatic impact.

Pastors, envisaged in dramatic terms, are people who operate (**act**) deliberately within intricate matrices of human characterisation. They have a real-life **presence**, incarnating

a different range of options that can be rehearsed and probed for their value to a human life that is being touched by the Gospel. The direct human contact with the pastor ensures that the synergic interchange (**encounter**) of God, person, pastor and life situation is given scope with an immediacy and **intensity** that brings a host of perspectives to bear on the human players. Pastors work in the intense world of meaning, where deep reservoirs of being are confronted by even deeper mysteries of deity. The interaction does not only possess its playful moments; it has serious, **thought-provoking** and philosophical infusions that leave the human players with a sense of having witnessed something that lies beyond the mundane and the predictable. They find themselves having to choose which way they want their lives to proceed (**decision**). Such is the base of the pastoral interchange, if we are willing to embrace it.

#### **7.4.2 Discerning more – Contrasting the role with other metaphors**

When we consider the pastor in dramatic terms, we are anticipating a role that will exert a profound impact on people. Such an influence will be consistent with the preliminary sketch of the pastor as spiritual antagonist that was given in chapter six (para. 6.2.2). The sketch attempted to outline the provocative role that the pastor would fulfil in developing and extending the protagonist (the persons among whom he ministers). Despite initial impressions of the antagonist as a malicious irritant (the popular notion of antagonist, even among some of the respondents), the profile suggested that there was an unusual but creative stance for the pastor that would empower him to execute his calling during a time when the role of spiritual leadership was undergoing frustration and disillusionment. We have seen already from our examination of the antagonist of literature and Scripture that such a ministry position pressed people forward, and it refocused their attention on larger issues. People were surprised by the interchange and it caused them to think.

We are realising again, at this juncture, that the profile of spiritual antagonist would not be a comfortable one at every turn; in fact, the chances would be high that there would be some resistance to the input of the spiritual antagonist. Nevertheless, as the pastor embraced the invitation of such a ministry, and once the early awkwardness was

overcome, it would be apparent that the pastor possessed a distinctive ability to stimulate faith by causing people to reflect on, and re-assess, their lives.

There are, of course, other metaphors of pastoral ministry that might be argued to be accomplishing similar goals. Several respondents equated the antagonist to these other metaphors as they engaged with the research metaphor. The pastor as equipper, as coach or mentor and as catalyst, to start with, might seem to infer the same thing as spiritual antagonist. While there are useful elements in each of them, the metaphors are not identical with that of the spiritual antagonist. An antagonist is more than these other metaphoric descriptors.

#### 7.4.2.1 More than an equipper

Building on Paul's words (Eph 4:12) where apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers are to prepare (equip) God's people for works of service, the pastoral role has been linked to this outcome of equipping believers to serve God's purpose. As Humphreys (2001:56) urges seminarians: "You are not to build a church institution but an army of finely trained spiritual soldiers. You are not to grow a church or an organization but a body, an organism of believers. You are not just to encourage but you are to equip; you are not just to exhort but you are to equip. You have not been called to establish bigger budgets, or to build bigger buildings and facilities, but you have been called by God, Jesus Christ, to build larger saints [my emphases]."

The image of the pastor as equipper rightly draws on biblical precedent and it emphasises the productive interchange between pastor and fellow believer for the sake of imparting skills and orientations that will enable him/her to serve God. In that respect the equipper and spiritual antagonist share a common task. But the equipper, by majoring on the performance issues and skills base, does not convey the idea that the pastor participates with the one being equipped in a common story of formation. The equipper can easily be mistaken for one detached from the fray.

#### 7.4.2.2 More than a coach-mentor

Alternatively, the coach-mentor might be seen to be closer to the action, participating along with the one being developed. Coaching and mentoring imply a certain competence or mastery, yet both figures are relegated to the sidelines of the game, unable to influence matters at crucial moments of play. Also, they emphasise practical skills once again. As Stanley and Clinton (1992:79) write with respect to mentoring, "coaching-mentors [the people who coach or mentor other people] focus on teaching *how to do things*." The spiritual antagonist has much broader objectives in mind than simply imparting a few skills.

#### 7.4.2.3 More than a catalyst

If the equipper and the coach-mentor have deficiencies, the catalyst lays appropriate stress on the tumultuous collision and transformation of elements, a dynamic that is captured and utilised by the spiritual antagonist. However, a catalyst is a term devoid of humanity, drawn from the field of chemistry to describe the provocation of certain reactions as a result of the introduction of a new chemical. By neglecting this important dimension of humanity, the image reduces the richness of personality and uniqueness bound up in every human being undergoing transformation.

#### 7.4.2.4 More than a transformational leader

Transformation there might be in a catalyst, and it is this aspect that is emphasised when Willimon (2002:277) describes a pastor as a transformational leader, rather than a transactional leader. Referring to James MacGregor Burns who used the terms 'transactional' and 'transformative' in explaining leadership, Willimon differentiates a leader who manages the expectations of a congregation (transactional leader) from a leader who refuses to be held captive by expectations and who calls the congregation to a higher purpose and a higher moral commitment (transformative leader).

When we study the nature of the transformation that is envisaged by transformative leadership, we gain a perspective on the experience of such leadership. Using Loren

Mead, Willimon (2002:281) cites four aspects of transformation with which pastors are busy: (1) Orchestrating the transfer of ownership of the church to the laity, (2) Simplifying complex, democratic and inhibiting church structures so that the Gospel is set free to thrive, (3) Developing a passionate spirituality, and (4) Commissioning every member to engage in missions.

In the light of these challenges, it would seem that the primary transformative goal of such leadership is the restructuring of the church for every-member ministry. Transformation, then, becomes no more than an evolutionary change in the direction of simplicity and greater effectiveness. This goal is not a bad thing at all. It just seems that transformative leadership, in reality, is about communal equipping, rather than individual equipping, as the earlier image of the equipper suggested. Willimon still locates the pastor squarely within the structures of the organised church.

The spiritual antagonist, by contrast, works within the structures, but moves in and out of them with greater ease. There is a more deliberate 'revolutionary' character about the spiritual antagonist that enables him to work with, bypass, transcend or even, in some cases, ignore the structures for the sake of stimulating growth. It is not that the spiritual antagonist condescends to structures, or is necessarily disparaging of structures, for we all know that there is a necessity for structure throughout life. But the spiritual antagonist roams within and beyond the structures for the sake of biblical growth. Like Christ, he finds people within the temple and by the side of a well. He overturns established convention, not for spectacle, but for growth and deeper principle. He finds the outcast and honours, both individually and through connections to the church, what is truly honourable in that one, thereby opening up the outcast to the marvellous acceptance that there is in Jesus.

#### 7.4.2.5 More than a growth agent

To some extent, the spiritual antagonist is a growth agent, trying by all means to stimulate godliness. In that respect he is no different to what pastors have been attempting for

years. As Miller (1994:22) says, "Spiritual growth is obviously the basic reason churches open their doors. It is the undertone, the tone and the overtone of the Bible. It was the focus of the early church. It has been the impassioned concern of the saints of all ages. A three-year study in six denominations concluded that the primary aim of congregations is to nurture a life-changing faith that will shape one's way of (a) thinking, (b) being, and (c) acting."

As Miller continues, he investigates how people grow, but for now it is worth noting that Miller envisages growth to be the result of a complex mixture of factors that fall into two categories: (1) What God does by his Spirit, (2) What the congregation does to promote growth. His Spiritual-Growth Opinion Poll proposes to identify which features of congregational life (worship, music, prayer, fellowship, preaching, service, stewardship, Bible study, books, encouragement, leadership, administration, retreats, evangelism and 'other') are expected to produce the most growth and then target that growth area. As useful as these instruments are for diagnosing and remediating obstacles, we are faced with the underlying metaphor of the pastor as an organiser, or an agent of growth, who manipulates contextual factors to best advantage. His is primarily an administrative function that places nourishment before hungry people who might have selected certain kinds of growth, unadvisedly perhaps, or under the influence of popular trends of what is valuable for a Christian.

The spiritual antagonist is clearly not averse to growth. There might be room to discuss what constitutes the kind of growth that is being sought (see para. 8.8, below), but it is also clear that the spiritual antagonist has an emerging clarity as to where he and the people around him are to head. It comes from discerning where God is not fitting into the prevailing socio-political and religious context, and by implication where God is redesigning society, even if it is in 'remnant' fashion. An awareness of our current society is therefore a critical tool in assessing what God is doing. Piper's remarks on spiritual leadership (2002:11) go a long way to depicting the stance of the spiritual antagonist, when he says that spiritual leadership is knowing where God wants people to be and



taking the initiative to get them there by God's means, in reliance on God's power. And the way to find out where God wants people to be is to ask where God himself is going. It might not be as well-defined as Piper makes out, but the spiritual antagonist will possess a growing conviction of the direction, even if he has to hold that conviction tentatively.

#### 7.4.2.6 More than a prophet

If we are asking of pastoral leadership a certainty of direction as to where God is headed, then surely the best metaphor for ministry would be that of the prophet. The prophets of Old Testament times boldly proclaimed that God was troubled about the condition of human society and what he wanted people to do to correct their individual and collective sins. The prophets, while often enduring the wrath of an indignant community, experienced their call as leaving them no option but to speak in God's name, and what they pronounced contained a well-developed moral content (Shelp & Sunderland, 1985:9). Jesus himself was regarded as a prophet (Mt 13:57, 21:11; Lk 1:76), but his prophetic ministry was different to his Old Testament predecessors, with respect to the substance of his prophetic vision (the Kingdom of God), and to the mode of its realisation (through the way of the cross, rather than through pietism or Zealot activism)(Yoder, in Shelp & Sunderland, 1985:24).

Prophets were brave, as spiritual antagonists must be. Unlike spiritual antagonists, however, they walked apart from the people and struggled to integrate prophetic and caring functions. As Stanley Hauerwas comments, when Amos calls attention to the oppression of the poor and the rapaciousness of the rich ladies of Samaria, "it is not the best pastoral practice to approach the women of one's congregation with the appellation 'cows of Bashan' " (in Shelp & Sunderland, 1985:27). If a Baptist pastor were to see himself essentially as a prophet – rather than spiritual antagonist – he would run into economic trouble in his congregation, for pastors' salaries in Baptist churches are paid exclusively by their own congregations. If, by contrast, he were to embrace the antagonist role, where the caring function co-exists with the prophetic, his chances of maintaining ministerial integrity and effectiveness would be considerably enhanced.

Then too, the prophetic pastor who attacks society is hardly going to attract members of that same society who feel themselves to be under pronouncement. For churches who are obsessed with being attractive to a secular society, the role of prophet is not going to sit well.

The usual characterisation of the prophet is one who primarily is a social reformer. But as Hauerwas (in Shelp & Sunderland, 1985:39) points out, prophetism in Israel was an extraordinary varied phenomenon which also included the function of interpreting past, present and future in the light of God's calling of Israel. The efforts to keep the people true to God is a further feature of prophetism. Yet these three aspects of prophetic ministry can be approached conservatively or radically. Our exploration of the pastor as spiritual antagonist seeks to probe the radical undertones of a seemingly conservative position, in order to prepare Baptist pastors for a time when they will need to find their voice in all these areas, bravely, resolutely and with strategic freedom.

Find their voice they must. McMickle (2005), and Ayer (1967) long before him, both lament the loss of the prophetic in our Christian communities. Ayer (1967:291) restricts prophetic ministry to the pulpit when he says that a 'species' of pastor is on the brink of extinction: "The one species on which I center attention now is a high-spirited, eagle-eyed, aggressive animal which I call 'the pulpit prophet'." The picture of the prophet is intriguing (high-spirited, eagle-eyed, aggressive) and somewhat reflective of a particular model. But more than that, Ayer does fear the replacement of preachers in the mould of Elijah, Daniel, Isaiah, John the Baptist and Jesus, with what he calls 'wet-finger-to-the-wind' prophets, who gauge public opinion before selecting what they will denounce.

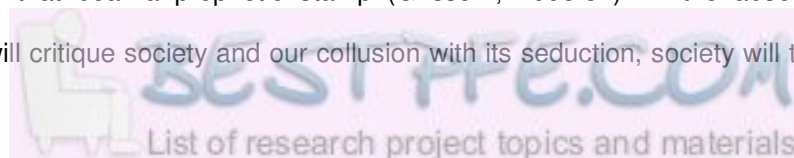
Departing somewhat from Ayer's denunciatory model of prophetism, McMickle asks where all the prophets have gone, realising that an important function of prophetic witness is to widen the perspective of congregations that tend towards inwardness. Preaching that is prophetic, says McMickle, shifts the focus from what is happening to us

as a congregation, to what is happening to us as a society. Then it poses the question as to what an appropriate response would be from the Christian community (2005:7). Socio-political conditions and trends are allowed to feature in biblical preaching, rather than to be kept separate under the mistaken adage of separation of church and politics. The plight of widows, orphans and strangers is spoken and reflected on in the light of biblical values. Unpopular issues, such as the evil of affirmative action in South Africa, is permitted a voice in the deliberations on 'doing unto others as you would have them do unto you'.

Carl Laney (1981:315) softens the role of the prophet by suggesting that the function of the Old Testament prophets was to be a preacher, a predictor of future events and a watchman over the people; and the way they executed their office was in the form of a royal diplomat operating within parameters common to the times. Almost a decade later, Laney (1990:42) recognises the social base of the prophetic commentary, identifying such issues as:

- (1) The exploitation and oppression of the poor, orphans, widows, and foreigners;
- (2) Corrupt and degenerate religious practices;
- (3) Idolatry and pagan practices;
- (4) Perversion of justice;
- (5) Dishonest business practices;
- (6) Excessive indulgence in alcohol;
- (7) Violence of all sorts, including shedding blood and plotting evil;
- (8) Adultery, immorality, and sexual violations, and;
- (9) General disregard for the Law of God.

However, he insists that the prophets were always backward-looking in their denunciations, harking back to the terms of the covenants (1990:34) and enforcing the terms of the covenants (McLean, 1994:6). Prophets today might not be so focussed on the past that they cannot factor in the dynamics of the future. Prophets, like Jeremiah, helped the people of Judah to face – rather than hide from – impending disaster (Shriver, 1981:399), as spiritual antagonists in the South African context still have to do. Either way, their position in society is not always that easy to detect, especially if one is concentrating on traditional pastoral figures, for there would seem to be many religious figures but few that bear a prophetic stamp (Grissom, 1993:37). In the absence of prophets who will critique society and our collusion with its seduction, society will tend to



follow its own popular socio-political figures, investing in them a mystique that borders on the religious.

The metaphor of the pastor as spiritual antagonist is one that shares a kindred spirit with the prophetic, especially insofar as the spiritual antagonist attempts to step into the 'naked public square' (Neuhaus, in Simmons, 1989:517) as creatively as possible, in order to address the oppressive theology of secularism. As Simmons cautions, we cannot assume that because there are churches in a society that there is a vigorous socio-political dialogue underway that will restrain a society from contributing its own list of terrifying episodes to the catalogue of global evil:

The horrors of the Stalin purges, the Maoist revolution and the Nazi holocaust are reminders that morality cannot and must not be separated from politics. The fact that the Czarist atrocities and the Nazi pogroms had religious backing is a sobering reminder, however, that religion needs more guidance than self-interested involvement if more good than evil is to come from the injection of religion into the public sphere. Iran, under religious leaders, can hardly claim moral superiority to that of the Shah it displaced (1989:518).

The prophetic impulse will stand as watchman over the people both within the church and in general society. The minor prophet, Hosea, linked the two: "The prophet, along with my God, is the watchman over Ephraim" (Hosea 9:8). As watchmen would warn of approaching threat, so the prophet raises alarm over destructive trends in society.

Despite the close correspondence between prophet and spiritual antagonist, we would want to move beyond the prophetic in proposing the role of pastor as spiritual antagonist. The pastor cannot delineate his role solely in terms of the prophet, for he must operate within a community of faith. He combines at least two types of action (care and compassion; and protest and challenge) within one ministry, or within one persona offered in the name of the risen Lord (Shelp & Sunderland, 1985:21). The awkwardness of this combination is what drives us to consider the pastor, this time, as spiritual antagonist.

The spiritual antagonist seeks to build on the noble platform of the prophetic by reclaiming from the disciplines of education, psychology and politics the church's 'mother

tongue' – the language of challenge, or the vocabulary of the church's prophetic mission (Johnson, 2000:62). Believing that the nature of God, the nature of the pastor, the nature of the church and of the pastoral task incline a pastor to embrace the prophetic as a natural dimension of what he does, Johnson argues that pastors - can we say spiritual antagonists, as well? – proclaim (by identification, sacrifice and obedience) a message of passion, prediction and protest that undermines the status quo and all forms of injustice.

## **7.5 CONCLUSION**

The quest for a new metaphor has taken us to consider the unique persona of the antagonist in literature and in Scripture. The likely connection between the antagonist and the pastor has been approached and, in so doing, we have been careful to differentiate the pastor as spiritual antagonist from other metaphors that operate in close proximity.

Yet in going further, shortly, to examine other dimensions of the metaphor, we must not lose sight of the constructive characteristics discussed above, including the pastor as equipper, coach-mentor, catalyst, transformative leader, growth agent and especially prophet. The spiritual antagonist accommodates positives from all of these, but integrates further dimensions, as we will see in the next chapter, when the role of spiritual antagonism comes into sharper focus.

# **CHAPTER EIGHT**

## **A STRANGELY DIFFERENT VOICE – THE ROLE AND MINISTRY OF THE SPIRITUAL ANTAGONIST**

### **8.1 STEPPING FORWARD TO PERFORM**

If the pastor as spiritual antagonist occupies a unique position on the stage, it is essential that such a persona step forward and be seen. In this important chapter, we are deepening the description that was initiated in the preceding chapter, as we intensify the efforts of the practical-theological theorising that Zerfass' amended model sets out for us. We will observe the pastor in the new praxis-metaphoric to be **a spiritual person, fired by a pastoral-poetic imagination, increasingly adept at crafting 'communicatives' that penetrate, expose and bring to life. His actions will provoke and sometimes even offend, but he will not be intimidated by conflict and anger; in fact, he will use them for constructive gain, as he desires, passionately, to be with people, engaging them 'from the side', so that faith-filled, Christ-like, and thorough life-change emerges.**

### **8.2 A SPIRITUAL PERSON**

At the centre of the metaphor of the pastor as spiritual antagonist beats a heart for God. At once a human being, in touch with earthly realities of a socio-political and religious contextuality, and a spiritual being, the pastor is – and must be – orientated towards Christ who is his life (Col 3:4).

#### **8.2.1 In awe of God**

As much an orientation as an attitude, the pastoral stance is sensitive to the presence and movement of God. William James (1960:73) would speak of there being in the human consciousness "a sense of reality, a feeling of objective presence, a perception of what we may call 'something there,' more deep and more general than any of the special

and particular 'senses' by which the current psychology supposes existent realities to be originally revealed." The pastor is one who has entered into a territory of conviction, born out of encounter with that 'presence', to discover that the 'something there' has personality, promise, purpose and power. Like Jacob (Gen 28:12) who meets this God at Bethel, the role of the pastor as spiritual antagonist presupposes that a life-transforming encounter has taken place at some stage in the journey. Jacob's reaction was to proclaim: " 'Surely the Lord is in this place, and I was not aware of it.' He was afraid and said, 'How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven.' " The specifics of encounter may be different for the pastor, as for any of us, but if Jacob's experience is at all representative it indicates a four-fold incident, viz. a movement from non-awareness to awareness of God's presence, a powerful effect on the human spirit, encoded initially within an emotional register (humble fear), a sense of awe, and a metaphorical conflation of ordinary place and extraordinary threshold ("This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven").

John's Gospel records another instance of this transition from non-awareness to awareness and its effects, which together points to the essence of the Christian faith, viz. the Father-child relationship (Jn 1:10-14):

<sup>10</sup>He [Christ] was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognise him. <sup>11</sup>He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. <sup>12</sup>Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— <sup>13</sup>children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. <sup>14</sup>The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

In commenting on the impact of becoming aware of Christ and subsequently 'receiving' him, Oswald Chambers (2000:35, 360) describes the psychology of faith as comprising three constituents: mental, moral and mystical reception. Baptists have laid great emphasis on the receiving of Christ, mentally and morally, but our earnest efforts to formulate the way of salvation have sometimes had the unfortunate consequence of reducing the mystical and the mysterious to a formula. Clemmons (1983:28) is distressed by the loss of awe in our post-Enlightenment, scientific world. Awe is initially an emotion that brings together dread, veneration and wonder, inspired by the authority of God or by

his sacredness and sublimity (*Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary*). Awe is that arresting of our being by something infinitely bigger than ourselves. Our sense of significance undergoes massive revision, as we realise that life really is not about us at all. Our most serious modern heresy, argues James Fowler, may be the idea that the point of life is our self-actualisation (in Steele, 1990:110), but when we live in the awe of God, our arguments, justifications, suggestions and issues about which we feel so strongly, diminish to a whisper, before giving way to the wide expanse of brilliance and ordered chaos. Our perspective explodes to attempt to take in what is beyond us and threatens to overwhelm us. We prostrate ourselves, simply because to stand implies a right of existence that now even is in dispute. Before long, we are silent before the Transcendent One, the Trinitarian Complexity, the Penetratingly Intimate, before Jesus our Risen Saviour. And before Him, we wait in a 'sacrament of silence' (to borrow a term from Oswald Chambers, 2000:1012).

Writing about Psalm 62:5-6, Chambers remarked that a great deal of our silence arises from sullenness or exhaustion, but the silence of the psalmist's counsel, by contrast, is one that springs from certainty that God knows what he is doing. It is not a drifting into daydreams, but a deliberate 'getting into the centre of things' and focussing on God, not in idleness but in rested, intense activity of expectation (2000:1012).

Sadly, under the influence of technological reductionism and demythologised rationalism, we have lost the capacity to wonder, to perceive the 'excess of meaning', or the 'more than' of life. Clemmons (1983:30) adds that awe is "the posture of the person for whom intuition and wonder are fundamental ingredients in knowing." Awe militates against the functional approach to religious life and the slide into objectivism. Awe awakens the imagination (see below) and shifts pastoral practice from themes of anxiety, control, abuse and burnout to expressions of hope, tolerance, consideration and relaxed endurance.



Becoming open to awe utilises solitude, as well as the spiritual disciplines of daily Bible reading, reflective reading and honest accountability to a small group of fellow believers. Henri Nouwen (1975) would concur that spirituality involves a three-part movement from loneliness to solitude (reaching out to our innermost self), from hostility to hospitality (reaching out to our fellow human beings) and from illusion to prayer (reaching out to our God). Solitude does not always mean isolation, but more often an attentiveness in the midst of activity that enables us to be present with ourselves, to live the questions of our lives and to take perspective from the being of God (Nouwen, 1975:38).

Jacob, in Genesis 28, was profoundly affected by the awe of God. Like Bildad (in the conversation with Job), he grasped the fact that "dominion and awe belong to God" (Job 25:2). His exclamation, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven," testifies to a metaphorical conflation of earth and heaven in one of those 'holy moments' (Young, 1985) when we encounter God and we know that life is sacred, purposeful, authentic, whole and holy. Holy moments are snatches of eternity when we become aware of who we are (human, dependent, broken, in need of transforming mercy), and when we submit to the presence of God. As Young says:

A moment becomes holy for us when we see and are seen; we hear and are heard; we know life and feel alive; we seek and find; we ask and get answers; we reach and touch; we know and are known; we care and are cared about; we love and are loved. When life changes and we are never the same again... we know holy moments.... [They are critical moments] when who we are is confronted, threatened, questioned, confirmed, affirmed, claimed, named and blessed. And it takes just a moment (1985:14, 18).

The pastor's spirituality is clearly at issue here, for his own ongoing spiritual development and for the authentic spiritual development he might instigate in others around him. Of Levi, the minister of God among people, God says (Mal 2:5-6): "My covenant was with him, a covenant of life and peace, and I gave them to him; this called for reverence and he revered me and stood in awe of my name. True instruction was in his mouth and nothing false was found on his lips. He walked with me in peace and uprightness, and turned many from sin." Of significance to the pastoral role is the appropriate response of awe and reverence, out of which proper instruction and influence ensues. It is in that spirit of 'standing in awe of my name' that the spiritual antagonist ministers. Michael Cavanagh

(in Shawchuck & Heuser, 1993:27) has aptly commented that "when ministers are in tune with themselves [read that as in tune with Christ in them], they can touch people in beautiful ways, but when they are out of tune with themselves, not even the Lord can make music with them."

Having God make music with our lives, as it were, calls us to a depth of living that is characteristically out of step with the 'fast food' mentality of our age. Watchman Nee (1975:63) was distressed by the shallow life of believers in China in his day, occasioned by their haste to share or teach other people from their initial experiences with God, before those experiences had matured into deep-seated convictions. Using the parable of the sower (Mk 4:5-6), Nee urged believers (and pastors) to let 'deep call to deep'.

We can affirm that it is of utmost importance to the pastor, if he is to be a spiritual antagonist, that he operates from a **depth of spirituality**. So far we have made the case for the awe of God being foundational to that spirituality. There are other facets of it, of course, and Shawchuck and Heuser (1985:57) have proposed a useful model of spirituality that incorporates awe (they call it 'waiting'), along with three further elements: (1) A covenantal relationship with an accountability group, (2) A holistic lifestyle, which avoids harmful influences and strengthens wholesome other experiences, e.g. exercise, family, hobbies, and (3) The examen of consciousness, which I will deal with below as living reflectively.

### **8.2.2 Living reflectively**

Christians are called upon to be thinking people, of the kind that will test everything and hold on to the good, while avoiding every kind of evil (1 The 5:21-22). Pastors model such a thoughtful stance, as they ask questions and as they seek truth that avoids the conditioned responses of easy praise or condemnation. The pastor as spiritual antagonist is, as Taylor (1986:16) remarks, a person who is sensitive to and fascinated by the complexity of things, who bears an openness to the nuances and grace notes of life, and who has an eye for hidden beauties and whitewashed sepulchres. The safe conclusions

are suspended in favour of the quest for meaning that is based on risk and on a commitment to God and to people. While reason is vital to the repertoire of the pastor, it is not nearly so dominant as we might assume. In fact, as Taylor notes, there is no such thing as an objective, neutral thing called 'reason' which stands aloof from the manipulations of insecure defensiveness (1986:68). Moreover, reason displays limitations in dealing with every dimension of spirituality:

It is my experience that, for all its usefulness in many areas, the closer one gets to the nexus where the eternal and temporal intersect, the less reason operates effectively as the primary instrument of judgement. In fact, reason recedes in importance in most of the truly critical areas of the human experience, largely because there are forces at work with which reason is not adequate to deal.... Making reason the primary arbiter in matters of faith ignores both the nature of the message (which is a person and a relationship, not an argument) and the nature of the recipient (who is also a person, not a computer)" (Taylor, 1986:70).

Living reflectively, then, is not an argument in favour of an oversized intellect or a highly rationalistic approach to ministry. Instead, it is a way of living and leading that appreciates that life is a puzzle in many respects, and that many of our conclusions are more tentative than we dare to admit. Nevertheless, it is not paralysed by indecision and passivity simply because the pastor recognises the complexity of the moment. He reads the situation as fully as possible, and with humility and courage he acts in good faith, drawing on resources of knowledge, experience and skills (often by inventing new ones) (Carroll, 1991:122), in order to take up a constructive position that inspires and energises others. In fact, according to Steele (1990:107), living reflectively is a quality of maturity that ought to be the experience of all Christians, but especially of leaders.

Johannes van der Venn (1998) applauds the movement in ministry beyond therapeutic and managerial models towards a model of reflective ministry. He believes that the pastor is now compelled to develop a professional competence to deal adequately with problematic situations, and to discover, formulate and analyse the religious problems in those situations, before using basic tools to consider and weigh alternative solutions – and to behave proactively while at the same time (a) reflecting on the very action that he is busy executing and (b) doing so in conjunction with fellow professionals and lay people (1998:85). The pastor's reflections will cause him to explore six aspects of the religious

life: the experiential aspect (symbols), the cognitive aspect (convictions), the emotional aspect (moods), the moral aspect (motivations), the ritual aspect and the communitarian (or communal) aspect (1998:94). Significantly in Van der Venn's model is the notion of reflection concurrent with action, rather than reflection taking place only after the action. This position is critical to living and leading reflectively, for it maintains an ongoing vigilance and flexibility that is necessitated by a fast-changing context of ministry.

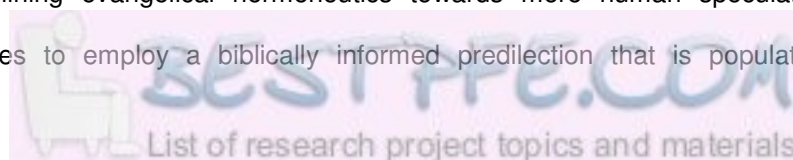
### **8.3 PASTORAL-POETIC IMAGINATION**

Poets were said to be inspired by their muses and biblical authors by visions of the glory of God. Those visions were creative and energising. For the biblical writers, therefore, such a vision, such a theopoetic (to borrow a term coined by Amos Wilder, in Hunter, 1978:1), is a prelude to theological construction (Minear, 1978:201). Theopoetics or theopoesis refers to the religious imagination which was essential to biblical writers, as well as to theologians and also, in my view, to pastors as spiritual antagonists. It seeks to "recover the experience of glory that lies at the heart of Christianity," according to Minear, and it revises co-ordinates of time and space, creating new 'calendars' and 'geographies' from which a new consciousness of life is measured.

To speak of theopoetics is to reconsider the place of the imagination in pastoral ministry. Hendrix (1989:427) is of the opinion that the imagination may yet become the next controversy to afflict the church, but for the time being it has mostly been neglected. Nevertheless, while imagination might have been denigrated over the course of church history, it has not been lost, even in our crude world. It has just been limited and cheapened, until it has become irrelevant to mainstream modernity, or it has been confined to the interests of hard-nosed commercial advertising, Hollywood blockbusters, or pulp fiction. Imagination has long been the preserve of poets, novelists, painters and sculptors. It is hardly expected within the church, and least of all among pastors.

It was the Puritans who were suspicious of imagination, and the Reformers before them who demonised it. Imagination possessed great power for the Puritans, and therefore had to be handled carefully. Like John Calvin, who classified the imagination as "a dreadful dungeon" of human stubbornness that was utterly opposed to God (Evans, 2001:51), the Puritans could not accept that it could ever lead to a proper contemplation of God. Rather, the unregenerate imagination would more likely turn towards idolatry, the making of images that substituted for God. Their belief that images were akin to the old divine economy, that had been replaced by the word of the Gospel, meant that the Puritan aversion to images translated into an ambivalence towards verbal artistry, though some Puritan preachers – especially later Puritans – clearly practiced the skill of sermon illustrations and the spiritualising of natural things. Despite a suspicion of the imagination, they recognised the value of a 'sanctified imagination', as Evans explains: "The imagination, sanctified by grace, guided by Scripture, was transported by faith into the realm of 'things above', to elevate the mind, stir the affections and satisfy the soul" (2001:74). Just as they were highly critical of the imagination as a result of their Reformed roots, they were also guided by their Scholastic roots to appreciate the psychological connections that can derive from word-based imagery, such as Jonathan Edwards' view of Old Testament types (La Shell, 1987:317).

The Puritan spirit would have to concede, of course, that God uses imagery to communicate his message. The book of Revelation is one such grand sequence of imaging that utilises sacred imagination in the service, amongst other things, of social critique, in order to deliver social protest and engage in social reconstruction (Broadhead, 2001:79). Evangelicals, as an expression of their Bible-centredness, have favoured the historical-grammatical hermeneutical approach to the reading of Scripture. Yet this approach often neglects personal formation, practical application and the more direct encounter with God (Scorgie, 2001:273), precisely because it spurns the meditative reading of Scripture which relies heavily on a 'baptised imagination'. Rather than the imagination inclining evangelical hermeneutics towards mere human speculation, it instead purposes to employ a biblically informed predilection that is populated by



Christian themes, symbols and narratives, drawn from the rich tradition of biblical Christianity. Within such a predisposition, the text triggers associations and insights that cause the biblical context and the social context to come alive with fruitful correspondences. Pastors work from this fertile biblical base in grasping the overall framework of meaning, which must later be related to the often biblically denuded landscape of the modern person. As one of the respondents (GS-C) conceded, in speaking to his congregation about the risen Christ, that pastors are trying to expand their interaction with a mystery in all its untamed relevance.

To illustrate the imaginative dynamics, we could examine an Old Testament picture that, like its New Testament counterparts depicting the nature of the Kingdom of Heaven, informs our approach to a modern context. Isaiah 11:6-9 sets out an eschatological reality of a surprising harmony between unlikely partners and of an absence of threat in the midst of intense vulnerability:

- <sup>6</sup> The wolf will live with the lamb,  
the leopard will lie down with the goat,  
the calf and the lion and the yearling together;  
and a little child will lead them.
- <sup>7</sup> The cow will feed with the bear,  
their young will lie down together,  
and the lion will eat straw like the ox.
- <sup>8</sup> The infant will play near the hole of the cobra,  
and the young child put his hand into the viper's nest.
- <sup>9</sup> They will neither harm nor destroy  
on all my holy mountain,  
for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD  
as the waters cover the sea.

We could despatch this picture to an eschatological future, or we could allow its power to operate retroactively upon our consciousness in a broken and polarised world, causing us tenaciously to resist expressions of independence in favour of interdependence. The biblical vision encourages us to persevere in the ministry of the impossible, when an easier capitulation into division and disunity beckons. Imaginative associations between text and context are explored in a meditative hermeneutic that awakens hope and stimulates faith, so that loving, restorative action can be taken.

His imagination quickened by biblical imagery, the pastor moves among people, sensitive to opportunities to relate earthly objects (e.g. viper's nest), invested with memory (fear and hostility) to a basic human desire for safety amidst vulnerability. Contending with cynical realism all the time, he 'antagonises' people to consider life from the vantage point of a God who is determined, through knowledge of Himself, to transcend barriers of hate, suspicion and violence. Deep human longings to live in such a world where we do not have to protect ourselves from one another are stirred, and objections erected to protect ourselves from disappointment are examined and given permission to be devalued. The entire process is dialogically imaginative, involving several stages: (1) a dawning awareness of conflict (something not fitting), (2) a pause, (3) the finding of a new image, (4) the re-patterning of reality, and (5) interpretation (Lan, 1989:30). We will press this five-stage process into further use later, under para. 8.4 below.

If our senses have been dulled by living in this broken world, the ministry of God is to enliven us and cause us to dream again. The dreaming is not wishful thinking that must, of necessity, be 'killed' quickly by our cynical disqualifications. Like faith, imagination pauses and considers another possibility that is not immediately apparent to the senses. At this point we are integrating imagination into the pastoral motivational mindset and, at the same time, capitalising on the poetic impulse.

Poetry combines words to produce an emotive effect, whereby the objects of the ordinary world, both internal and external, coupled with events, people and experiences, while keeping their usual appearance, are suddenly placed in an indefinable but wonderfully fitting relationship with the modes of our general sensibility (Valéry, in Lodge, 1972:254). Valéry insists that the constituents of our world are musicalised by the poetic process, so that they resonate harmonically with something deep within us. He likens the difference between prose and poetry to the parallels of walking and dancing (1972:260), where walking has a definite aim by contrast with dancing, which also embraces movement, but in a way that enchants, elevates and summons the imaginative. Infusing the language of paradox and analogy (Brooks, in Lodge, 1972:296), poetry transcends the logical and the

expected, bringing unlikely opposites and ridiculous discrepancies into creative tension. It ranges through levels of abstraction (Hayakawa, 1974:153) as it negotiates the transaction between the concrete-superficial and the spiritual-deep.

Pastoral-poetic imagination, then, is the rekindling of possibilities. It is the soul-ful contemplation of what could be, if God in his biblical revelation were to prove true to his word. It sweeps aside the crusty objections of our reasoned unbelief and moves into and within a land of exquisite potential, where Christ is Lord and every knee is bowing. This is no intellectual gaming. It touches the core of our liveliest longings. It awakens the hitherto smacked-down hope that God has seen us and has reached out his hand to us. It moves us out of the shadows and into his smile. It intimates now by the encircling of his arm the end of aching loneliness, and from there the world looks very different indeed. It brings relief from the oppression of hostile questions that have lived within our perspective for so long. The pastoral-poetic imagination reaches far to provide a long view of life lived within the will of a God who is personable and supremely in control of every eventuality. Connecting to that long view and then connecting others to that long view is the twin endeavour of the spiritual antagonist.

This concept of poetic-pastoral imagination shares some characteristics of the pastoral imagination proposed by Foster, Dahill, Golemon and Tolentino (2006), but it does not follow their pattern slavishly. Their research, sponsored by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, investigated teaching practices involved in preparing clergy for the ministry. They believe that one of the key tasks of seminaries is the development of pastoral imagination in seminary students. They explain pastoral imagination as "a distinctive way of seeing and thinking that permeates and shapes clergy practice" (2006:13), and as "an internal gyroscope and a distinctive intelligence" (2006:22), but not an intelligence that is individualistically concentrated in the pastor. Rather it is a 'distributed intelligence' or an 'extended intelligence' invested in the community of faith, in which the pastor shares (2006:29), and which becomes a form of mediation between religious tradition and forces of modernity (2006:191). Pastoral



imagination is an intuitive knowledge (2006:23), embracing cognitive values, skills (forming the congregation, interpreting, contextualising and performing leadership roles) as well as identity.

Clearly poetic-pastoral imagination is indebted to this research, even as it seeks to take a different course, especially away from the mentality of the institutionalised clergy who must operate strictly within denominational boundaries. Working imaginatively and poetically in a pastoral capacity implies a creative discernment of three territories brought together in moments of heightened significance through the imagery of words.

There is the **landscape of mystery**, centred awesomely on the primary reality of the Trinitarian God, who brings into being that which was not. This reality is for the most part hidden and not always known, but it is pursued, nonetheless, with increasing levels of satisfaction and surprise. Vast in comprehension, eternal, limitless, stretching from everlasting to everlasting, this reality contains endless promise that will never be exhausted by human exploration.

There is, also, the finite **sub-reality of fallen humans**, some being restored, some not yet awakened to the prospect of restoration – choosing instead their bounded existence as the defining elements of what is valuable and aspirational – and some for whom the adventure of eternity will probably never be more than an object of contempt.

Finally, there is the **territory of communication**, a bridging instrumentality that evokes knowledge of the other realities, delicately and obliquely. Along with other forms of encounter with things bigger than ourselves, communicative gestures (such as words and symbolic action) break open, bring to life and help to define what is – from the human sub-reality – vaguely perceived and frequently elusive.

What I am suggesting, here, bears relation to the writing of Michael Polanyi (1966) on the subject of the tacit dimension. Starting from a position that we can know more than we

can tell, he investigates the basic structure of tacit knowing. Based on earlier research by Eriksen and Keuthe in 1958 in which a candidate was given an electric shock whenever the person uttered associations to controlled words, Polanyi proposes that humans develop an implied (tacit) understanding of a new entity (Item A) by attending to something else (Item B) that becomes associated with that entity. We indwell Item A by first indwelling Item B. All the while we explore Item B, we find that we have a knowledge of Item A that goes beyond our immediate comprehension and the consequences of which we do not fully grasp at the time, but they are disclosed as we continue to indwell.

If we adapt these insights further, we could say that when we choose to live deeply and reflectively, we are drawn to the hidden reality of God, and what we learn we walk in, or indwell, at the same time that we are drawn to further hidden knowledge of the ways of God. In keeping with an incarnational model of spirituality depicted by Jesus Christ, who himself repeatedly reminded the people, "I tell you the truth....", we walk in truth (Ps 25:5). Yet even as we walk in truth, we are attracted not directly by the truth so much as by the love of God for us (Ps 26:3).

This indirect involvement with reality is a characteristic of the pastoral-poetic imagination in the hands of the spiritual antagonist. Again, like the poet, he enables people to perceive what they see and imagine what they already, conceptually or practically, know (Eastman in Wellek & Warren, 1963:33). In that respect, it would seem to be as the Romantic poet, William Blake, once observed: "What is now proved was once only imagin'd" (Marriage of Heaven and Hell, Plate 8:13, in Keynes, 1972:151). Yet the pastoral-poetic imagination does more, for it offers to the spiritual antagonist a skill, enabling him to sharpen human gaze on the deep mystery of God through the artful juxtapositioning of words.

On two levels, so far, the pastoral-poetic imagination is a powerful instrument of provoking what is good and developmental: (a) The level of informing the pastoral-poetic

perspective for the pastor himself, and (b) The level of engaging the other person, antagonistically.

#### **8.4 A CRAFTER OF 'COMMUNICATIVES'**

The imaginative world beckons the pastor to explore language and communication, and to become proficient in the energy of antagonistic vocabulary and exchange. We are referring, here, primarily to the use of words, without excluding other features of communication, such as body language, silence and pause. Together, we could say that the pastor as spiritual antagonist is a crafter of 'communicatives', rather than merely the crafter of words, as important as words are likely to be in the complete process.

Words have power. They can kill and they can bring life. These things we know from personal experience and also from the Scriptures. Solomon appreciated that "a word aptly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver" (Pr 25:11), or that "the tongue that brings healing is a tree of life, but a deceitful tongue crushes the spirit" (Pr 15:4). James testifies that the Father "chose to give us birth through the word of truth" (Jas 1:18, my emphasis).

The spiritual antagonist understands the power of words, for he is a student of words and an observer of the impact that words can have. Words as signs, in themselves, do not have meaning, but acquire meaning through our agreement as to what they will represent, through the context within which the agreed-upon signs are used and through the order in which the signs are presented (Wilson, 1967:16). He has learned that there are different types of words, some descriptive and evaluative, while others are pointer words (e.g. pronouns, conjunctions and articles) and others are interjections (e.g. Good heavens!) (1967:22). He has discovered that words have denotations, the verifiable object to which the sign-word points, as well as connotations, the non-verifiable concepts and images within the speaker's mind that have more to do with personal, affective associations that have attached themselves to the word (Hayakawa, 1974:52).

If that were all he were to be, he would be no more than a scientific practitioner of language, attempting to define, circumscribe, contain and fix meaning to an unchanging reality. Instead, he realises that there is a second, emotive, use of language that probes the more murky regions of attitude and feeling (Richards, in Lodge, 1972:112). He would, with Richards, be aware of the meanings of language that include sense and feeling, but also tone (attitude to the listener) and intention (conscious or unconscious purpose for communicating) (1972:116).

Since the pastor as spiritual antagonist lives reflectively, he has watched as words (his own and the words of others) have torn down and built up. He has seen words 'snarl' and 'purr' (Hayakawa, 1974:40) as they convey emotion and have impact on the hearer. He has become attuned to the nuances of register, inference, innuendo and sarcasm, slanting, bias and taboo. He has observed the debilitating effect of exaggeration, sentimentality and other distortions of reality, such as overspiritualisation. At the same time, he has harnessed the often dismissed, phatic communicative forms (e.g. How are you? Nice to see you.), that use language as social cement to acknowledge the presence of another person (McMagh, 1981:53).

He has contemplated the 'better' word to have used in order to achieve the precision and accuracy of intention. He crafts his own words and experiments with the appropriate timing and setting to speak them, and he ponders the effect. The spiritual antagonist is not a babbler. Neither is he careless with words. He is economical, deliberate and daring.

Still, the result of such combinations could yield 'flat', lifeless discourse that dutifully logs a certain progress through a subject. In contrast to such an approach to spiritual truth, the spiritual antagonist prefers to work poetically, or theopoetically. In many respects the pastor is like a poet, sensitive to words in all their rich variety and colourful combinations. He is careful to craft his communication with acute awareness to context and spiritual reality. Of the spiritual antagonist it cannot be said that he is removed from the 'real world', isolated in an ivory tower of esoteric redundancy. The spiritual antagonist is

grounded, earthy, but attuned to the expansiveness and the awkwardness of kingdom vision. His words demonstrate such a connectedness, but they unsettle and dislodge the permanence of earth-bound constructs. His words invade. They move in to disturb and awaken; and once they have been spoken, it is so much harder to reassert the same order of earth-boundedness. Like the poet who organises and tightens everyday words, sometimes even doing violence to them in order to compel awareness of, and attention to, deeper realities (Wellek & Warren, 1963:24), the pastor as spiritual antagonist moves swiftly from denotative values to connotative ones, and explores these patiently and persistently. Recalling Valéry's comparison of walking (referential language) and dancing (poetic language) earlier, we could contrast words with which to walk and words with which to dance, as follows:

| <u>WORDS TO WALK WITH</u>                         | <u>WORDS TO DANCE WITH</u>                       |
|---|--|
| <b>They label</b>                                 | <b>They excite</b>                               |
| <b>They pronounce, "That's all! / That's it!"</b> | <b>They ask, "What else?"</b>                    |
| <b>They engender contentment</b>                  | <b>They engender restlessness</b>                |
| <b>They exclude what is irrelevant</b>            | <b>They include what has not been thought of</b> |

Finding words in their theopoetic intensity to hold an exuberance and irresistible vigour, the pastor listens to people carefully, and simultaneously and perpetually searches for the cohering word(s) which fuses referential meaning with biblical correlatives and with aspirational feelings. Cumulatively, the cohering word stimulates hope and translates into action.

In selecting the better word to use, it would seem that we can choose words of differing dimensionality. Lifeless words, or 'small talk', bore us to tears and they conspire to allow us to bypass quality interaction. They are one-dimensional words that ignore other dimensions of being. Better words in the mouth of the pastor as spiritual antagonist are those that are three-dimensional, for they are full of life and they draw us to deeper zones

of reality, because they connect three dimensions of time: past, present and future (see Fig 8/1 below).

A word connects with **past** history in that it recognises the conventions of the English language, as well as the cultural adaptations of the word e.g. the unusual use of the word "late" by the Indian community in South Africa to mean 'dead'. A word also relates immediately to **present** feeling, recognition and validation of the person with whom one is speaking, and a word links to **future** vistas as we use words to set up an expected scenario for ourselves. As the pastor uses the word antagonistically, he sets up an unexpected vista which may create dissonance in the one with whom he is speaking.

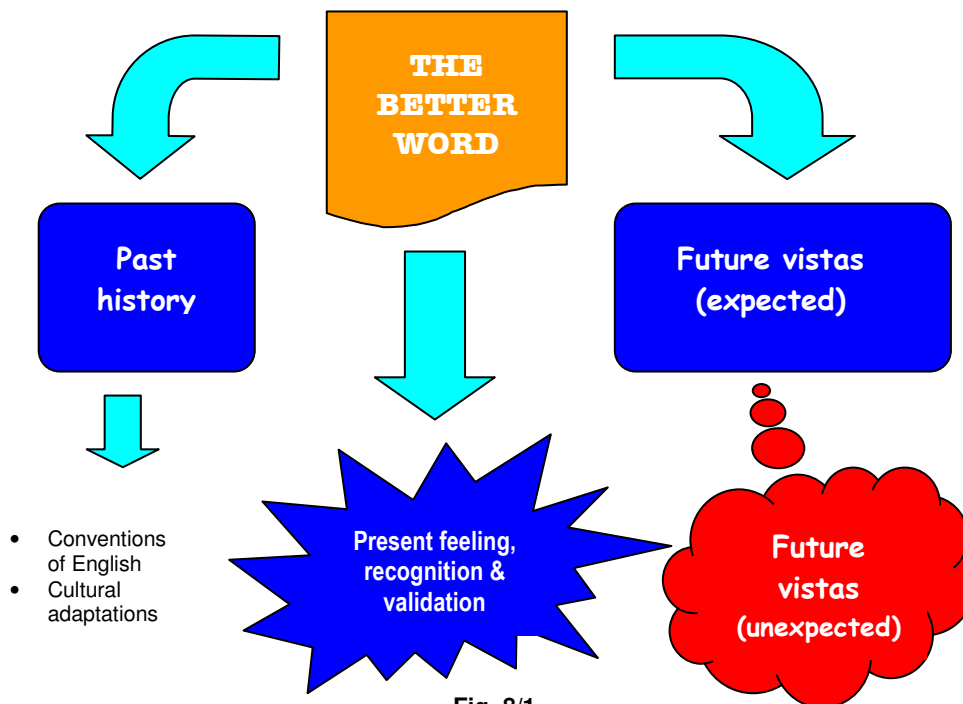


Fig. 8/1  
The Better Word

The search is really one of locating eidetic images that will penetrate to a level of being and take with it unexplored options of meaning that suggest alternative behaviours hitherto unacknowledged, or not given serious thought. Hendrix (1989:422) describes eidetic images as follows:

Eidetic images are those deep seated, vivid, emotionally charged bundles of energy. These eidetic forms are marked by or involve extraordinarily accurate and vivid recall of visual images. These images are formative learning tools which have the power of bringing things together in such a way as to move us to action. The whole direction of a person's growth is

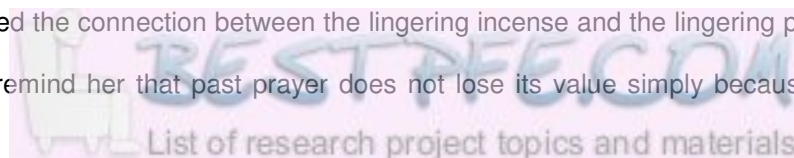
profoundly influenced by these powerful, inner, emotion packed images. In biblical language these images are written on the heart, which is the storehouse of memory.

It must be stressed, here, that the spirit of the enterprise is never manipulative. Always the motive of the heart is to stimulate development and growth that causes us to appreciate the wonder of God-with-us.

An example of the crafting of words would be helpful at this juncture. In a pastoral visit to a young mother whose marriage of fourteen years to an irresponsible but likeable man was fragile at best, I listened to the woman explain the difficulty they were experiencing. I probed the nature of the recent problems in a desire to understand the situation as well as I could under the circumstances. Since I had 'journeyed' with the couple over several years, there were other pieces of information that I safely could introduce from previous engagements with the couple. One of those pieces of information was that I had come to know the wife as a woman of prayer who had interceded for her family with great consistency and dedication. During our conversation, she ranged through her disappointment and frustration with her husband, but also through her obvious love for him and her genuine desire to remain committed to the marriage and the children. Steadily she came to acknowledge the depth of her heartache and its spiritual implications, and at one point she began to question the value of all the years of prayer. The issue was suddenly no longer about her husband as much as it was about the faithfulness of God. Unwilling to take up a simplistic defense of God, I let a moment of silence intersperse our words, as I thought about what she was implying and so that she would register the impact of what she had concluded. Then I turned her attention, informally, to an image from the Book of Revelation where the prayers of the saints rise before God (Rev 8:3-4):

<sup>3</sup> Another angel, who had a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense to offer, with the prayers of all the saints, on the golden altar before the throne. <sup>4</sup> The smoke of the incense, together with the prayers of the saints, went up before God from the angel's hand.

I spoke of a manner in which incense lingers in the air, that it does not disappear quickly, and I emphasised the connection between the lingering incense and the lingering prayers before God to remind her that past prayer does not lose its value simply because – in



time and space – it has passed. She caught hold of this concept, in part because of her Indian background and her familiarity with the burning of incense, and she began to build on the concept, in the direction of continuing to pray for her husband and her family with renewed enthusiasm and purpose. We were able to move to other aspects of her situation with a freedom that convinced me that the image of incense lingering had struck home with liberating effect, having freed her from the oppressiveness of our human time prescriptions.

The example, above, is illustrative of Lan's five-stage imaginative process mentioned under para. 8.3, earlier. The pastoral dialogue stumbled into a **dawning awareness of conflict** between two legitimate spiritual entities (prayer and the faithfulness of God in the midst of delayed answer). Something did not seem to fit comfortably anymore for the young wife. For a moment there was a **pause** for reflection. During that pause, communication continued – not with words, though, but with facial expression, body posture and eye contact. Again, precisely because the communication is comprehensive and thoroughly inclusive of one's whole being, the preference is evident in this thesis for the pastor as a crafter of 'communicatives' rather than merely a crafter of words. It is often these other elements of the communication process that we pastors can neglect in our efforts to concentrate on words. Then, after the pause, there was a **finding of a new image** (the incense-like prayer going up before God), followed by the **re-patterning of reality**, in this case the reality of prayer within the matrix of relationships between wife and God and between wife and husband. The wife was then shifted to a new **interpretation** of her current situation in the light of biblical imagery that allowed her to move forward with renewed commitment.

The imaginative process we are contemplating here is enhanced by reflecting, briefly, on certain aspects of literary theory, in particular phenomenology, hermeneutics, structuralism, reception theory and semiotics (Eagleton, 1983). Some pastors attempt to pinpoint a fixed, objective meaning to the 'textual' components of a person's life, and in that respect would be operating according to a phenomenological approach. Other



pastors try to understand the parts of a person's life in terms of their historical whole, within a 'hermeneutical circle' of significance. This pastoral approach could be referred to as hermeneutical. The structuralist approach also respects the relations of the individual components of a person's life with each other, but looks for meaning in those very relations – or structures – rather than in the individual components. Exponents of reception theory would argue that meaning is to be found not in the text itself or its parts and structures, but rather in the way in which the reader 'receives' the text, or makes sense of the text. In other words, the pastoral emphasis of the reception theory approach would lie with how a person understands his or her predicament, rather than how it might be assessed objectively, or in terms of commonly accepted criteria. Finally, the semiotic approach lays stress on the study of signs, as events, gestures, decisions and preferences become suggestive of deeper meaning.

There is no need to eliminate any of these approaches within the framework of the pastor as spiritual antagonist, for there are moments when it is appropriate for him to lean towards one rather than another in the dialogue. Through all of them, the person's life is considered to be the 'script' which the pastor and the person (the protagonist) will analyse collaboratively, with the pastor exerting antagonistic influence throughout the discussion. Into this discourse comes the analysis of the biblical text, which itself integrates antagonistically with the pastoral dialogue. The pastor will appreciate that the protagonist is needing to make sense of his or her experience, in much the same way as a person will seek understanding during the reading of a book. Adapting the insights into reading from a reception theory perspective, for example, we could describe the process as a dynamic and complex one that unfolds through time:

The reader will bring to the work certain 'pre-understandings', a dim context of beliefs and expectations within which the work's various features will be assessed. As the reading process proceeds, however, these expectations will themselves be modified by what we learn, and the hermeneutical circle – moving from part to whole and back to part – will begin to revolve. Striving to construct a coherent sense from the text, the reader will select and organise its elements into consistent wholes, excluding some and foregrounding others, 'concretizing' certain items in certain ways; he or she will try to hold different perspectives within the work together, or shift from perspective to perspective in order to build up an integrated 'illusion'. What we have learned on page one will fade and become 'foreshortened' in memory, perhaps to be radically qualified by what we learn later. Reading is

not a straightforward linear movement, a merely cumulative affair: our initial speculations generate a frame of reference within which to interpret what comes next, but what comes next may retrospectively transform our original understanding, highlighting some features of it and backgrounding others. As we read on we shed assumptions, revise beliefs, make more and more complex inferences and anticipations; each sentence opens up a horizon which is confirmed, challenged or undermined by the next. We read backwards and forwards simultaneously, predicting and recollecting, perhaps aware of other realisations of the text which our reading has negated. Moreover, all of this complicated activity is carried out on many levels at once, for the text has 'backgrounds' and 'foregrounds', different narrative viewpoints, alternative layers of meaning between which we are constantly moving.... The whole point of reading... is that it brings us into deeper self-consciousness, catalyzes a more critical view of our own identities. It is as though what we have been 'reading', in working our way through a book, is ourselves (Eagleton, 1983:77).

The pastor is sensitive to the flow of meaning that arises from a pastoral discussion, in which words, pauses, sighs, glances and body movement all co-operate to communicate deeper levels of being and possibility.

## **8.5 A USER OF CONFLICT AND ANGER**

### **8.5.1 Towards a theology of conflict**

Whenever we propose to stimulate growth, we are in a sense declaring war on inertia and mediocrity. The inevitable backlash is not hard to predict. Kierkegaard has said that, "In the New Testament, Christianity is the profoundest wound that can be inflicted upon a man, calculated on the most dreadful scale to collide with everything...." (in Forrester, 2000: 69). The proposition of the pastor as spiritual antagonist anticipates that he will disturb and unsettle, as he interacts with his contemporaries. It is vital, therefore, that the inevitability of conflict is taken seriously in the ministry framework.

Yet it should be noted right at the outset of this section that the expectation of conflict is no excuse for rudeness and interpersonal ineptitude. The pastor as spiritual antagonist is not one who will be carelessly brash and abrasive and then justify his social incompetence by claiming the inescapability of conflict. Pastors need to refine their diplomatic skills and ensure that when conflict does appear it is because of people's offence to the Gospel and not their offence to the pastor's rough style, or his coarse personality. Having made that disclaimer, we can prepare ourselves to deal with conflict.

Much has been written about conflict in general and conflict in the church, in particular (e.g. Augsburg, 1992; Haugk, 1988; Miller, 1978; Elmer, 1993; Bossart, 1980; Huttenlocker, 1988; McSwain & Treadwell, 1981; Willimon, 1987; Henderson, 1997; Bell & Jordan, 1992; Leas, 1982; Lawson, 1991; Cava, 1990; Edwards, 1987; Bridge, 1989; Shawchuck, 1983a, 1983b & 1996; Krebs, 1982; Leas & Kittlaus, 1973; Gangel & Canine, 1992; Cosgrove & Hatfield, 1994; Moeller, 1994; Thomas, 1994; Peters, 1997; Rediger, 1997; Shelley, 1997; Berkley, 2007). The intention of this thesis is therefore not to re-enter that well-worn territory, but rather to select a strand of thinking that relates to the pastor's intentional role of capitalising on growth opportunities; hence the sub-heading above, of the pastor as a user of conflict and anger.

Conflict can be approached in different ways, reflected often by the choice of words that are associated with the word 'conflict' in the definitions of the phenomenon. 'Conflict management', for example, presupposes that conflict cannot be avoided but has to be controlled – or managed – in order to limit its destructive potential. 'Conflict resolution' regards the event as being able to be resolved successfully, in order for the individuals or organisation to move forward. In preferring the term 'conflict utilisation', here, this thesis is indicating a particular approach to conflict that seeks to harness whatever value there might be in it, for the sake of a particular purpose, viz. growth and development. Most writers in the field espouse a set of attitudes to conflict that are broadly categorised as negative (conflict is destructive and hurtful)(e.g. Dobson, Leas & Shelley, 1992; Philips, 1991:118; Leas, 1992:54; Goetz & Shelley, 1993:14; Amandus, 1993:26; Shawchuck & Moeller, 1993:43; Bustanoby, 1993:56; Walker, 1993:80), or as positive (conflict is really good for us). Krebs (1982) speaks of conflict as creative, and Bossart (1980) represents the positive attitude that almost borders on naiveté with respect to the destructive potential of conflict. Bossart says, "For a creative solution, we must rid ourselves of the myth that conflict is demonic in the church" (1980:4).

While this thesis will incorporate many useful insights from Bossart, it proposes to adopt a deliberately ambivalent approach to conflict, one that does not wish to be sentimental about the destructive havoc wreaked by conflict, but which also seeks, somewhat

stubbornly, to identify a constructive impulse that is latent to conflict. It does so without minimising the awful power that conflict holds to destroy people and progress.

Unavoidably, pastors as spiritual antagonists must develop, quite consciously, a theology of conflict, as several authors rightly suggest (Patterson, in Shelley, 1997:39; Lewis, 1981:38, 45; Halverstadt, 1991:24; Thomas, 1994:59; Bossart, 1980:95; McSwain & Treadwell, 1981:19). Having such a theology will not spare us from the inescapable anguish that conflict can bring. It might be innovative to conceive of conflict as dynamic and creative, but this ought not to obscure the biblical starting-point that the triune Godhead is presented in the Bible as non-conflicted. The Trinity is not at odds with itself. Christ demonstrated that the execution of the will of the Father was critically important to him (Jn 4:34), and that he was prepared to set aside his own human will for the sake of eternally-conceived salvific plans for humanity (Eph 1:4, Pe 1:20; Lk 22:42). Conflict did not lie with the eternal Godhead; it came about subsequent to creation, subsequent even to the failure of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. The nature of the Edenic relationship was harmonious, open and free, despite the fact that it possessed a human finitude. With the Fall into sin, however, the first couple took up defensive positions against God and each other (Ge 3:10-13) and came to experience varying degrees of trauma associated with conflict. Conflict, therefore, is birthed in sin and it holds the same potential for destructiveness that every other fallen human dynamic possesses. Every effort, now, to utilise conflict in post-lapsarian living does so on the basis of minimising the destructiveness it has, and capitalising, redemptively, on the relatively constructive applications to which sin-birthed conflict can be set until Christ returns to usher in a conflict-free new order.

The pastor as spiritual antagonist, therefore, does not work naively with conflict, as though it were a neutral sociological phenomenon. He respects the power it has to fragment and destroy, but he chooses – in a setting of brokenness – to capture a positive strand and, within careful limits, to steer the restiveness of conflict towards spiritual development. In doing so, the pastor appreciates that in the wisdom of God, conflict was

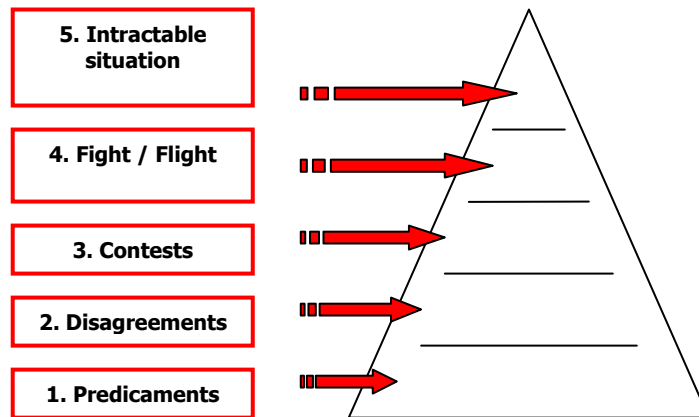
built, deliberately, into the salvation plan focussed on the cross, and it possesses, therefore, a redemptive capability. As Bossart says, "Conflict is as essential to the Christian faith as is the cross" (1980:95.).

### **8.5.2 Demystifying conflict**

The prospect of conflict has been an underlying question throughout our deliberation on the antagonist. In the research with Baptist pastors, in chapter five, it has loomed as a phenomenon that, understandably, has scared some leaders into resisting a praxis-metaphor that attracts the very phenomenon they have tried so hard to evade. Part of the distaste for conflict in ministry has to do with the fact that our particular theology of conflict conditions us to expect a ministry that is largely conflict-free, and when there is an incidence of conflict, it is interpreted as an intrusion upon an otherwise well-managed ministry. Also, we flee from conflict because we believe that conflict has to be accepted as a singular entity when, in fact, it is multi-faceted. If the pastor is to use conflict effectively, he needs to re-position attention on more than just the negative power of conflict. In effect, he needs to demystify conflict so that he does not assume that conflict is one 'package' that he must accept or reject in totality.

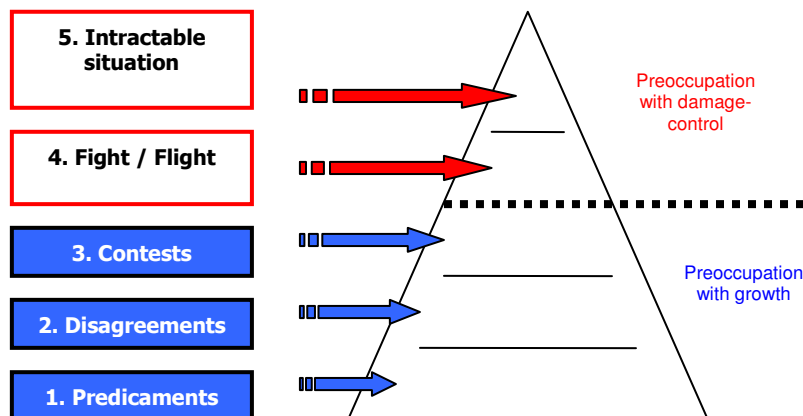
Conflict is not all the same, as can be demonstrated by the differences in definitions provided by several writers (Halverstadt, 1991:4; Thomas, 1994:3, 5; Patterson, in Shelley, 1997:39; Augsburg, 1992:16). It helps to realise that while the clash might be inevitable, the intensity does not have to be all the same. Haugk (1988:33), developing an idea from Speed Leas (in Dobson, Leas & Shelley, 1992:84), has arranged the levels of conflict in escalating order of intensity, ranging from predicaments through to intractable, irresolvable situations (see Fig 8/3 below). The level of intensity is based on the objectives of those concerned and on the amount of distorted thinking. The objectives change from seeking resolution (predicaments), to early self-protection (disagreement), to winning (contests), to hurting (fight / flight), and finally to punishing and destroying (intractable situation).

It needs to be clearly understood that the pastor cannot hope to operate in all levels with the aim of constructive growth. His antagonistic work can function only in the first three



**Fig. 8/3**  
**Intensity of conflict**

levels of intensity (shaded blue in Fig. 8/4 below to represent redeemable conflict), after which the dynamics of conflict compel him to become preoccupied with damage-control, rather than with growth. During the stages of redeemable conflict, he will attempt to understand its source and respond appropriately.



**Fig. 8/4**  
**Territory of the pastor as spiritual antagonist**

### **8.5.3 The spectre of anger**

Many pastors find dealing with conflict exceptionally difficult, even traumatic, because of another part of conflict, the fact that it is such a highly charged emotional territory and the calibre of emotions are almost always negative. It is not only other people's emotions with which the pastor must contend, but also his own. Huttenlocker (1988:18) rightly identifies four negative emotions that are common among those caught up in conflict, viz. anger, guilt, anxiety and frustration. None of these emotions makes us feel good about ourselves and it is understandable that we will do our best to avoid them. Though there are four emotions which could be discussed here, I shall elaborate on anger only, since many of the principles involved can be related to the other emotional states.

Anger holds its own terror. It is an energising emotion that is triggered in response to perceived injustice or threat, which presses us towards action designed to neutralise the threat (Huggett, 1998:130). It is a necessary component of a healthy defence mechanism that nurtures a will to live (Bush, in Riordan, 1985:44) and a defence against threat (McKay, Rogers & McKay, 1989:3, 46, 217; Keller, in Riordan, 1985:89). It is not a 'thing' that lies within us, waiting to explode. It is situational, emerging from a context populated by events and participants (Tyrrell, in Riordan, 1985:68). For all its value, though, pastors struggle to find a place for anger, for at least three reasons: (1) Anger is regarded as bad for one's health, and it certainly does have medical side-effects (McKay et.al., 1989:1); (2) Anger is often mistaken in every case for sin, when not all anger is sinful; (3) Anger is seen as antithetical to the pastoral image of the 'Lord's servant', especially in the light of Paul's words to Timothy (2 Ti 2:24-26). As a result, anger can easily come to be regarded as decidedly negative, and the pastoral potential is relinquished in preference for tranquillity and safety.

### **8.5.4 Using anger**

If we are going to utilise anger within a wider use of conflict, we would need to transform the place of the emotion. It helps to approach anger as a useful diagnostic tool that puts us in touch with deeper, often hidden personal realities. Walters (1981:49) believes that

the cycle of anger starts with outer conditions or events that resonate with internal conditions of guilt, helplessness, unrealistic self-expectations and aimlessness, leaving us with a choice about whether we will get angry or not. Anger invites us to analyse our cognitions (McKay et.al, 1989:81; Evans, in Riordan, 1985:60; Weisinger, 1995:15).

Anger-analysis is crucial to the successful execution of the role of antagonist, for people in pain and brokenness, or people with tenuous belief structures, are likely to hit out at the pastor for disrupting their delicate equilibrium. Another person's anger is intimidating (it is, after all, designed to be) and the pastor is called upon in those moments of heightened emotion to analyse his own anger, at the same time as looking beyond the intimidation of the person's anger, to be able to diagnose the conditions of a person's life. (Weisinger, 1995:74).

Pastors are very often lightning rods for complaint and dissatisfaction (Shelley, 1997:17), as people take out their frustration with God, other people and themselves on the leadership of a church. Yet, conflict destabilises the status quo and raises the awareness of people to evaluate what is going wrong and what would be needed to put things right (Bossart, 1980:38, 117). The purpose of healthy conflict is to restore a sense of proportion that was seen to be out of balance. There are, of course, instances where conflict is motivated by a dark heart of destructiveness that will not rest until the system is dismantled and obliterated, regardless of whether there is anything better with which to replace it. Churches have been slow to appreciate the reality of evil (Haugk, 1988:42) and have downplayed the 'battle behind the battle', where occultic forces attempt to shape the church into an expression of this evil age rather than of the age to come where God reigns (Henderson, 1997:22). Even in those cases of demonic irrationality and never-ending undermining of Gospel gains, a probing of the purpose of such malignant conflict will help to deal with it appropriately.

### **8.5.5 Working bravely with conflict and anger**

We have seen that conflict can be viewed as an obstruction to progress, or it can be viewed more creatively as a doorway into much larger rooms of growth and loyalty-



generation, if more than the unpleasant outburst can be taken into account. At the same time, we have tried not to be sentimental about conflict. It saps energy and if there is no sign of resolution, the momentum becomes counter-productive and divisive. Conflict is about process rather than product, and for people who are product-driven, conflict is disastrous rather than facilitatory.

Conflict is really an act of engagement. Sometimes the only engagement between hardened, hurt people and the Gospel of Jesus Christ will take place conflictually. The pastor as spiritual antagonist will make use of conflict and its loyal servant, criticism, as a means of offering choice, stimulating growth and creating space to manoeuvre. Embracing risk, he uses conflict, in the sense of attempting to work redemptively with a feature of human interaction that usually threatens destruction. He refuses to accept that conflict always ends in misery, and will stubbornly insist that there is long-term benefit to be gained by the engagement. He will take heart from research that demonstrates that tension caused by conflict is a spur to growth and creativity, provided there is hope of a way forward (Lewis, 1981:24), and he will believe, with Nürnberger (2007:242), that "transformation happens in conflictual encounters and discourses."

#### **8.5.6 Working dissonantly**

The antagonistic conversation adopts a methodology that favours a cognitively dissonant style. Cognitive dissonance is a psychological state in which a person holds two or more dissonant items of knowledge (cognitions) at the same time, which generates tension within the person and which then motivates him or her to reduce the tension or eliminate it (Wicklund & Brehm, 1976:1). Cognitive dissonance can be engendered as much by inconsistent behaviour as by inconsistent cognitions (Cooper, 2007:73). Recognising that each person has made decisions that have precipitated certain behaviours, the antagonist will use those behaviours and the dissonance that they evoke. The very instrumentality of reducing the dissonant tension is the same instrumentality that the antagonist can use to intensify dissonance for educational purposes (Wicklund & Brehm, 1976:10):



1. Adding cognitions (e.g. alerting a person to a biblical principle).
2. Increasing the importance of certain cognitions (e.g. linking a perspective to a primary religious commitment).
3. Decreasing the importance of certain cognitions (e.g. categorising a cognition along with an already established disincentive or evil practice).
4. Removing cognitions (e.g. highlighting a biblical principle that sets aside a former anxiety).
5. Exposing the dichotomous and inconsistent behaviours (e.g. exploring the consequences of behaviour so that perceived unities are actually seen to be contradictory and flawed).

Recognising the role played by conflict in promoting growth in the developmental models of Piaget, Erikson and Fowler (Bossart, 1980:168), the pastor will press people (protagonists) toward the challenge of successive stages and their developmental tasks. He will place them in situations where they are extended and he will put before them options that they might not have considered. His method integrates concrete experience with reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation (Kolb, 1984:42). He introduces change into the protagonist's world which extends him at the same time as it causes him to reflect deeply.

The movement of the interaction progresses from divergence to convergence, with conflict marking the threshold between the two that is critical for learning to take shape. Antagonistic interaction can take place in structured, formal teaching situations, but it can just as easily occur informally in conversations in lounges, coffee-shops, taxi ranks and queues.

Traditionally, education has majored on the cognitive dimension of its work. However, more recent initiatives have sought a confluence of rational, logical and informational processing with metaphorical and image processing, so that a balance between cognitive and affective dimensions can be achieved (Bossart, 1980:216). It is in line with this balance that the present thesis has emphasised the theopoetic and narrative features of antagonistic ministry.

#### **8.5.7 Using conflict and anger: A case study**

For all the necessary theoretical underpinning of conflict, the pastor frequently must wade through waves of angry exchanges. With his own anger under control, with a clear sense

of how the protagonists words are enticing him into unhelpful retaliatory encounter, the pastor manages to keep perspective, sufficiently, in order to recognise the developmental potential in words of militancy. An example might prove beneficial here. In a situation of church discipline affecting Kassim Singh, Kassim's friend, Jabu, is aggrieved by the way the church leadership pursued the discipline over a long period of time because Kassim's sin was eventually 'told to the church' in terms of the Matthew 18 framework. In both their cultures, personal sins are to be kept concealed, regardless of whether concealment helps or not, and regardless of how public the matter had become through the parties lobbying support among their friends and acquaintances. It is simply the cultural way not to go public, but rather to 'save face'. The pastor telephones Jabu to check whether he will take part in a church activity (that has nothing to do with the discipline). Jabu replies rather curtly that he will not be there. The pastor, sensing the underlying anger, probes by explaining that Jabu's contribution would be beneficial for the wider congregation. The following conversation ensues:

**JABU:** I've got nothing to say to the congregation.

**PASTOR:** Is that because you feel you are too new to the church, or do you feel unsure about the activity?

**JABU:** I don't want to talk about things in front of the church. There's been enough of that kind of talk already.

*[The pastor feels the criticism which tempts him to retaliate, but he chooses not to. Instead he braves the unspoken topic, because therein lies transformatory choice.]*

**PASTOR:** Are you referring to the issue with Kassim?

**JABU:** Well, that too. Personal stuff should stay personal. It should never be brought before the church like that.

**PASTOR:** I realise that Kassim's situation has raised several issues for a lot of us. Why do you feel so strongly about what's happening to Kassim?

**JABU:** You white people don't understand the first thing about culture. You simply impose your views on other people and expect us all to go, "Yes, baas."

*[The racial implications threaten to anger the pastor who is a white man, because he perceives it to be unfair, but again, the pastor holds his own issues in check for the sake of using the conflict positively.]*

**PASTOR:** (after a slight, deliberate pause) Sho! You sound really angry with a whole lot of people who are not involved in this situation. And it sounds as if you are making out the choice to be one between different cultures, when in fact the issue with Kassim, and also for you, is on another level.

**JABU:** What do you mean?

**PASTOR:** Well, you sound as if you are being forced to choose between your culture and my culture, when the real choice is whether you are prepared to embrace a biblical culture, or stay with the way you have always done things up till now.

**JABU:** What have I done?

**PASTOR:** No, I'm not saying you've done anything wrong. I am simply observing that both you and Kassim come from different cultures that both prefer to keep 'personal stuff personal', as you said a moment ago. But all of a sudden you have been confronted with a different way of handling unrepentant moral mess-ups. And the way it has been handled is following something Jesus said in Matthew 18.

*(The pastor has opportunity to give a brief explanation of the disciplinary process of Matthew 18:15-20, but throughout he is sensitive to the personal issue that can be probed.)*

....

But even though you might be in a better position now to assess Kassim's predicament in the light of Scripture, I guess you still have to face the other matter, not so?

**JABU:** What other matter?

**PASTOR:** The fear you have that the spotlight might turn on you.

At that point the conversation could move to Jabu's personal fears about keeping a healthy spiritual balance in his own life, a pastoral issue about which he has been reluctant to speak until now. Alternatively, Jabu could react angrily once again and seek to terminate the conversation, leaving the pastor with unavoidable feelings of frustration and helplessness. Yet, from the point of view of spiritual antagonism, the pastor accepts that God is able to work far more deeply in Jabu's life. All that the pastor was required to do in the conversation was to name the issues as carefully and as lovingly as he could. Clearly, nothing positive would have been likely if the pastor had responded combatively to the conflict-triggers that were enticing him into defensiveness and retaliation. But with his own anger under control, and with a focus on using the conflict as a point of engagement for positive growth, the pastor succeeded in offering Jabu some data with which to explore his (Jabu's) own issues of spiritual development.

## **8.6 PRESENCE – BEING WITH PEOPLE**

Conflict generally urges us to distance ourselves from the one with whom we are in conflict. By contrast, the role of spiritual antagonist presses us towards people, to seek them out, to draw them – not necessarily smoothly – into the ambit of spiritual encounter with Christ. Fundamental to such engagement is the obvious principle of living close to, or among, the people, not as Cantrell (2005:273) found with respect Limpopo churches that a third of them were being pastored by leaders who were not staying locally but were travelling in to preach on Sundays only. Spiritual antagonism takes up a position of

engaged presence with the protagonist in much the same way as God did in Christ as Emmanuel, "God with us" (Mt 1:23). Emmanuel's role in being with us was to seek and to save that which was lost and scattered, fragmented and broken. Much of Christ's time was spent with those outside the religious establishment, illustrating the fact that Christ elected to labour in situations that were spiritually awkward and untidy. Pastors and members of the Christian church often find it difficult to envisage ongoing contact with people who are difficult and spiritually confused. Hybels and Mittelberg (1994:100) are of the opinion that we have to overcome at least four barriers to building relationships with unbelievers (read, "with those who are spiritually awkward and untidy"):

1. Biblical misunderstandings surrounding the need to 'be separate from the world' (Jas 4:4; 1 Jn 2:15-15; Jn 17:14; 2 Co 6:17).
2. The spiritual danger of perpetual association with people in rebellion against God in that bad company ruins good morals (1 Co 15:33).
3. The risk to our reputation of associating with awkward people.
4. The personal discomfort of enduring their bad language and their activities for which we now have little appetite.

Pastoral ministry that is antagonistic necessitates that we have a presence in the lives of people, that we get close to people, that we allow ourselves to love people who might be very different to the kinds of people we would otherwise have chosen as our friends.

Antagonistic ministry is also present in the ordinary world of people. It is interested in how believers relate their faith to the workplace and how much of a difference they are making where God has placed them. Some pastors are not thinking in these terms. As White (in Banks, 1993:6) says about clergy interest in people coming into the church: "Once these folks have joined, they become interesting to the clergy in terms of the ways they can contribute to the life of the institution. People are needed to help as church officers, Sunday School teachers, building and grounds superintendents, etc. The preacher recognises and thanks those laity who provide service. Discipleship is understood primarily in terms of institutional activity." The pastor as spiritual antagonist, by contrast, will support the building up of the structures of the church for the explicit purpose of strengthening the base of operations into a secular world, but he will also work with less overt dependence on the structures, engaging analogously with the world of unbelief and scepticism (Robinson, 1994:182). Unbelievers and immature modern believers approach

biblical teaching with a frame of reference that might not value Jesus as much as they might value Judas, for example, because Judas knew how to work the system for his own advantage. Certain African people-groups might not sense the biblical approval given to being a lamb, rather than a lion, where strength and forcefulness is more highly prized. In such situations, it might be necessary to find consistent analogies that work in their setting. Robinson cites the case of a welder who built Land Rovers who was struggling to grasp the concept of the church as the body of Christ, but could relate to the church being like the parts of a lathe (1994:183).

The pastor's presence in people's lives will stimulate them to think of their places of work and to ask what are the marks of a faithful Christian \_\_\_\_\_ (executive / businessman / factory worker etc.)? Banks (1993:22) believes that God's own vocational model (God as creative, redemptive, providential, just, compassionate and revelatory) is helpful in probing such a connection between work and our Christian calling.

Because the pastor desires to stimulate people to represent Christ in all of life, he will dismantle key compartmentalisations (e.g. 'religious' vs. 'real world') that have the effect of excluding God from sectors of existence. Then too, he will promote creative discussion that provokes people to recognise the belief system of the secular world and to see opportunity in all of life, not least of all in the workplace which consumes so much of our time each day. By endeavouring to experience the transcendent in the ordinary round of work and play, the pastor will 're-presence' eternal perspectives at events marking rites of passage, social festivals, artistic exhibitions and moments of crisis, and he will do so through offering friendship, using humour and narrative (Robinson, 1994:162).

## **8.7 ENGAGING FROM THE SIDE – HUMBLE AUTHORITY**

Though the pastor is with the people as much as possible in the vicissitudes of life, it is important to note that he is not engaging them from above as in bygone patterns of authority, but rather from the side.

Many years ago, the problem of pastoral authority was noted (Southard, 1969:7). Avis (1992:7) has preferred to sketch the predicament of authority in terms of two opposing trends in Western cultural history: on the one hand, the firm rule, or 'specific authority' of the Roman Catholic model, versus the thirst for freedom; or the 'dispersed authority' of Anglicanism, on the other hand. Anglicanism, he feels, needs to strengthen its authority in order to overcome the authority 'vacuum' inherent in the denomination, whereas Catholicism is required to renounce authority, in order to enter the ecumenical dialogue and liberate theological, liturgical and pastoral potential in churches of the developing world.

Whatever the anguish of authority, it has to be appreciated that built into the very fabric of Christianity is an authoritative weave, expressed in words such as 'surrender', 'obey' and 'submit'. Our relationship with God is founded upon the obedience of faith (Ro 1:5). Church leaders are to be respected (1 The 5:12) and obeyed (Heb 13:17).

Earlier representations of authority emphasised the pastor's immediate religious experience that, like Jesus, was conducted in the power of the Spirit (Lk 14:14) and with mastery over certain elements of reality. Jesus had said, "I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven" (Lk 10:19-20). Paul had pointed to the centrality of the cross in his proclamation about Jesus, and that it had come, not with mere oratory, but with "a demonstration of the Spirit's power" (1 Co 2:1-5).

With the passing of years and the complicated organisation of Christianity, reaching its zenith during the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the pastor became a church authority and the leader of a prominent social institution (Southard, 1969:13). His authority enjoyed social support and respect. Conditions altered as the 20<sup>th</sup> century drew to a close, and pastors found their social authority undermined and challenged by a crisis of belief on the part of society, by a fundamental shift of the church from the centre to the periphery, by

the rise of volunteerism and by the spread of egalitarianism and shared ministry (Carroll, 1991:19). Pastoral authority, therefore, has been forced to find a different basis.

Some religious leaders might have resorted to an authority founded on individualism and infallibility, literalism, illiteracy and anti-intellectualism, as was the case in frontier American Protestantism (Southard, 1969:35), but such is unlikely to be a secure platform for any lasting authority. Denominational traditions made much of diverse emphases along the way. For Baptists, Methodists and Presbyterians a special calling constituted authority. For Catholics the apostolic and sacramental authority was important, while for Lutherans the pastoral office was emphasised (1969:51).

Whatever might be the case in other denominations, among Baptists the pastor's power resides in the strength of relationship, founded on biblical images of respected leadership. His personal commitment to God, his understanding of the Scriptures and his grasp of biblical principle enables him to lead well, all of which help to provide him with an assumed authority arising from his call and ordination. Yet it is only as the pastor proves himself in the informality of individual relationships within the congregation that the congregation accords the pastor full authority to lead. This second phase of authority has been referred to, cleverly, as his 'second ordination' (Carroll, 1991:38).

Although society may have taken up a more anti-authoritarian position in recent years, the argument of this thesis is that authority is unavoidable, even if it is to be refashioned. The apostle Paul described the purpose of his authority as having been given to him by God to build people up and not to tear them down (2 Co 10:8; 13:10). Authority embraces a cluster of associations. It is a *power* that influences people. It is a necessary component of *leadership* and it is exercised in an environment of *respect* for the role and the competence of the one in authority. Its proficiency is related to notions of *correctness* and appropriateness. Its *legitimacy* comes from a higher source (Carroll speaks of the ultimate and penultimate bases of authority – 1991:40) and therefore is delegated at every level of human order.



The pastor as spiritual antagonist finds himself in the unique position of being able to function, having little or no outward forms of authority, but possessing intense inner authority that is granted by the Spirit of God and expressed through human relationships. Those relationships can be symmetrical (non-hierarchical) and yet there can be plenty of room for strength of leadership (Carroll, 1991:94). Antagonistic ministry does not have to be 'wimpish', or so self-effacing that there is no real presence remaining. By the same token, ministry does not have to lapse into old forms of authority that are dictatorial, tyrannical or unduly elevated in status. The authority of the antagonist is easily confused and therefore exercises the pastor surprisingly. As Creon says in Sophocles' play, *Antigone*: "No other touchstone can test the heart of a man, the tempter of his mind and spirit, till he be tried in the practice of authority and rule" (1947:131). Because the pastor is no longer the central character in the system, as the protagonist of a play is seen to be, he can approach people to build them up (not tear them down), he can provoke them to deeper spirituality and he can launch them on a personal quest for the true meaning of life from his antagonist position, 'from the side', as it were.

This is a strategic location, because its indirect engagement makes it well suited in at least four respects. First, it is well suited to the use of stories, an imaginative device that reveals hidden depth. Hyde and Stassen (in Leonard, 1990) have rightly drawn attention to the genius of stories to call forth compassion, to bind events and agents in an intelligible arrangement, to disclose the sacred, to make known hidden selfhood, to transform, to give spiritual identity, to illuminate social setting, to establish spiritual community and to heal (1990:74). Stories invite us in and persuade us to drop our defences. They permit us to contemplate scenarios we would not normally consider, and they make themselves compatible to the similar work of the spiritual antagonist. By so doing, they offer another way of knowing: a process that involves conflict, scanning, imagining, releasing energy in response to the imagination, and interpretation of the imaginative solution. Hyde and Stassen identify in this process "the transformational logic of convictional knowing" (in Leonard, 1990:82). A spiritual awareness emerges that is not

normally available to us through rationalistic, non-narrative means, and Christian formation is enhanced.

Second, it is well suited to the indirect approaches of African and Asian cultures. Elmer (1993:50) writes thus, with respect to conflict situations:

Most people in the world do not place a high value on direct, face-to-face confrontation to solve conflict. Such directness is considered crude, harsh, uncultured and certainly disrespectful if not cruel. Asian cultures possess this attitude most strongly, but African and Latin American cultures also demonstrate this view.

The indirect approach 'saves face' in these cultures where protecting a person's honour is highly prized, without compromising on the need for truth or the need for a direct confrontation in other situations. Resplendent with instance of story-telling to make the subtle point (1993:99), these cultures understand parabolic communication of the kind Jesus employed so skilfully, and they appreciate the 'one-down position' (1993:80) that comes more easily to the spiritual antagonist who is working from the side rather than from the top.

Third, engaging from the side is well suited to preparing for an apologetic and/or evangelistic interchange. Unlike formal engagements, the pastor as spiritual antagonist comes alongside in a friendly, natural, but opportunistic way. Hybels and Mittelberg (1994:53) argue that the maximum impact of evangelism takes place when a Christian allows the authenticity, compassion and sacrifice of his life to combine with getting close to people. In this place, clear communication achieves maximum impact of leading people to a faith commitment to Christ. From the side allows the pastor to relate as a fellow human being, without having to maintain a mask of the expert.

Fourth, engaging from the side is well suited to the time when Christians will be treated with widespread contempt, suspicion and persecution. Jesus had warned (Lk 21:12): "But before all this, they will lay hands on you and persecute you. They will deliver you to synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors, and all on account of my name." Times are set to become increasingly hard for pastors to speak

about Christ in any decisional sense. When that happens, pastors may no longer have the kinds of platforms to speak into people's lives that they have today. If they have undergone the paradigm shift into spiritual antagonist, it will be easier to make the most of every opportunity to impact secular lives with a view to changing people.

Engaging from the side means that the pastor will first make use of curiosity, surprise and difference to pique the interest of the modern mind, before adapting creatively the biblical stances put forward in Paul's depiction of the Scripture. Paul writes to Timothy thus (2 Ti 3:16-17): "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." Without doubt, Paul deems the Bible to be useful for **teaching** (διδασκαλία / didaskalia, setting forth of biblical principle and the ways of God); for **rebuking** (ἐλεγμός, ἔλεγχος / elegchos, strongly resisting and exposing a trend or line of thinking that represents denial, rebellion and self-centredness, and which affects the way life is lived); for **correcting** (ἐπανόρθωσις / epanorthosis, straightening up, or restoring the thinking and behaviour to a correct and true standing, especially after we have mistaken something out of ignorance or lack of awareness), and; for **training in righteousness** (παιδεία ὁ ἐν δικαιοσύνη / paideia ho en dikaiosune, using failure and success to guide towards wise judgement and the appropriate way of living).

In similar fashion, antagonistic ministry utilises this four-fold repertoire of engagement, above. Cloud and Townsend would add a further three uses of the Bible which can be recruited for antagonistic service (2001:198): **Comforting and strengthening** – Ps 119:52 ("I remember your ancient laws, O Lord, and I find comfort in them."); **identifying with fellow believers** who have gone before us, e.g. Moses, David, Paul, Peter; and **resisting Satanic advances** so that we are able to take our stand against the devil's schemes (Eph 6:11-17).

Uncompromisingly full of conviction and principle, the pastor nevertheless adapts the method of engagement – sometimes teaching, sometimes comforting, and sometimes rebuking – so that the protagonist is provoked to new levels of being.



To illustrate the method of engagement that is envisaged by the pastor here, a case study is offered:

*Marc and Lindi, loosely associated with our church, are in the process of divorcing. Through the three-year long estrangement leading up to the decision to divorce, Marc has drawn closer to the church, while Lindi has maintained a mildly hostile stance towards Christianity, the church and pastors. Out of the blue, Lindi telephones the pastor to ask him to help in broaching with Marc the possibility of their handling the divorce through mediation rather than through lawyers. The pastor listens to the reasons and believes that they are sound and worthy of consideration. He agrees to telephone Marc, with whom he has a reasonably good relationship, to discuss the possibility. The conversation ensues:*

**Pastor:** Marc, I received a call from Lindi last night. She spoke to me about the divorce preparations and particularly about the decision to involve lawyers. She was wondering whether there might be merit in exploring mediators, rather than lawyers, to help settle the divorce. What do you think about that, Marc?

**Marc:** I'm surprised that she phoned you and didn't mention a thing to me.

**Pastor:** Well, these kinds of unusual lines of communication happen when breakdown in relationship occurs. The fact is she has come up with an alternative, and I was wondering what you thought about it.

**Marc:** Of course, she would want that. She doesn't want lawyers to be involved!

**Pastor:** Why do you think she doesn't want them involved?

**Marc:** She doesn't want the truth to come out in a court of law. [*Marc goes on to elaborate on the 'truth'.*]

**Pastor:** So it's important to you that the truth is made public, even if you know what the truth is?

**Marc:** Of course. The children need to know what their mother did.

**Pastor:** And you have sufficient trust in the law to bring the truth out in its entirety without bias and bitterness, do you?

**Marc:** Yes, I do. The truth has to be admitted. [*Marc goes on to express his disappointment that the children seem to have been given a false report of the reasons for the divorce. After allowing a certain degree of 'venting', the pastor finds a convenient entry to say...*]

**Pastor:** Marc, it's sounding as if the truth you want must include some punishment for Lindi. I understand you are angry and hurt by the break-up of the marriage; anyone would be. But do you

want her now to pay? [*The pause that follows suggests he is having to rethink his position in mid-step.*]

**Marc:** I... she needs to acknowledge what she has done!

**Pastor:** That's true. And she would probably ask you for the same. I'm not so sure that the kind of peace you seek is going to be found in a court of law. It's the kind of peace that both you and Lindi will only find when hearts are softened and the place of love is touched again. The legal route is hard and unforgiving, Marc. There might be other ways to separate fairly and amicably that do not involve lawyers here. That's why I'd like to help you to explore other routes to deal with this thing, even if you decide in the end still to go ahead with the lawyers.

**Marc:** I am not prepared to make it easy for her, Pastor. And I don't really want to talk much more about it at the moment. In fact I am a little annoyed that you would allow yourself to be manipulated by her.

**Pastor:** That's okay, Marc. Whatever you think of me at the moment, I want you to know that my heart for you is that you are not further crushed by this terrible thing that has happened to both of you. Some of the decisions you make now will make it harder or easier for both of you later. I simply want to walk with you as best I can. I am still committed to helping you find God in these awkward times when your dreams have been shattered.

*[The conversation shifts to other things, both hard and soft, before ending without the agreement necessary to consider the option Lindi had suggested. With Marc's permission, the Pastor telephones Lindi and reports that at this stage Marc is still determined to pursue the legal route. However, the next day, Marc telephones again, and speaks at length about where he is in the whole divorce process and what can be done to pull the thing back from the edge. The engagement from the side had provoked serious thought and it had permitted an exploration of difficult emotional territory. It had challenged the deeper recesses of a man's motivations, and it had done so without closing off communication, as can so often happen when the pastor dictates from above.]*

## 8.8 THE NATURE OF THE CHANGE BEING SOUGHT

Clearly, the pastor as a spiritual antagonist employs a range of tactics to influence and change the lives of the people (protagonists) among whom he ministers. It must be stated quite unambiguously that ministry that does not envisage change in an individual – and through the individual to the group – is not a ministry at all contemplated by the spiritual antagonist. Spiritual antagonism is by its nature change-orientated, and at least 31% of respondents seemed to suggest that this is what they ought to be emphasising (para.6.5).

It proposes that a person moves from one spiritual position to a better one, regardless of whether it feels good, is easy or looks traditional. At the heart of the better spiritual position is a relationship with God that encourages us to press deeper into God's reality, that enables us to relate to God appropriately, that guides us in the way of awe and that cautions us to avoid counterfeit expressions and worthless goals (Leonard, 1990:21, 23). Richards (1987:50) refers to this spirituality as "living a human life in this world in union with God." The development of faith in the relationship with God is crucial, for it is the characteristic that God looks for on the earth (Lk 18:8). Faith, says Steele (1990:102), is three-fold, involving orthodoxy (right belief), orthopraxy (right practice) and orthopathy (right passion / feeling). It is an inner transitioning towards a Christo-centric character and expression, that finds its precedent in the Pauline remark of Galatians 4:19, "that Christ be formed in you."

Dallas Willard (2002:22) describes the change, that is being sought, as spiritual formation: a "Spirit-driven process of forming the inner world of the human self in such a way that it becomes like the inner being of Christ himself." Believing that life is lived from the heart, that executive centre of a human life, Willard anticipates that the change (he calls it spiritual renovation) is "nothing less than an invasion of natural human reality by a supernatural life 'from above' " (2002:19). His 'invasive' approach resonates with antagonist vocabulary within a strategy of creating vision of life in the Kingdom of God, stimulating intention (or choice), and utilising means (Scripture and people) to propel individuals in the direction of deep Christlikeness (2002:85). The process, according to Willard, involves a comprehensive transformation of the mind, the feelings, the will, the body, the social dimension and the soul. The **mind** thoughtfully engages with ideas, images and information offered in the Bible and in the experience of people. Human **feelings**, that otherwise are allowed to range destructively, are changed to those associated with love, joy and peace. The **will** undergoes its own change along a continuum through surrender to abandonment, contentment and participation in the will of God. The **body** is not neglected, for its transformation corresponds to the inner changes that are given tangible expression through the body. The **social dimension** forces us to

deal with our woundedness that has resulted from assault on us, and/or withdrawal from us, and to move from such woundedness to wholeness, to a removal of defensiveness and to genuine love in all our gatherings. The **soul** (the organising, regulatory centre of life) is taken seriously in relation to the law (another organising, regulatory structure) and grace (a different organising, regulatory principle).

Essentially, the spiritual formation is one of aligning every part of our lives to the character and purpose of Christ. Francois Fenelon would speak of God desiring from us a will that is no longer divided (in Foster & Smith, 1991:63). The curse of mediocrity in our generation is surely that we wish to serve God and also ourselves. With Schaeffer (1983:29), the pastor as spiritual antagonist accepts the centrality of death in our transformation, a continual dying to self, a daily taking up our cross, that intensifies the necessity of saying 'no' to all that divides us from our purpose, and saying 'yes' to the will of God in the place where we are. Increasingly, as we mature in genuine relationship with God, we will find our lives giving evidence to a number of qualities: (1) Our lives become Christ-centred in all our thinking and action (Eph 4:15; Php 3:10; Mk 10:42-45); (2) Our lives will increase in understanding and applying the Scriptures and biblical belief (He 5:14 – 6:1); (3) Our lives will be fruitful and will be characterised by actions that demonstrate improvement and growing mastery (Col 1:10; Jn 15:16-17; Eph 4:28; 2 Co 9:10); (4) Our lives will increase in love for others and in grace (1 The 3:12; 2 Pe 3:18); and (5) Our lives steadily will be overcoming temptation (1 Jn 2:14).

Rick Warren (1995:338) has pulled together these thoughts about mature spirituality into a useful scheme. He says that a mature Christian is one with five attributes. First, he/she has **knowledge** of the God of the Bible and knowledge of the Bible. Second, he/she has **perspective**, which is derived from his/her knowledge of the Scriptures. Third, he/she has **conviction** (values, commitments and motivation). Fourth, he/she has **skills** (including Bible study skills, ministry skills, witnessing skills, relational skills, time-management skills and so on). Fifth, he/she has **character** – the character of Christ which can be seen in that the person has love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Gal 5:22).

Assisting us towards spiritual formation is truth. It is "one of God's essential tools for growing us up" (Cloud & Townsend, 2001:318) and it is one of the resources in the repertoire of the antagonist. Truth is not always received sweetly, for it frequently upsets our carefully negotiated compromises with our world. Truth finds its precedent in God himself who is described as the God of truth (Ps 31:5) and as "the Way, the Truth, and the Life" (Jn 14:6). The Holy Spirit, also, is known as the truth (1 Jn 5:6). Taking his cue from God's precedent, the pastor as spiritual antagonist constantly endeavours to apprehend truth and to apply it in his own life (Ps 51:6), at the same time as he seeks to apply truth consistent with the nature and purpose of the God of truth wherever he has a teachable moment with people along the way.

## **8.9 A MINISTRY ETHOS AND A SPECIFIC ROLE**

The nature of the change that is being sought by the ministry of the spiritual antagonist can seem a daunting one. As one pastor commented during the course of the research: "No training is possible for this role." To some extent he is right. We are not positing a formula for quick fixes to ministerial perplexities in a modern age. We are not reducing humans to mechanistic components that can be manipulated in a dispassionate way for maximum effect. We are laying hold of a way of living, pastorally, that intersects the lives of others all the time, in every setting, notwithstanding circumstances, or cultural barriers. We are postulating a ministry ethos that emerges from a unique identity as a follower of Jesus in these days. Much like the Deuteronomic injunction (Dt 6:4-9), so too the effect of the spiritual antagonist is mediated through every encounter and presence that occupies time and space for us. It is who we become; it is in our bones and in our breath, in our eyes and in our touch. We are spiritual antagonists through and through. Our governing metaphor for pastoral identity is one of spiritual antagonism, as previously defined in this thesis.



Yet it is also a specific role that we fulfil within the system of the church, where we are looked upon to take a position before people that will do something with them, to them and for them. It will take shape within core roles, even of a traditional nature, for it will infuse them with new vitality and vigour. When we shepherd, we will lovingly confront people with their humanity undergoing transformation, pressing people to consider what they might not want to face. When we preach and teach, we will not merely exchange information, but we will challenge and provoke. When we lead, we will stir people to wonder about what is possible. When we administrate, we will introduce the awareness of the Kingdom where things are done differently to many of the world's patterns. When we celebrate, as priests do, we will disturb the trite ritualism of religion to make way for the invasion of the eternal. When we evangelise, we will deliberately corrode the edifices of rebellion and selfish pride. When we act as community figures, we will not be politicians, social workers or aid workers, but we will usher in a restlessness with this world's solutions.

The pastor as spiritual antagonist can work within structures and outside of structures. He is just as effective inside the church as he is in a society that might have waning regard for the things of heaven. He focuses on substance, not structure, and he does not need the demarcation of church versus world, or the authority structures of traditional ecclesiology to be secure. His is indeed a strangely different voice, and the ministry he carries out is indeed a strangely different performance.

# **CHAPTER NINE**

## **MAKING A VOICE HEARD – IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE MINISTRY**

### **9.1 TOWARDS AN OPERATIONAL THEORY**

To enjoy a complex dramatic production for one night makes use of resources for a limited moment. To make provision for further dramas to capitalise on skilful performances ensures that the benefit is multiplied. If we have delineated a unique profile for pastoral action, then it is necessary that we begin to operationalise the theory in the direction of a new praxis.

After preparing the stage, in chapter one, for our quest to understand the current praxis of Baptist pastoral ministry in a South African setting, we considered, in chapter two, the socio-political, and in chapter three the religious, contexts that are compelling pastors to adopt a revised approach to ministry. We took cognisance, in chapter four, of the persuasive expectations arising from a particular biblical standpoint and from the wider church. We went on, in chapter five, to measure the persuasive expectations emerging from the media and from personal experience of actual pastors. Both chapters four and five helped us to understand how the core roles have been identified and changed in response to an altering world. We then, in chapter six, compared the core roles with the self-perception of South African Baptist pastors, and tested the proposed praxis-metaphor empirically. Along the way, it was pointed out that pastors lacked a pastoral centre, and this realisation opened the way for us to approach the new role of the pastor as spiritual antagonist in chapter seven and then to examine the deeper dynamics of that new role in chapter eight.

In practical-theological terms, we have been acknowledging – using Zerfass' amended model – that our praxis as Baptists is likely to be inadequate for the challenges that have emerged from the context of ministry. After clarifying meta-theoretical predispositions, we

have submitted the discontent to deliberate research by examining the context of ministry more closely. We have taken into account the historical factors (the socio-political context), the religious factors (the religious context), and the scriptural tradition, before ranging out to include the perspectives derived from church tradition (the wider church). We have come closer to the modern era by scrutinising some social factors (media persuasions and own experience) The deliberate research has concluded with empirical situational analysis of a sample of Baptist pastors who have revealed their experience of Baptist ministry. This has led us to a practical-theological theory that has explored an alternative, dramatic, vision of the pastor as spiritual antagonist, a vision that has been cast in terms of a governing metaphor, or a pastoral centre. Now we are in a position to engage the principles of the theory in a brief moment of operational theorising. The term 'operational theorising' is preferred to 'operational theory', to indicate that the approach of this concluding chapter will be tentative, rather than exhaustive. Nevertheless, it will reveal the direction of our practical-theological thinking that is pointing us to a new praxis (praxis 2 of the amended Zerfass model).

Consequently, if we propel the insights of the previous chapters (the practical-theological theory of chapters seven and eight) towards an operational theory, we could depict the new pastor as one with an antagonistic heart and employing antagonistic strategies, with several outcomes.

## **9.2 WITH A NEW IDENTITY – AN ANTAGONISTIC HEART**

To speak of an antagonistic heart is to suggest that we have been formed most profoundly by a dominant metaphor that has changed the way we look at the world and the way we present our ecclesiology. Just as a man or woman undergoes a radical transformation at the core of their being in coming to faith in Jesus Christ (being 'born again' – Jn 3:1-21), so the pastor undergoes a change of heart from being a pastor of traditional standing to a spiritual antagonist. To be effective in this role, he must be utterly convinced that Jesus, his Lord, modelled antagonistic ministry in his context, disturbing

Jewish opinion in Pharisee and Zealot alike, and surprising Gentile reticence that the kingdom of heaven was near.

The heart of the antagonistic pastor beats more emphatically than the way most Baptist pastors in the research tended to conceptualise it. Being antagonistic and challenging in preaching and teaching might be the most common expectation of South African Baptist pastors in fulfilling the role, but the metaphor presented here in this thesis is intended to penetrate all areas of the pastor's interactions with his world. Even in casual conversation around the dinner table, or recovering on the sidelines of a soccer game, the pastor is naturally attentive to lives near him in their varying capacities of desire for God, or of avoidance of God. Unlike a pastor who 'clocks in' to a formal role when he is in the office, the pastor as spiritual antagonist operates forever in that role, since it is a part of who he has become. Spiritual antagonism is a state of being, as it were, that looks for spiritual advance in every conversation and friendship, in the home, workplace, sports field and hospital bed. Such an orientation towards the world testifies to a new identity that the pastor has embraced, one that is respectful of past and present traditions, but radical in its revision of self-understanding so that the pastor can infiltrate his world much like the biblical images of salt and light might have intended.

### **9.3 WITH A NEW IDENTITY – ANTAGONISTIC STRATEGIES**

To assist the pastor in the expression of his antagonistic heart, certain strategies suggest practical advantage.

#### **9.3.1 Being with people (presence)**

Clearly the pastor needs to be with people. As a people-person, he will seek out people and will delight to be around people, both because he enjoys his fellow human beings and because he knows that in the incessant interrelation of humanity there will be opportunity for heaven to invade earthly existence. Pastors who prefer to retire from people will not manage to transition from traditional pastoring to spiritual antagonistic

pastoring. Spiritual antagonists, by contrast, will choose to be with people and among people, ever vigilant for the intersections in the traffic of human discourse where God's omnipresence can be made real to distracted hearts.

### **9.3.2 Dialoguing reflectively with another person**

Encountering people for the most part, pastors will not give way to preaching at people, but will aim to dialogue reflectively with others. It is a respectful mode of engagement that esteems another's opinion sufficiently to let it stand in the space of legitimacy, rather than attempting to 'bash' it into subjection.

Traditional pastors may find this stance uncomfortable, for it refuses to demand from people an acquiescence to pastoral superiority or to churchly ways. Instead it expects to relate to people as equals in a common theological enquiry that is patently human, and it admits the possibility that the pastor himself might be the one who learns a surprising amount from the dialogue. At a very basic level, the pastor here must acquire the skill of holding back from pronouncing on each and every topic just because he is the pastor. He will think with his contemporary, rather than lapse into verbal contest. He will trust that God is perfectly capable of letting people express doubt, scepticism and even philosophical unbelief, without compromising biblical truth.

### **9.3.3 Dialoguing apologetically**

Coming at people from the side, rather than from above, the pastor attempts to enter the presuppositional world of the other person to pre-evangelise in two ways: countering the objections to the Christian faith, and setting out the attractiveness of the faith (McGrath, 1998:3). Of special importance in the dialogue is likely to be the counteraction of the challenges to the credibility of the Bible (Collins & Oller, 2000: page unknown).

Baptist pastors who desire to embrace spiritual antagonism will need to prepare themselves apologetically to take on the kind of objections that are emerging in a modern world. We cannot afford to remain insulated from the questioning and intellectual



obstacles of our generation, who are searching for meaning in quarters we pastors may no longer be recognising.

#### **9.3.4 Not threatened by conflict and able to handle anger**

The apologetic dialogue will not always take place in congenial settings. In fact, Mohler (2001:21, 23) anticipates that a Christian apologetic begins in a provoked spirit and is directed to a spiritual hunger. It may be that people who are being pressed to account for their belief structure may lash out defensively. We have examined the environment of conflict earlier within which pastors must now function. Embracing the role of spiritual antagonist will necessitate a thorough confrontation with the reality and impact of conflict and anger. Pastors will benefit from an honest assessment of how they will cope with conflict and anger, as well as how they can safely and responsibly use conflict to provoke people to greater spiritual heights.

Anger has already been noted as a feature of pastoral work. Anger in others is one thing; anger in oneself, which is incited by the actions and reactions of other people, is another thing altogether, and it can prove extremely difficult for pastors to handle. Yet if pastors are intending to embrace the role of spiritual antagonist, they will need to understand conflict and anger as much as possible throughout their ministry, and consider it to be a normal feature of ministry, rather than an abnormality. To some extent, these are going to be days where gains for the Kingdom of God are not going to come about smoothly and without struggle. Hearts are hardening and cold hearts are not willing to accept what God's will might be. Jesus himself said (Mt 24:10-14):

<sup>10</sup> At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, <sup>11</sup> and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. <sup>12</sup> Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, <sup>13</sup> but he who stands firm to the end will be saved. <sup>14</sup> And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

The pastor as spiritual antagonist will be among those who will preach the Gospel of the Kingdom in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, provided he is not daunted by conflict and anger.

### **9.3.5 Imaginative ministry**

Spiritual antagonism relies on the astute use of words, as we have seen already in the previous chapter. An entire dimension of the word at work comes into its own as pastors experiment and assess the power of words and other facets that comprise the communicatives described earlier (para. 8.4). They will utilise words creatively and excitingly in their presentation of Scripture, as well as other forms of communication that supplement the transmission and comprehension of the message of Christ.

Pastors as spiritual antagonists become people who read widely, not just theology but poetry, prose, drama and non-fiction. Without nagging feelings of guilt that they are taking precious time away from ministry, pastors will pursue works that broaden the mind and imagination, and which help to shape the sensitivities of an imaginative pastoral presence. Pastors will need to read newspapers, watch the news on television, listen to talk-shows while driving in the car, for example; and then balance them with meditative pieces that issue from the reflective deliberations of Scripture, of Christian thinkers and artists who themselves are attempting to process the data of this world and the next.

### **9.3.6 Coming back to the awe of God**

Whatever is attempted in ministry of this nature is intended to bring the pastor and people into ever deepening levels of appreciation of the awe of God. The effect of our work leads us to respect God more, humble ourselves before God more, and long for his righteousness to take root in every relationship possible. Where ministry does not engender such a worshipful and holy stance, it is likely that we have missed the heart of the enterprise of spiritual antagonism and become enamoured with organisational functionalism, rather than personal devotion to an amazingly impressive and provocative God.

#### 9.4 A CHANGING IDENTITY

Pastoring has been revisioned in this thesis. To conceive of the pastor as a spiritual antagonist is to recognise that the pastor has undergone – or must still undergo – a **transformation of identity**. Without denigrating the value of inward integrity, he has relinquished a reliance upon a collection of certain virtues for a secure identity, as traditional pastoring often anticipates. Equally significant is the letting go of the accumulation of an ever-increasing number of skills that pastors are frequently taught to gather to their repertoire of competence for them to feel they have a pastoral identity. The emphasis on these two traditional proficiencies has been exchanged, here in the approach of this thesis, for a governing perspective that reorganises every attribute and aspiration that the pastor prefers to embrace. The superintending point of view derives from the metaphor of the spiritual antagonist who recruits every circumstance and ability, in order to provoke and stimulate faith in another person (the protagonist). With every movement and intention, the pastor is positioned in relation to people to incite radical appreciation for God and awe-filled, brave and sustained trust in Him. In a sense, to be a pastor in this changed identity is not work; it is a way of life.

#### 9.5 A CHANGING ECCLESIOLOGY

Pastoring in the mode of spiritual antagonism does not only alter identity. It also sets up a conversation with current Baptist ecclesiology. It acknowledges (with the Statement of Baptist Principles in *The South African Baptist Handbook 2006-2007*: 377) that the church is, at its heart, a gathering of regenerate followers of Jesus Christ in all times and ages, both in heaven and on earth (Strong, 1907:887). Its identity does not lie in any external organisation, but in the '*communio sanctorum*', the communion of the saints, or the community of those who believe and are sanctified in Christ and are joined to him as the head of the church (Berkhof, 1958: 564), with the foundation of the Gospel, or the teaching of the apostles and the prophets, firmly in place (Erikson, 1985:1060; Calvin, 1960:1046).



Nevertheless, in this thesis, the use of the term 'church' has focussed more on the church on earth (the church militant), in its local manifestation, rather than the church in heaven (the church triumphant). The local church, then, carries out various functions of evangelism, edification, worship and social concern (Erikson, 1985:1051) and thereby demonstrates a particular character defined by its tasks. That character will be holy, unified, open to all, in submission to the rule of the apostolic Scriptures and committed to missions (Milne, 1982:220).

Spiritual antagonism builds on this doctrine of the church, but it places more emphasis on the attitude with which the church performs those functions (Erikson, 1985:1067) and it further scrutinises those actions. The underlying desire is to stimulate, or provoke people to face the proper relation of their humanity to the character and mission of God. In this feature, spiritual antagonism shares certain similarities with what Karl Barth (1963:41) expected of theology, when he said that "the task theology has to fulfil is continually to stimulate and lead them [the community] to face squarely the question of the proper relation of their human speech to the Word of God."

Spiritual antagonism further acknowledges the priesthood of all believers in that any follower of Jesus will share with Christ in his reconciling work: interceding, worshipping, serving and bearing witness (*South African Baptist Handbook 2006-2007*: 377). However, it takes this principle in a different direction. While this thesis has described the pastor as spiritual antagonist ostensibly from the point of view of the ordained pastor, it must not be misconstrued to mean that only the ordained clergy is capable of fulfilling such a role. George Spink (1971:7) asks the question, "Who is a minister (read 'pastor')?" He acknowledges that it would be answered in many churches (Baptist included) as "anyone who is trained and authorized to carry out the spiritual functions of a church, conduct worship, administer sacraments, preach and pastor a local congregation." While the explanation might be basically Christian and can be traced to the Early Church, he realises that the limitation of ministry to the ordained clergy misses the wider concept set forth in the New Testament. With the Protestant Reformation, ministry began to be

returned to the people of God, but by the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, lay involvement had once again been restricted by a professional ordination. Where the ordained personnel have assumed all of the functions of ministry, two defects have been introduced into the church, which this thesis has attempted to reverse: (1) The activity of the laity has been paralysed; (2) The laity that are permitted to be involved are relegated to lower-order functions (Spink, 1971:9).

The issue of how the laity is to be involved in relation to ordained personnel is a matter that must be faced, and it is here that the metaphor of the current thesis is of assistance to us. *The advantage of this praxis-metaphor is precisely that it bridges the gap between ordained pastors and lay pastors in one consistent model.* It may be that newly retrained, ordained men will need to lead into this new paradigm, but the expectation is that non-ordained men and women will be able to function in the mode of the antagonist in a way that does not denigrate the unique contribution that ordained persons make, or that male eldership makes. It anticipates more rigorously than Baptist praxis usually does that all kinds of Christian people will interact with their context antagonistically. The laity will be empowered to be 'priestly' in the role of stimulating faith and simultaneously undermining the structures of unbelief. Yet the laity will be so empowered precisely because there are pastors (or better, elders) – some of whom are ordained – who are modelling the qualities and responses of spiritual antagonism, which spur people on to express their own special forms of the role where God has placed them in society. Spiritual antagonism does not undermine godly pastoral authority and leadership, for it will still challenge, encourage and equip the laity to be the people of God in their circumstances; but the metaphor broadens pastoral action from the structural supports that derive from 'office' and shifts the attention to the character (heart) of the person and the interactivity (strategies) of that person with the surrounding context, under a governing perspective. Fellow Christians can now see their way clear to engaging with a secular, informed and politicised world as spiritual antagonists, because they can observe pastors in their midst who are modelling such a courageous role in the church and in society.

## 9.6 HANDLING THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

Of course, this kind of pastoring will necessitate a revision of theological education. In chapter six (para. 6.5), the pastors who were surveyed indicated what would need to be a priority if the preparation for the role of spiritual antagonism were to be taken seriously in their training. The current training model was seen to be only partially successful in orientating pastors to the role of spiritual antagonism. Most seemed to indicate that the following would be valuable: (1) Mentoring, or on-site training; (2) Thorough grounding in the Scriptures; (3) Personality and spiritual-giftedness profiling; (4) Relational, rather than informational training; (5) Practical courses to help them master conflict, leadership, church discipline and inter-personal competence.

This thesis is not intending to offer curriculum adjustments, or educational specifics. That can be done later. What is suggested through this thesis is that the preparation of pastors for new-generation pastoring is not going to succeed using models of yesteryear. Pastors in the survey noted the trend in past and current Baptist training in South Africa towards the role of the pastor as CEO, or manager, but this model will have to give way to a more overt selection and shaping of the person for the role. They spoke of **mentoring** (cited in the previous paragraph) as the first educational necessity for improved training. Mentoring, alone, will not ensure that proper preparation will ensue. It will need to be mentoring *by pastors who are proving to be adopting a clear antagonistic style and who will mentor intentionally in that mode*. **Biblical instruction** was also cited above, but this will need to be approached from the standpoint of assisting the pastoral candidates to bring the Scriptures into relation to people who are to be provoked. **Personality profiling** (also cited above) will need to be recruited to pinpoint those resident traits that could prove to be destructive if left unchecked within the new role. Such traits could be exploited tragically by the prevalence of anger and conflict that this thesis has already discussed as a norm for antagonistic ministry. Clearly it would be counterproductive to let loose on a congregation a person who is managing his life by means of denial and then giving him the permission to be perversely antagonistic. It would be more constructive if the pastoral training included time spent on a structured analysis of where the personalities of pastoral candidates aided or impeded ministry. To discount personality

profiling as simply a way of 'stifling the Holy Spirit' does not take into account the way we can benefit from modern instruments that can at least alert us to potential pitfalls in character and background, that could severely jeopardise pastoral effectiveness. The fourth educational necessity the pastors acknowledged was **relational training** rather than informational training. Of course there will need to be plenty of information exchanged during theological training, but the emphasis in the assessment of value will be that information that can be applied relationally to greater benefit. If information does not lead to changed eyes, ears, tongue, hands and feet, then its value is less consequential for pastoral training than other information that can accomplish such transformation. **Practical courses** in strategic competencies (a fifth necessity cited above) will be modified accordingly, therefore, to equip the pastors contextually so that they can provoke faith throughout their ministry.

To intimate that courses will need to be modified, as indicated above, does not imply that pastors will have to be trained in a narrow or obsessive manner. Certainly theological training, if it is to develop into the antagonistic mode, will undergo its own revolution, for it has settled into a pattern of performance and assessment that does not readily support spiritual antagonism – and that will surely have to change. Yet, as Foster, Dahill, Goleman and Tolentino (2006:231) point out, theological training can benefit, critically, from several **legacies**. Mainline Protestant seminaries have sought to "balance intellect and piety by stressing the pedagogies of interpretation and performance." Pastors would ideally be people whose biblical studies would be directed to oratory skills and professional roles, while piety would be left to instances of corporate worship. Fundamentalist-evangelical seminaries have emphasised biblical piety and missions through pedagogies of formation and performance. African-American seminaries have stressed social upliftment and leadership through pedagogies of contextualisation and formation. Pastors would be people with strong ties to race and cultural emancipation. Catholic seminaries have combined monastic rigor and liberal arts through pedagogies of formation and interpretation, whereby priests become 'gentleman scholars'. Increasingly the seminary has contended with the university in the production of graduates, often

making adjustments to the curriculum, to standards and structures and in collaborating more with the university in order to raise the profile of the seminarian in the eyes of the general public. Theological training that is to nurture pastoral antagonism will need to be deliberately, but critically, eclectic so that the richness of diversity can be filtered through biblical scrutiny and theological consistency.

Furthermore, say Foster et.al. (2006), seminaries over the years have come under pressure to address **social issues** such as the professional competence of the clergy, feminist perspectives and global themes of poverty, racism, oppression and liberation theology. These issues, too, will find worthy space within antagonistic theological training, but they will be subjected to fierce critique and assessment to strip them of their 'fad' status and preserve biblical balance in a real world where men and women struggle to discern the will and purpose of God.

Spirituality has always been an important component of seminary education, but the kind of **spirituality** that has been cultivated in traditional seminaries has become affected by other religious approaches (e.g. Hinduism and Buddhism)(Foster et.al., 2006:249ff.). Seminaries have usually cultivated spirituality through community worship, through small groups, through individual guidance or mentoring, and through some kind of holistic programme favouring human maturity (2006:275), yet for all the advantage of such strategies, something has been lost that ought to cause pastors to identify themselves consistently with respect to the awe of God.

Baptist training in South Africa could be accounted for quite easily in terms of the above discussion of legacies, social issues and spirituality. Moreover, from what the pastors in the survey revealed, there appears to be a trend in current Baptist training towards professionalism and academic respectability (the academy model), *rather than the formation of spirituality*. Training pastors to be spiritual antagonists will never sit comfortably with the academy model, for antagonism relates better to the formation of an identity, the fashioning of a ministry ethos and the shaping of an imagination that will

exert consistent force on all activities which the pastor must carry out. Theological education in the antagonistic mode will gravitate towards moulding a person to be an elder or a pastor, and to do the work of pastoring with a special and unique frame of reference – stimulating and provoking faith.

To what extent the future of ministry in a secularised society in South Africa will require academically proficient pastors (rather than antagonistic pastors) is debatable. As social cynicism rises with respect to qualifications that promote status rather than actual competence to change people's lives, so pastors under the academy model are going to feel less inclined to pursue degrees and prestigious titles, in favour rather of becoming empowered to disciple people in Christian character and courage. At that point the metaphor of the spiritual antagonist truly might come into its own in the formation of future Baptist pastors in South Africa.

## **9.7 GAINING ADVANTAGE FROM METAPHOR**

Throughout this thesis, we have recruited the power of metaphor in our attempt to explain, understand and extend. Other Christian writers have done the same. Hawkins (2004:29), a Christian Bible teacher, has demonstrated how the veil worn by Islamic women can be understood as a metaphor for deeper issues of respect, virtue and modesty, as well as those of social and political statement. Jones (2004:177) has taken the theme of exile in Jeremiah as a metaphor for contemporary congregations to rediscover faithful ministry. Paul Rainbow (1996:209) has cast the millennium as a metaphor of encouragement within John's apocalyptic vision. By so doing, these writers have exhibited the remarkable ability of metaphor to transcend what C.S. Lewis (in Macky, 1981:243) calls the 'observables' (observable realities open to the five senses), and enter the realm of the 'supersensibles' (realities such as love, meaning and value that defy direct observation, but can be detected by their effect).

By positioning the pastor in metaphorical relation to the antagonist of drama, the thesis has sought to display a new understanding of the pastor with respect to:

1. Expectations and tasks of the pastoral role

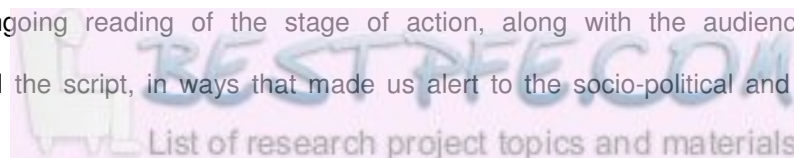
2. Fellow believers whom he is called to stimulate towards maturity
3. Fellow believers alongside whom he is called to minister
4. Baptist ecclesiological perspectives
5. Secular, globalised society in which he is called to function

A range of imaginative possibility has been suggested by the use of metaphor, from which advantage can accrue for Baptist ministry. Yet one of them deserves special mention in these closing stages of the present work. It was said in chapter seven (para. 7.1) that metaphor possesses the extraordinary ability to renew commitment. The truth of this assertion lies in the invitation that the metaphor of the spiritual antagonist holds out to all of us pastors. It draws us to rededicate ourselves to a life-endeavour that does not promise glory before its time, but it promises that we will more likely walk a path of creative, constructive and Christ-honouring interactivity with people for whom Christ died and rose again. For all the struggle implicit in the awkwardness of spiritual antagonism, the metaphor rejuvenates our determination to give our lives for the sake of something bigger than ourselves. We learn to expend ourselves and to do it more willingly and with greater dignity and intelligence. The metaphor has done its work.

## 9.8 A PRACTICAL-THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

This thesis has been an exercise in practical theology. In the first chapter, practical theology was defined as *a contextual hermeneutic of discontent that must make transformational sense of the growing awareness of the awkward presence of God in Christ by his Holy Spirit; and the growing awarenesses of human theological-communicative actions*. As we reflect on the progress of the thesis so far (and it is not finished, even at the end), we realise that a number of the components of the definition have been addressed along the way.

In its **contextual hermeneutic**, the definition of practical theology prepared us for a careful and ongoing reading of the stage of action, along with the audience, the protagonist and the script, in ways that made us alert to the socio-political and global



setting, the people among whom we act, the individual before us in a given ministry setting, and the Word of God that always inspires our interaction with living communicatives. Its **hermeneutic of discontent** unsettled us, even as we found a better way forward. The metaphorical proposal of spiritual antagonist remains to be re-critiqued and reformed by later reflection on praxis and pastoral effectiveness. Its desire to make **transformational sense** committed us to account for the dialectical encounter of God and humans in terms of change and growth, and to turn the pastor's actions to the task of a similar transformational presence among people. We were orientated by its **awareness of the awkward presence of God** in Christ by his Holy Spirit to expect that God would never be tamed by our conventions and he would always surprise and disturb. The pastor, in turn, has been invited to embrace a similar stimulatory role in human relationships. Finally, the definition of practical theology has attuned us to the necessary sensitivity we can have to all kinds of communicatives that enliven and 'significate' our human exchange (**human theological-communicative actions**). The realm of the imaginative and the theo-poetic has become more accessible to us as a legitimate means of communicating and providing meaning. We are permitted to become students of communicatives, and their significance, as we probe a mystery and as we unashamedly face the mystery of God-with-us.

This thesis opened with a reflection on the example of Jesus in relation to Baptist pastors. The question was posed: Would Baptists really consider Jesus to be a good pastor? We are now in a better position to answer that question. If we Baptist pastors are wanting to hold to our traditional perceptions of pastoring, then the example of Jesus will seem to be a remote icon, and one that we would probably have to marginalise. But if we move more and more into the mode of the spiritual antagonist – having compassion on people, at the same time as challenging them, and doing so in formal readings of the Scriptures as well as along the road out of Johannesburg, or at dinner tables with sceptics and fanatics – then we might find that the ministry of Jesus is a little closer to our modern ministry reality. We might be surprised to discover that we can minister more like Jesus, even if the prospect of meaningful ministry might also contain a cross.



## 9.9 WALKING AWAY - HANDLING FAILURE

Anyone proposing a new or amended model of ministry is frequently mistaken to mean that if this proposal is followed it will ensure a successful **outcome** (*aka* more numbers, better tithing). Let the thrust of this thesis not be misunderstood. The pastor as spiritual antagonist is quite likely going to yield a unforeseen harvest. There might not be huge numbers, for those who would have sat complacently in our church seats, secure in the knowledge that they would not be disturbed by the preaching or the application of the Word will suddenly realise that there are spiritual antagonists around in this Christian community, and they will flee to another church. There may not be many people willing to get involved in ministry, because people serve for many different reasons and not all of them worthy of the Gospel, or the name of Christ. As the spiritual antagonists begin to relate to such people, they will be challenged to consider their motives for service and not like what they see, and then they might decide that the Christian church is defective and the pastor is to blame. They might fight and threaten to split the faith community. The execution of the role of spiritual antagonist might even result in a pastor's dismissal from the very church he has sought to serve most faithfully. The risks of 'failure' are immense.

To be sure, the metaphor of spiritual antagonist is not a smart recipe for quick church turn-around. It is a slow drama of the soul that seeks changes that are always registered in heaven but not always on earth. William Willimon (2002:289) quotes James Dittes as saying that ministry is 'grief work':

To be a minister is to know the most searing grief and abandonment, daily and profoundly. To be a minister is to take as partners in solemn covenant those who are sure to renege. To be a minister is to commit, unavoidably, energy and passion, self and soul, to a people, to a vision of who they are born to be, to their readiness to share and live into that vision. To be a minister is to make that all-out, prodigal commitment to a people who cannot possibly sustain it.

Pastoring in the mode of the spiritual antagonist is to prepare oneself to handle failure, and still to know that what has been accomplished in ministry is worthwhile. Not everyone will be won over, not every person will want to grow, and not every person will appreciate the style of the spiritual antagonist. During seasons when the paradox between strong call and futile efforts seems to be intense, Craig

Larson (1998:120) writes about several conclusions that have helped him to preserve his focus. These are adapted for our use here:

1. As a spiritual antagonist, I can influence, but I cannot control.
2. Any growth in righteousness, as a result of spiritual antagonism, is of infinite value.
3. Ministry, especially in the mode of spiritual antagonism, is measured in many ways besides numerical gains.
4. Spiritual ministry, along antagonistic lines, requires faith from beginning to end.
5. Seeds planted in the lives of people, as a result of the provocation of the spiritual antagonist, have enduring power.
6. Each step people make in God's direction should be celebrated.
7. The ministry of the spiritual antagonist is a mixture of muddle and glory.

Determining what is failure and what is success depends on one's perspective (Lutzer, 1998:108). It is possible to succeed in the eyes of people and fail in the eyes of God, just as the converse is true. Jesus' failure with the rich young ruler (Mt 19:16-26) must surely restrain us from hasty conclusions about success versus failure.

While pastors will do their absolute best to bring about godly change, there are occasions when it is right and appropriate simply to walk away, entrusting the fruit of ministry to the long-range purposes of God. As Larson (1998:18) realises: "God has an interesting perspective on my life – eternity – and he has a way of working with that perspective in mind. The One who knows the end from the beginning never feels rushed, knowing full well that many of his highest purposes are fulfilled through what is my greatest frustration: time."

## **9.10 CONCLUSION**

"To finish well is to focus well," wrote Shawchuck and Heuser (1993:302). The nature of pastoral ministry is such that we can be persuaded to invest our time and energy in all manner of ecclesiastical enterprises that promise a great deal. The result is that pastors

can lose their focus on the reason they are pastoring. This thesis has attempted to sharpen the focus on the pastoral centre, by using the metaphor of the pastor as spiritual antagonist. We have tried to let a particular metaphor resonate with, and reorganise, the approach to ministry. The apostle Paul once said, as a stage of his ministry drew to a close (Ac 20:22-24):

<sup>22</sup> “And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. <sup>23</sup> I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me. <sup>24</sup> However, I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the gospel of God’s grace.

That we would be antagonists of such similar focus and determination, regardless of impediments on the stage of ministry... Ah! That would provoke a protagonist, touch an audience and perhaps change a community!

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## 2. WORKS CONSTITUTING BACKGROUND READING

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# **APPENDIX 1      QUESTIONNAIRE**

## **ROLES OF A BAPTIST PASTOR**

### **Instructions and comments from the researcher:**

1. *Thank you for taking the time to fill in this questionnaire. Your input will be extremely valuable in forming a picture of what Baptist pastors think.*
2. *There are two sections to this questionnaire.*
3. *Please read the questions carefully and place a cross through the block that represents your answer / response.*
4. *When you have completed both sections, please place your questionnaire back into the original envelope. The envelope will be collected from you.*
5. *The researcher will contact you for the second phase of the research, namely, the one-on-one interview.*

### **SECTION 1: BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 1.1 In what age group do you fall? 

|       |       |       |       |     |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----|
| 20-29 | 30-39 | 40-49 | 50-59 | 60+ |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----|
- 1.2 What is your highest educational qualification in theology? 

|      |             |         |            |             |         |         |           |
|------|-------------|---------|------------|-------------|---------|---------|-----------|
| None | Certificate | Diploma | Licentiate | 3-yr degree | Honours | Masters | Doctorate |
|------|-------------|---------|------------|-------------|---------|---------|-----------|
- 1.3 Where did you receive your education in theology? 

|                |     |                      |
|----------------|-----|----------------------|
| Not applicable | BTC | Other institution(s) |
|----------------|-----|----------------------|
- 1.4 For how many years have you been a pastor / a lecturer at BTC? 

|                  |           |           |           |           |           |           |
|------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| less than 1 year | 1-5 yrs   | 6-10 yrs  | 11-15 yrs | 16-20 yrs | 21-25 yrs | 26-30 yrs |
|                  | 31-35 yrs | 36-40 yrs | 41+ yrs   |           |           |           |
- 1.5 How many people attend your church / college (church attenders, not members; total students, not only residential students)? 

|              |         |         |         |         |          |         |
|--------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|----------|---------|
| less than 50 | 50-100  | 101-150 | 151-200 | 201-250 | 251-300  | 301-350 |
|              | 351-400 | 401-450 | 451-500 | 501-800 | 801-1000 | 1000+   |
- 1.6 How multicultural is your congregation? (Please give a percentage under each culture group.) 

|       |       |        |          |
|-------|-------|--------|----------|
| Black | White | Indian | Coloured |
| %     | %     | %      | %        |

 = 100%
- 1.7 What percentage of your congregation is made up of foreigners (non-SA citizens)? 

|        |            |
|--------|------------|
| Locals | Foreigners |
| %      | %          |

 = 100%
- 1.8 How long has your congregation / college been in existence? 

|          |           |           |           |           |           |            |          |
|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|----------|
| 0-10 yrs | 11-20 yrs | 21-30 yrs | 31-40 yrs | 41-50 yrs | 51-75 yrs | 76-100 yrs | 100+ yrs |
|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|----------|

1.9 From the following options on the right, how would you describe the economic character of your congregation / student body?

|                   |          |                |              |
|-------------------|----------|----------------|--------------|
| Struggling        | Artisans | Small business | Big business |
| Service-providers |          | Professionals  |              |

**Explanation of terms**  
*"Struggling" - e.g. unemployed, part-time/casual workers, hawkers*  
*"Artisans" - e.g. plumbers, electricians, panel-beaters*  
*"Small business" - e.g. shopkeepers, small businesses, home-based industries*  
*"Big business" - e.g. company directors, CEOs, stock-brokers, bankers, politicians*  
*"Service-providers" - e.g. bus-drivers, taxi-drivers, cleaners, domestic-workers*  
*"Professionals" - e.g. doctors, teachers, lawyers, engineers*

1.10 From the following options, how would you describe the prevailing attitude of your congregation / student body?

|       |             |      |     |    |
|-------|-------------|------|-----|----|
| 1.9.1 | Apathetic   | .... | Yes | No |
| 1.9.2 | Keen        | .... | Yes | No |
| 1.9.3 | Traditional | .... | Yes | No |
| 1.9.4 | Flexible    | .... | Yes | No |
| 1.9.5 | Prickly     | .... | Yes | No |
| 1.9.6 | Warm        | .... | Yes | No |

**SECTION 2: YOUR ROLE AS A PASTOR**

2.1 What do you consider to be some of the roles that Baptist pastors are expected to fulfill in Baptist churches today?



2.2 What would you say is the typical role that Baptist pastors tend to fulfil these days?

2.3 Which one of the roles you listed under question 2.2 are you fulfilling most prominently at the moment?

2.4 Who or what determines what a pastor's role ought to be?

2.5 How have pastoral roles undergone change (if any) during your experience / tenure?

2.6 What do you consider to be your most important role(s) as a pastor, regardless of whether you are managing to fulfil it at the moment or not?

2.7 What difficulties have you encountered in fulfilling your role(s) as a pastor?

2.8 To what extent do you experience anger arising from the fulfilment of your role?

|        |       |           |        |       |
|--------|-------|-----------|--------|-------|
| Always | Often | Sometimes | Seldom | Never |
|--------|-------|-----------|--------|-------|

2.9 What enables you to continue fulfilling your role? (Please be more specific than "God helps me".)

- 2.10 Which of the following pictures of the pastor would you say most closely resembles how modern society sees pastors today?  
(Refer to the attached page called "Mood Board". Select a picture. Note its number. Place a cross in the box below with the same number.  
Please note that the question is asking you to determine how you think society views the pastor; not how you view the pastor.)

|            |            |            |           |
|------------|------------|------------|-----------|
| Picture 1  | Picture 2  | Picture 3  | Picture 4 |
| Picture 5  | Picture 6  | Picture 7  | Picture 8 |
| Picture 9  | Picture 10 | Picture 11 |           |
| Picture 12 | Picture 13 | Picture 14 |           |
| Picture 15 | Picture 16 |            |           |

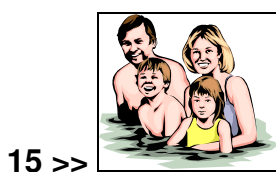
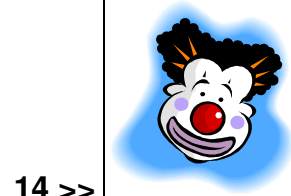
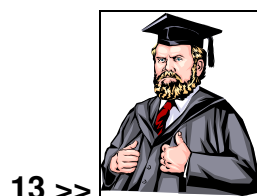
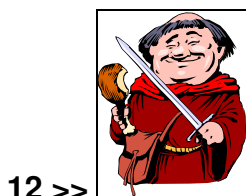
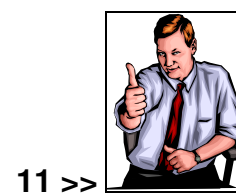
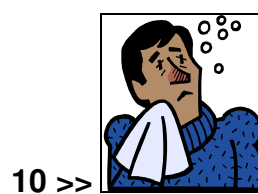
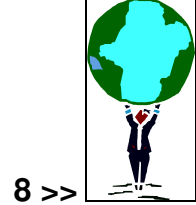
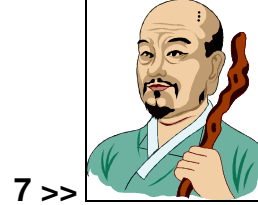
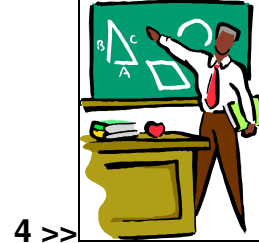
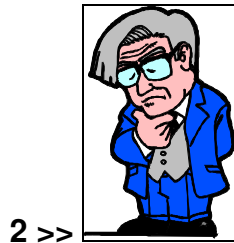
- 2.11 In the picture you have selected under 2.10 above, what characteristics of the pastor are you seeing? (List as many as you wish.)

**(Thank you for your time. Please place these pages back into the envelope in which they came.)**

## APPENDIX 2

# MOOD BOARD

At the bottom left-hand corner of each picture is the number of the image. Select the picture of your choice. Take note of its number, then mark the corresponding box of the last question on your questionnaire sheet.



## APPENDIX 3

# INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEW THE PASTOR AS SPIRITUAL ANTAGONIST

- \* *It has been proposed that a pastor needs to understand his role in modern times in terms of a spiritual antagonist.*
- \* *Hand out standardised role profile and read together.*

1. What are your overall impressions of the role?
  - 1.1. Main features that interest you?
  
  - 1.2. Main features that strike you as odd, or out-of-place?
  
2. Are you already fulfilling this role in a primary capacity?
  
3. Would you find the role easy to fulfil?
  
4. What would make it difficult or easy for you to fulfil it?
  
5. How do you think your congregation would respond to this role?
  - 5.1. What kind of people would respond well to such a role in their midst?
  
  - 5.2. What kind of people would respond poorly to such a role in their midst?
  
6. What part of their reaction would you find easy to deal with?
  - 6.1. Why would you find their reaction easy to deal with?
  
7. What part of their reaction would you find unpleasant / difficult to deal with?
  - 7.1. Why would you find their reaction unpleasant / difficult to deal with?
  
8. What features of the South African context of ministry would you identify that would make it essential for you to assume the role of spiritual antagonist?

9. How would the role of spiritual antagonist complement other traditional roles of the pastor?
10. How would the role of spiritual antagonist undermine other traditional roles of the pastor?
11. We both realise that this role - if used recklessly - could be highly destructive. Therefore, what should pastors bear in mind in order to fulfil this role most effectively?
12. What part of your training for the pastorate has prepared you to fulfil such a role?
- 12.1. What changes to the training would need to come into effect to prepare pastors accordingly?

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### Notes

- The interview will be recorded with permission of the one interviewed.
- I will take notes along the way as well.
- After the interview, I will crystallise the salient points of the interviewee's remarks (as gleaned from the recording) and compare these with the sheet

## APPENDIX 4

# LEADERSHIP TRENDS IN AFRICA

Extracted from a careful study of Meredith, M. 2006. *The state of Africa: A history of fifty years of independence*. Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball. Page numbers listed in brackets after each entry, below, refer to this work by Meredith.

- ✱ Many leaders were separated from the concerns of the masses (Meredith, 2006:70). It has been suggested that Mbeki's defeat to Zuma for the leadership of the ANC in 2007 was precisely because he was a shrewd intellectual who lost the common touch (:664).
- ✱ Many did not give much thought to post-independence conditions and challenges (:130, 688). Many rode the crest of the wave of public euphoria which soon gave way to the harsh realities of running a country. When politicians could not deliver real service after the 'honeymoon' of independence, enthusiasm gave way to despair (:141, 291).
- ✱ The land was regarded as the leader's personal fiefdom. In this regard Leopold II of Belgium, a participant in the carve-up of Africa during the colonial era set the tone (:94). In his wake came several other African leaders (:136, 170-174, 614).
- ✱ Several tried to play larger pan-Africanist roles (:143, 351, 635). Diplomacy became a matter of playing one super-power off against another for national / personal gains (:105, 108, 143), or flirting with socialism (:144).
- ✱ Some neglected the agricultural wealth in favour of industrial development (:144, 279), and even used food as a weapon (:343, 360, 528, 645).
- ✱ Many had to contend with severe skills shortages in the country (:151, 257, 273, 277).
- ✱ Extensive use of violence characterised the reigns of African leaders (:146, 175, 178, 193, 218, 229, 238, 240, 242, 268, 499, 515, 546, 563, 573, 588, 598, 607, 620 646, 679).
- ✱ Their primary loyalty was to their own tribal roots, rather than to the wider nation (:156, 157, 238, 354, 357, 389, 403, 486, 582, 585).
- ✱ Too many did not handle diversity at all well, and quickly moved the country towards a one-party state (:154, 165, 189, 203, 232, 241, 295, 385, 409, 627), or making it apparent that criticism would not be tolerated (:182, 188, 643, 656, 672).
- ✱ The need to hold onto power (:210, 222, 271, 371, 378, 389, 609) became a common motivation in constitutional changes and vote rigging (:552).
- ✱ Several understood themselves to be messianic figures who were destined to 'save' the nation (:179, 180, 207, 224, 237, 241, 242, 296, 573). Alternatively, in the cases of Nkrumah, Nasser, Senghor, Houphouët-Boigny, Sekou Toure, Keita, Olympio, Kenyatta, Nyerere, Kuanda and Banda, they understood themselves to personify the states they led: "The president personifies the Nation as did the Monarch of former times his people," asserted Senghor (:162).
- ✱ A number made it a priority to develop a personal ideology, whether it was called "Nkrumahism", "Nasserism", "ujamaa" (familyhood), or the "Third Universal Theory" (:163, 250, 253, 350). Our current president's energetic development of African Renaissance probably falls into this same trend (:676).
- ✱ Ambitious, grandiose schemes that cost the country dearly before they were eventually abandoned or replaced seemed to provide some leaders with a sense of purpose (:184, 190, 581, 630), but frequently plunged the country into deep foreign debt (:282, 368, 370, 374, 392, 580, 616, 631, 635).
- ✱ Despite the high-mindedness of personal ideologies and flamboyant projects, the insidious malady of patronage and corruption, as a method of rule, was undeniable (:169, 278, 284, 301, 303, 307, 490, 537, 581, 613, 628, 631, 687).

- ✿ Sadly, all too often leadership was seen as an opportunity for personal greed, and lavish lifestyles, even while their countries languished in abject poverty (:228, 248, 297, 540, 549, 572, 602, 615, 616, 662, 686).

Though leadership appeared to be rather chequered on the continent, there were hopeful signs of:

- ✿ Intellectual vigour, e.g. Nyrere who has been regarded as one of the foremost thinkers of Africa (:249);
- ✿ Restrained use of Affirmative Action or Africanisation, e.g. Senghor who refused to nationalise French assets or allow unqualified nationals to take over jobs too quickly from qualified Frenchmen (:269);
- ✿ A better use of national resources, e.g. Botswana's use of diamond discoveries to attack poverty rather than for the personal advantage of the elite (:285);
- ✿ More prudent economic management in Rwanda during 1965 to 1989 that saw GDP increase by 5% per annum and inflation kept low (:486);
- ✿ Brave and merciful initiatives to reconcile a divided South Africa, as the TRC opened our national pain to processes of healing (:654);
- ✿ Honest self-criticism, of the kind demonstrated by Nelson Mandela when he conceded at the OAU summit in 1994 that many modern African leaders had added to the toll of misery: "We must face the matter squarely that where there is something wrong in how we govern ourselves, it must be said that the fault is not in our stars but in ourselves that we are ill-governed" (:676).