

**AN INQUIRY INTO THE UNITY PROCESS AMONGST BAPTISTS
IN SOUTH AFRICA**

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CULTURE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF KWA-ZULU NATAL**

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DECLARATION

The Registrar (Academic)
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Dear Sir

I, RODNEY RAGWAN

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hereby declare that the dissertation/thesis entitled **An Inquiry into the Unity Process Amongst Baptists in South Africa** is the result of my own investigation and research and that it has not been submitted in part or in full for any other degree or to any other University.


.....
(Signature)

28 : 04 : 2004
.....

Date

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABC	-	AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES
ABK	-	AFRIKAANSE BAPTISTE KERK
BAR	-	BAPTIST AGAINST RACISM
BASA	-	BAPTIST ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AFRICA
BCSA	-	BAPTIST CONVENTION OF SOUTH AFRICA
BMSA	-	BAPTIST MISSION OF SOUTH AFRICA
BUSA	-	BAPTIST UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA
BUT	-	BAPTIST UNITY TALKS
BWA	-	BAPTIST WORLD ALLIANCE
CBM	-	COLESBERG MINUTES
GKB	-	GOLDEN JUBILEE BROCHURE
HMS	-	HOME MISSIONARY SOCIETY
IBM	-	INDIAN BAPTIST MISSION
KZN	-	KWA-ZULU NATAL
LAC	-	LOCAL ARRANGEMENTS COMMITTEE
NAW	-	NATIONAL AWARENESS WORKSHOP
NIBA	-	NATAL INDIAN BAPTIST ASSOCIATION
NIV	-	NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION
NT	-	NEW TESTAMENT
OT	-	OLD TESTAMENT
REV	-	REVEREND
SA	-	SOUTH AFRICA
SABA	-	SOUTH AFRICAN BAPTIST ALLIANCE
SABMS	-	SOUTH AFRICAN BAPTIST MISSIONARY SOCIETY
TRC	-	TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION
WCC	-	WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to all those men and women who have struggled for unity in the Baptist Church in South Africa, who are still working towards unity and who will continue to do so until the day we are able to stand as one united Baptist church in South Africa.

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CHAPTER ONE

1. RESEARCH DESIGN

1.1 INTRODUCTION

"Man, in consequence to his technological and scientific ingenuity has made of this world a neighbourhood. The challenge now, is for him to make of this world a brotherhood" (Abram-Mayet 1982:26).

The researcher is currently involved in the Unity process amongst Baptists in South Africa. Since the demise of apartheid, Baptist representatives from the five organizations, namely, The Baptist Association of South Africa (BASA), Afrikaanse Baptiste Kerk (ABK), The Baptist Convention of South Africa (BCSA), The Baptist Mission of South Africa (BMSA) and the Baptist Union of South Africa (BUSA) decided to begin a process of dialogue with the intention of working towards unity in the true sense of brotherhood (Bulwer Road Consultation Minutes 1999:1).

There were several bilateral discussions that took place between the bodies in the past but no significant steps were taken to work together. The world Baptist body called the Baptist World Alliance, of which the BASA, BCSA and BUSA are members, had their first General Council Meeting in July 1998. Their presence in South Africa had a positive effect on Baptists and this resulted in the five Baptist bodies expressing the desire to enter

into discussions with each other with regards to Baptist Unity. Consequently the South African Baptist Alliance was formed which comprises the five bodies. The formation of SABA was an important development amongst Baptists in South Africa given the socio-political background. SABA allowed these five Baptist organizations to engage each other on areas of unity and co-operation. The researcher is a pioneer member of the executive committee of the South African Baptist Alliance (SABA).

1.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Firstly it seeks to conduct an enquiry into the unity process amongst the five Baptist bodies in South Africa by tracing the histories of each of the five national Baptist bodies. These histories were written mainly by Baptists of each of the five organizations. This is an important dimension to the recording of history. Their stories will be told by themselves. This is a significant study because it makes a contribution to the current pertinent area within the discipline of Church History that deals with unification. This research will be conducted by an 'insider' who has been involved in the unity process amongst Baptists in South Africa. There is always the tension between empathy and critical reflection. The temptation to empathize with one's own organization will be resisted.

South African Baptist history is also poorly or inadequately reflected in the historical literature and therefore the available literature fails to situate Baptist history and, more so

the relationship amongst five of the Baptist organizations in the broad political, social, and economic context of South Africa. The available record of the histories of these groups in most parts are in local or in 'micro' narratives such as brochures and dissertations. Another unfortunate experience is that the colonial, apartheid missiological paradigm made people of colour believe that their history was not important. The researcher himself, while studying South African Church History at a South African Theological Institution, expressed disappointment to the professor at the lack of South African Indian, Coloured and Black Baptist History. The curriculum comprised an extensive history of white Baptists in South Africa and very little on the history of Indian, Coloured and Black Baptists in South Africa. Yet, this year, two of the Indian Baptist organizations will be celebrating their centenary.

The research covers the histories of each of the five Baptist bodies, which shows the enormous contributions individuals within the respective bodies have made to the Christian community in South Africa. Special mention will be made of these individuals' contributions to the unity process amongst Baptists in South Africa

Secondly the origins and agenda of the ecumenical movement will be traced. Are there any lessons from this movement that Baptists can learn from as far as unity is concerned?

Thirdly the study will identify and deal with the reasons for disunity amongst the five Baptist organizations in South Africa.

Finally it intends to investigate the theology of unity from a church historical perspective.

1.3 VALUE OF THE RESEARCH NATIONALLY

1.3.1. The researcher will provide information concerning the effects of a political era and how it affected the church in South Africa.

1.3.2. Evidence from minutes of past meetings, most notably those of SABA, will add to the limited knowledge of Baptists in South Africa.

1.3.3. The research may assist other denominations that are working towards unity.

1.4. VALUE OF THE RESEARCH INTERNATIONALLY

1.4.1. The research will provide information concerning Baptist history and the working together of Baptists in South Africa.

1.5 CHAPTER TWO

1.5.1 THE HISTORY OF THE ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT

The researcher will first give an overview of the ecumenical movement. While Baptists

were attempting to work towards unity the ecumenical movement came into being. This movement also dealt with issues of unity. There was division amongst Christians prior to the Reformation, not only amongst Christians but also between East and West, which SC Neil calls the Great Schism (Neil 1953:14). The World Book Encyclopedia volume three mentions these heresies and schisms the church experienced in the early years of its history. The more important according to this encyclopedia were Arianism, Nestorianism, Iconoclastic heresies and the Aligensian heresy.

Christianity despite this remained practically one great community for almost a thousand years. In the late 800's, however, according to the WBE, a schism (division) began to separate the church at Rome and the church at Constantinople. In 1054, rivalries between the Eastern Orthodox Churches and the Roman Catholic Church resulted.

Another schism, referred by Neil as the Great Schism of the West, which began in the late 1300s, led to rival popes and seriously divided the church for almost forty years. Then in the 1500's, large groups of Christians called "Protestants", broke away from the Roman Catholic Church. The Protestant Reformation was a protest over religious matters and against worldly powers of the church. Protestants have since divided into many sects and denominations.

The three great divisions of Christianity today are the Protestant group, the Roman Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox churches. In the 1800's, some Christian groups began what is called the ecumenical movement, to seek ways to unite. Protestants

and Orthodox groups have founded such organizations as the World Council of Churches (World Book Encyclopedia Vol 3 1974: 407).

In this chapter, the researcher will give an overview of the church's struggle with divisions and schisms. The establishment of the Ecumenical movement helped to a certain extent in raising the idea of church unity. This chapter will briefly sketch the history of this movement, with particular reference to its origin, agenda and the issues that it faced and how the movement dealt with them. This is important as it deals with the whole idea of church unity, which is relevant to this study. Whilst Ecumenical unity deals mainly with multi-denominational unity, it is important to get a sense of its understanding of the concept of unity. It is hoped that as a researcher, the gathering of information and knowledge of the ecumenical movement will help in the understanding of this movement particularly in its agenda for unity.

The church is an important institution of the Christian faith. Was the church supposed to be one universal church, and, did this church have one common bible? If not, what process was undertaken to deal with this issue? The researcher will also include an important development, that is, the influence of Constantine and his role in calling and maintaining unity in the church. Are there any lessons on unity for Baptists to learn from these? The researcher will investigate this by highlighting the following conferences/movements: -

1.5.1.1 Edinburgh 1910

This Conference is of particular interest to the researcher as the founding member of the BASA attended this Conference, which dealt with Christian unity.

The important question that will be raised is, “Did the desired objectives come to fruition?” (Elwell 1984:341).

1.5.1.2 Faith and Order

The period after the Edinburgh Conference till World War 11 was characterized by the development of two great parent movements of the Ecumenical movement, the Faith and Order, and the Life and Work movements. Here too, the main exponents of this movement, as well as the purpose will be highlighted.

1.5.2 WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES (WCC)

A brief history of the WCC will be sketched. Special reference will be made of its origins, main leaders, compositions, functions, challenges as well as its objectives in a worldwide context. Equally important will be its strengths and weaknesses, which will be examined by the researcher.

1.5.3 HISTORY OF THE BAPTIST WORLD ALLIANCE (BWA)

This chapter will also include a history of the Baptist World Alliance (BWA), which is the world body for the majority of Baptists worldwide. Reference to its origin, location and how it functions, as an organisation will be sketched. In recording this international Baptist organisation the researcher will highlight key individuals within the organization who impacted Baptists globally particularly in the area of unity and reconciliation. Important initiatives as well as conferences that were organized by the BWA to promote unity and reconciliation will be included in the general history of the Baptist World Alliance. One such important conference was the Baptist Against Racism and Ethnic Conflict Conference held in Atlanta Georgia, USA in 1999. The researcher attended and participated at this historical Conference and will highlight the key areas covered as well as the resolutions passed at this conference.

1.5.4 HISTORY OF THE FIVE BAPTIST ORGANIZATIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA

Chapter two will then proceed to record the histories of the five Baptist bodies in South Africa, namely, the Afrikaanse Baptiste Kerk (ABK), Baptist Association of South Africa (BASA), the Baptist Convention of South Africa (BCSA), the Baptist Mission of South Africa (BMSA) and the Baptist Union of South Africa (BUSA). In the last ten years, certain individuals in each of the five organizations, contributed greatly to the process of

reconciliation amongst Baptists in South Africa. These individuals' contributions will be recorded. Sources on the histories are drawn mainly from Sydney Hudson-Reed's book entitled 'By Taking Heed', Diamond Jubilee brochures and newsletters particularly with regards to the history of BASA, BMSA and the BCSA.

The critical question is to begin to ask why these Baptist organizations, which belong to, the Baptist denomination operated separately? It will also be important to disentangle the relationship between the BUSA, which was a predominantly white dominated organisation, and BCSA, which comprised Black people. Equally important is the question of why the two predominantly Indian Baptist organizations, the BASA and the BMSA existed separately. How does the ABK, which comprises Afrikaners, embrace Baptists from the other four organizations? Whilst criticism can be leveled against these Baptists bodies for maintaining their separate racial identities, what effect did the socio-political factors have on these organizations? This will require the researcher to describe the Apartheid History during which these five Baptist bodies carried out their Christian faith.

1.6 CHAPTER THREE –PROCESS OF DIVERSIFICATION

In this chapter the reasons for disunity amongst the five bodies will be surveyed. The main factors that influenced disunity amongst the five Baptist organizations were apartheid, racism and ethnicity. Each of these will be defined and critically examined.

1.6.1 Apartheid and Racism

The researcher will define Apartheid and racism, as well as the history of apartheid and its effect on the population of South Africa and in particular the Baptist denomination, and, more specifically, how this played itself out in the relationship amongst the five Baptist organizations.

This research will also show how the five Baptist organizations were affected by this ideology. There were Baptists that practiced apartheid and racism and those who opposed it. The researcher will show how the racial policies of the state caused Baptists to maintain separate organizations. In 1989 the BUSA angered its black members, which were in the minority, when it held its Annual Assembly at a military barracks in Kimberley. A group of black pastors protested by staging a walkout (NAW 1990:12). How were the two Indian groups, i.e., BASA and BMSA influenced by apartheid and racism? Whilst these two groups recognized the strong leanings of the Baptist Union to the apartheid government they were also seen as being content with the status quo. They were also seen as two ethnic organizations that have remained largely ethnic for almost a century.

1.6.2 Ethnicity

The BMSA and BASA are largely two ethnic organizations. The researcher will briefly

explore the meaning and manifestations of ethnicity in general, and then specifically, as practiced by these two ethnic organizations. The crucial question is, “To what extent did ethnicity affect unity?” Since the founding member of the two ethnic organizations had come from India where the caste system was practiced, a brief examination of this will be undertaken.

1.7 CHAPTER FOUR - THEOLOGY OF UNITY

Biblical texts from both the Old and New Testaments will be studied. The researcher will provide exegetical comments on each of the biblical texts, with special reference to key words and phrases that relate to Christian unity.

The theology of unity and disunity will be looked at. The crucial questions that will be raised and discussed are: -

1.7.1 What is the biblical basis for unity?

1.7.2 What is the definition of the Biblical Unity of the church?

1.7.3 Psalms 133:1 (Old Testament)

1.7.4 Ezekiel 37:17 (Old Testament)

1.7.5 John 17:21 (New Testament)

1.7.6 Romans 15:5 (New Testament)

1.7.7 Corinthian 1:10 (New Testament)

1.7.8 The researcher will also examine the minutes of the unity talks of the five Baptist organizations, which resulted in the formation of the South African Baptist Alliance (SABA). After this the entire body of data will be critically examined and evaluated followed by the researcher's recommendations.

1.8 CHAPTER FIVE - MOVEMENT TOWARDS UNITY

In this chapter a detailed recording of the proceedings that have taken place so far as far as the unification process is concerned will be made. This will include the establishment of a historical multiracial forum, the various consultations that took place, the role of the BWA and important statements and resolutions made at the multiracial forums, which later became known as the South African Baptist Alliance (SABA).

1.9 CHAPTER SIX - DATA INTERPRETATION AND RECOMMENDATION

The researcher will critically examine and evaluate the minutes of the meetings with specific attention to the significant statements, memorandum of understanding and progress attained followed by the researcher's recommendations.

1.10 CHAPTER SEVEN - CONCLUSION

This chapter will provide a summation of all that was attempted by the researcher in each chapter. Important to this study is the historical information of the Ecumenical movement, the Baptist World Alliance and the five Baptist organizations namely the BASA, BCSA, ABK, BCSA and the BUSA, the histories of these will be recorded. The contribution of key leaders to the unification process will be recorded as well. Key factors of disunity will be examined in the context of a racially divided country. Reference will be made of important Biblical texts that will provide a theology of unity will be studied. In 1999 the coming together of these five organizations to establish an Alliance called the Baptist Alliance of South Africa (SABA) was very significant. The study will examine this process. Critical examination of the minutes of the SABA will also be undertaken and recommendations will be made.

1.11 CONCLUSION

As stated in the 'Introduction' this chapter on the 'Research Design' stated that this research seeks to conduct an inquiry into the unity process amongst Baptists in South Africa. The research also sought to trace the origin of the ecumenical movement and the history of the Baptist World Alliance as well as the five Baptist organizations. As shown, this will be addressed by a general history and will then proceed to the specific history of the five Baptist organizations. Important dates, events, significant figures within the various organizations such as the ecumenical movement, Baptist World Alliance and the five Baptist organizations will be recorded.

The research design also will examine the reasons for disunity amongst the five Baptist organizations. The most disuniting factors such as apartheid, racism and ethnicity were identified and the research will show to what extent these affected unity amongst the five Baptist organizations.

Investigating a biblical theology of unity was also an objective of the research design. Identifying key biblical texts will show this and thereafter a scientific study of these texts will be undertaken. In this investigation comments of the various biblical scholars will be taken into account.

The research also stated that it would record the movement of the five Baptist organizations towards unity. To help understand this process the various consultations,

workshops and forums will be recorded and analyzed. Central to this chapter will be the examining of the South African Baptist Alliance. The minutes of the meetings of SABA will be examined as well.

In the research design it was also stated that the minutes of the various meetings of SABA would be critically examined. The tabulating of the important resolutions and statements by the various leaders of the five Baptist organizations shows this. They will be also analyzed and evaluated in the light of the ideals and objectives of SABA.

CHAPTER TWO

2. HISTORY OF ORGANIZATIONS

In an inquiry such as this, it is important to get an overview of the history of the organizations relevant to this study as each of its history had an impact, either directly or indirectly, on the unity process.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The ecumenical movement was an organized attempt to bring about the cooperation and unity of all believers in Christ. A study of this movement in the light of this research is important because it forms a backdrop from which the Baptist unity process can take lessons. This will be followed by the history of the Baptist World Alliance as well as the history of the five Baptist organizations in South Africa.

2.2 ECUMENICAL HISTORY

The history of the Christian Church from the first Century to the 20th Century might be written in terms of its struggle to realize ecumenical unity. The scope of this research does not allow a detailed history of the ecumenical movement, which spans over twenty centuries. The researcher will briefly outline the important areas. C. Lombard (1999:45-52) in a book entitled *Essays and Exercises in Ecumenism* makes reference to Gustav

Gous's sketch of a broad historical framework that puts the ecumenical movement in its proper perspective. He cites the following, which are very helpful.

2.2.1 One Church

Lombard begins with the church. The gospel message of the church spread rapidly throughout the world. Paul, the apostle played a pivotal role in spreading this message. His letters to the various churches reflected the idea of one universal church. (Ephesians 1:22, Colossians 1:18) with Christ as the head of the church. The essence of unity at that time was one universal church with local congregations. The crucial question was, "Did the church use a common bible to communicate and spread this message?" Difficulties arose in respect to this matter of a common Bible. A process of establishing a common Bible followed.

2.2.2 Canonization

Lombard's second area is canonization. This same church, which Paul challenged to embrace unity, differed on the number of books that should be included in the bible. The Roman Catholic and Protestant church had this disagreement. A process of recognizing books belonging to the New Testament was undertaken. This process took several hundred years, from approximately AD 100 to AD 400. The boundaries of the New Testament were determined at the Councils of Hippo (AD 393) and Carthage (AD 397).

The Roman Catholics maintain that there are more books belonging to the Bible than do Protestants. Both these groups were divided on this issue. The idea of unity however was still pursued where councils were established Constantan tine, the Roman Emperor to sort out the differences prevalent in the church.

2.2.3 Constantantine AD 312

The third area that Lombard highlights is an important one as Constantine the emperor of Rome laid emphasis on organizational unity of the church after his victory over Maxentius in AD 312. Prior to this, the unity of the church was a unity of faith and worship. The administration of the Roman Empire served as an example for the church. Lombard further states that an additional important consequence was the ecumenical gatherings (councils), which Constantine called to sort out the differences and maintain unity in the church.

2.2.4 Ecumenical Councils

These ecumenical councils were summoned by the emperors to determine the boundaries of belief. *The Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (1984:340) refers to these ecumenical councils, which he says originated from the link between the Christian church and the Roman State during the fourth century. Elwell (1984:340) adds that they were

summoned by the emperors to promote unity. The first eight councils that were called by emperors had representations of both Eastern and Western bishops. The scope of this research does not allow for the explanation of all eight councils. However the most significant of these early councils will be mentioned. They were as follows.

2.2.4.1 Nicaea (325)

According to the *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (1984:341), the first Ecumenical Council of the Church was convened by the emperor of Constantine at Nicaea in Bithynia on 20 May 325. The main purpose of this council was to attempt to heal the schism in the church provoked by Arianism. Arianism, named after Arius a Greek rationalist from North Africa as well as presbyter of Alexandria, shared a different view over the nature of Christ. His central assertion was that God was immutable, unique, unknowable, only one. Therefore Arians felt no substance of God could in anyway be communicated or shared with any other being. (Elwell 1984:74) The Bishop of Alexandria, Athanasius opposed this view where he declared Christ to be of the same substance (homoousios) with God. Athanasius and orthodoxy prevailed.

2.2.4.2 The Council of Chalcedon (451)

Eastern Emperor Marcion called this Council in October 451 to settle disputes as well as

to clarify the issue of unity of the two natures of Christ. The Council of Chalcedon took place after a series of Christological declarations beginning with the Council of Nicaea in 325. It brought together more than 500 bishops. At this council the bishops deemed it necessary in the interest of unity to define the faith as it related to the person of Christ. Elwell (1984:204) further states that the Chalcedon Creed safeguarded both the divine and human natures of Christ existing in one person in unchangeable union.

Subsequent councils consolidated the gains of the above council as well as opposed further Christological errors. Elwell (1984:204) mentions the other councils. They are Constantinople 1 (381), Ephesus (431), Constantinople 11 (553), Constantinople 111 (680-81), Nicaea 11 (787), and Constantinople 1V (869-70). As mentioned these councils were called by emperors and had representation of both Eastern and Western bishops. Several years later the papacy imitated and assumed control and the following councils were set up. Rausch lists them as Lateran Council (1123), Lateran 11 (1139), Lateran 111 (1179), Lateran 1V (1215), Lyon 1 (1245), Lyon 11 (1274), and Vienne (1311-12), Council of Constance (1414-18) and the Council of Basel (1431), Lateran Council (1512-17) and Council of Trent (1545-63). Elwell (1984:204) further states that these councils were called to meet the challenges of the Roman Church.

In the modern period the papacy convened two councils, Vatican 1 (1869-70) and Vatican 11 (1962-65). Vatican 1 and Vatican 11 each represented both the old and the new. Vatican 1 made official what had long been practiced - papal infallibility. In summing up the proceedings of these councils it is said, "It cannot be pretended that the

proceedings of the Councils were always marked by harmony, charity, or even an elementary regard for dignity. The church is at all times very human, and theological debate rarely brings out the best in human nature. And yet the councils were assemblies of Christian men, passionately in earnest about the truth; the best of them were sober, learned, temperate in judgment, and charitable towards opponents" (Neil 1953:11-12).

2.2.5 Edinburgh 1910

At this International Missionary Conference John Mott an American Methodist led this conference with a strong call for Christian unity. Joseph H. Oldham also played an important role with John Mott in uniting mission agencies in the missionary enterprise.

This world missionary conference according to SC Neil was primarily a consultative assembly, which was preceded by several gatherings such as in New York and London in 1854, which continued in Liverpool in 1860, in London in 1878, in London again in 1888 and then in New York in 1900. The conference was composed of official delegates from missionary societies. Interestingly Rev John Rangiah founder of the Baptist Association of South Africa attended this conference in Edinburgh in 1910.

2.2.6 Life and Work

The Conference on Life and Work which took place in Stockholm in 1925 had to deal

with the questions of 'Life and work, that is with the practical problem of applying Christian principles in social and international life. More specifically this conference according to Elwell (1984:341) sought to unify efforts to solve social, economic and political problems. Ruth and Neill (1953:535-537) records that the delegates from the fifteen countries who attended were only from the Protestant communions. Leading men at this conference were mostly Americans. They were Macfarland, Lynch and A.J. Brown. Others such as C.H. Brent, R.H. Gardiner, W.P. Merrill and J.A. Morehead. No definite reasons are known as to why the Roman Catholic and the Orthodox were not invited. It is believed however (1953:535) that the Federal Council charged with sending out invitations to delegates had members within its ranks who opposed sending out invitations to the two mentioned churches i.e. the Roman Catholic and the Orthodox Church. It is also believed that at the outset it was decided that only Protestant bodies would be invited to consider only such questions common to all Protestant churches. A debate subsequently took place with regards to the representation of this conference and it was the influence of Archbishop Soderblom that a decision was taken to invite all Christian churches to the conference. A most noteworthy comment (1953:538) from Soderblom, which reflected his deep commitment to ecumenism: "If any communion had to be excluded *a priori* from the coming conference, those responsible for it would themselves from the start haven taken a sectarian attitude". He championed the cause for a fully represented church at this conference.

The most significant figure at this conference was Archbishop Soderblom. He had a definite ecumenical programme.

Another conference was established in 1927 in Lausanne called Faith and Order, which was to address the theological basis of church unity (Elwell 1984:341). Rouse and Neil helps us understand the background to the establishment of the Faith and Order organizations. Bishop Brent of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America, then Bishop of the Philippine Islands had addressed the 1910 Edinburgh Conference towards its close. He spoke of the new vision that came about at this conference as well as the new responsibilities that each of the delegates had to perform. This new vision was the vision of a united church. Bishop Brent realized that matters of faith and order, which had been excluded from the 1910 Edinburgh programme had to be dealt with. It was decided that a Subject Committee be appointed which would issue a series of questions for discussions.

This conference had to consider: “ The call to unity, the church’s message to the world-the Gospel, the nature of the church, the church’s common confession of faith, the church’s ministry, the Sacraments, and the unity of Christendom and the place of the different churches in it” (Ruth and Neill 1953:417-420).

On the 3 August 1927 this conference was held which according to Ruth and Neill (1953:420) saw 385 men and nine women from 108 churches attend this conference in Lausanne. They were from the Lutheran and Reformed, Old Catholic, Anglican, Methodist, Congregational, Baptists and Disciples.

Many in the ecumenical movement particularly in the Faith and Order and Life and

Work were constantly reviewing the work of ecumenical cooperation. Some of the leading figures were William Temple, Germanos of Thyatira, William Brown, John R.Mott and WA Visser 't Hooft. It became necessary to integrate various parts of the ecumenical movement. By 1937 according to Elwell (1984:341) the conference on Life and Work and Faith and Order agreed that new, more inclusive organization was needed. The result of this was the meeting of the two Councils i.e. Faith and Order and Life and Work at Chamby and Clarens respectively. An important function of these two councils was to make recommendations to the Oxford and Edinburgh conferences regarding the future policy, organization and work of the ecumenical movement. This joint council came from people from occupying positions of ecclesiastical responsibility. Visser 't stated that the views of laymen, women and youth were also to be represented. The result of this meeting of the two councils resulted in the formation of the World Council of Churches (Visser 't 1982: 39-40).

2.2.7 The World Council of Churches

The formation of the World Council of Churches at Westfield, London was decisive and significant. Although this proposal was made by the two conferences of Faith and Order Life and Work and Faith in 1937, it was only in 1948 in Amsterdam that the WCC was formed. Elwell (1984:341) states that 351 delegates from 147 denominations representing 44 countries formed the WCC under the leadership of W.A.Visser 't Hooft.

The WCC is described by Elwell as a fellowship of Churches which confesses the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the Scriptures and therefore seek to fulfill together their common calling to the glory of one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Elwell 1984:341).

The WCC meets every five years with a Central committee that is tasked to carry out the policies of the WCC. This Central Committee comprised regional representatives from the USA, United Kingdom, Europe as well as younger churches on the advice of the International Missionary Council. South Africa, Australasia as well as other areas that are not otherwise represented. It is important to note that the churches determine the policy of the Council. Visser 't Hooft records that Dr Oldham in drawing up the proposal for the formation of the WCC suggested on the full participation of the laity.

The WCC is a fellowship of churches and it carries out its functions through different organs. As stated earlier in the research, the churches determine the policy of the WCC and not the Central Committee or the Assembly of the WCC and that the Council exists to serve the churches, and not to control them.

The Central Committee of the WCC minutes records (1982:114) that the WCC deals in a provisional way with divisions between existing churches. It is not there to negotiate unions between churches but to bring them into a living contact with each other and to promote the study and discussion of the issues of Church unity.

There are two assumptions underlying the WCC which is relevant to this research, firstly the membership of the Council believe that conversation, cooperation and common witness of the churches must be based on the common recognition that Christ is the Divine Head of the Body and secondly that the membership of the WCC believe on the basis of the New Testament that the Church of Christ is one (Visser 't Hooft 1982:114-118). Another World body called the Baptist World Alliance share almost the same agenda as the WCC in regards to cooperation and a common witness.

2.3 The Baptist World Alliance (BWA)

This world body started on the 17 July 1905 in Birmingham England. It has a fellowship of 205 Baptist organizations in almost 200 countries. C.W. Tiller (1980:1), in a volume entitled *Twentieth Century Baptist*, chronicles the history of the BWA from 1905 up till 1980. The year 1980 marked the 75th Anniversary of this world Baptist body.

According to Tiller (1980:1) J.H. Shakespeare, J.N. Prestridge and J. Clifford were the first leading figures in the formation of the BWA. A Scottish born leader was chosen as the first presiding officer of the Baptist World Congress. It is interesting to learn of the preamble to the constitution of the BWA, which was adopted by the Alliance in 1905. This preamble embodied the sentiments of the delegates in attendance at the very first meeting of the BWA. It was also agreed to hold a Congress once every five years. The preamble to the constitution reads as follows: -

“Whereas, in the providence of God, the time has come when it seems fitting more fully to manifest the essential oneness in the Lord Jesus Christ, as their God and Saviour, of the churches of the Baptist order and faith throughout the world, to promote the spirit of fellowship, service and cooperation among them, while recognizing the independence of each particular church and not assuming the function of any existing organisation, it is agreed to form a Baptist World Alliance, extending over every part of the world”.

Another interesting affirmation of the delegates at this first meeting of the Alliance was the ‘oneness of Christians’ that was repeated. It seemed that right from the inception of the BWA, a strong call was made for Baptists to be one. Did this come to fruition both globally as well as in the South African context? This will be examined in a later chapter. The gathering of Baptists at its first Congress in London in 1905 mapped out a future for Baptists around the world.

2.3.1 The Baptist World Congress

As mentioned earlier, the Baptist World Alliance adopted a constitution that provided for a World Congress once in each five-year period. The first Baptist World Congress according to Tiller was a great success with 3500 accredited delegates and they came from every nation in the world except two, thus making this Congress remarkably representative. The emphasis on unity and cooperation was strongly emphasized and

notably the closing hymn of the Congress was 'Blest be the tie that binds'.

In a commentary that appeared in the *Baptist Common Wealth*, in Philadelphia, USA Tiller notes the optimism of the delegates at this Congress "... out of this new realization of Baptist power will come a strengthening of our denominational consciousness. We will realize more fully our identification not only with our English brethren but also with those of all nationalities and countries. We will take more pride in the causes which demand cooperation ..." (Tiller 1980: 3).

According to Tiller (1980:3) another newspaper *The Maryland Baptist* reported on this significant event on 1 October 1905. It reported as follows " the sense of unity among the Baptist is something almost mysterious, and for the first time in history this sense of unity found a worldwide brotherhood, with a world power and a world history...".

The BWA also identified with the Ecumenical movement in 1910 when a Missionary conference was held in Edinburgh. Baptists were widely represented, including a representation by Rev. John Rangiah, the founder of the Indian Baptist Church in South Africa now called the Baptist Association of South Africa. (Tiller 1980:4) Elwell (1984:341) in the *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* states that the thousand delegates who attended caught the vision for Christian unity

Tiller (1980:5) draws our attention to another significant development in the life of Baptists in North America by highlighting the unity of two former Baptist organizations namely the Southern and Northern Baptist Churches of America at a meeting in St Louis

on 16 May 1905. This was hailed as a very positive step for Baptists in America. E.W. Stephens was elected as the first president of the newly formed General Baptist Convention comprising both the Southern and Northern Baptists of America. Tiller (1980:6) records the statements of commentators about this new Convention, “For the first time since 1845, the denomination is united in spirit, in motives, and determinations”.

One cannot ignore statements made by people such as George W. Truett in his address in St Louis where he spoke of the Unity of the Baptist Spirit. He also expressed his strong endorsement of the movement for unity. Another important voice was that of the Governor of Missouri who remarked that, “This meeting marks the decadence of the sectional hatred and the birth of a national brotherhood.” He went on to say that some are Northern Baptists, some are Southern Baptists – all are American Baptists” (Tiller 1980:6).

The role of the BWA has been, among other functions (Tiller 1980:8), to foster co-operation and promote unity. The coming together of the Southern and Northern Baptists made it so much easier for this world body.

Within the BWA there are many commissions that deals with evangelism, missions, worship, church renewal and several others. A special commission on Baptists Against Racism in 1993 was introduced by Dr Denton Lotz, the General Secretary of the BWA (Lotz 1993:4).

2.3.2 Baptist Against Racism

The BWA has played a significant role in the unity process in South Africa as well. Key leaders, as well as their efforts for church unity, and significant events that were hosted by the BWA, will be incorporated in this study. In the recent years a major conference, "Baptism Against Racism" was held in Atlanta, Georgia at the venue of the late Martin Luther King's church. This Conference was hosted by the BWA under the leadership of the General Secretary of the BWA, Dr Denton Lotz. The BWA under his leadership has been in the forefront in the fight against racism. According to Lotz (1999:7) utterances from this world body have had global effect. Dr Lotz, in welcoming the delegates to this summit at which the researcher was present, made a global call to stand up against all forms of racism. He stated, "In a world torn apart by racism and ethnic conflict, it is urgent and necessary for Christians to take a stand. On the eve of the 21st century it is incumbent upon Baptists to let the world know of our opposition to all forms of racism that deny the dignity of men and women world- wide". What followed for the next several days were papers from several leading Baptist leaders from around the world such as Jimmy Carter, ex-president of the United States of America, Wallace Charles Smith, chairman of the Commission on Racism in the BWA, Tony Cupid, Director of Study and Research in the BWA, John N. Jonnson, professor at Baylor University and ex-president of BUSA, Coretta Scott King, wife of Civil Rights leader, Martin Luther King Jr and Denton Lotz General Secretary of the BWA. Dr Billy Graham who is the honorary co-chair of the International Summit of Baptists Against Racism was unable to attend but sent a very significant statement (Lotz 1999:4), which read, "Racism may be the most

serious and devastating social problem facing the world today. Tragically, the church of Jesus Christ is not free of the sin of racism, and yet we of all people should be at the forefront, demonstrating to humanity Christ's love and reconciliation." He went on to state that, "Racism is one of the greatest barriers to world evangelization".

The purpose of this conference (Lotz 1999:7) was to challenge Baptist organizations around the world to actively confront issues of racism and ethnic hatred within their areas. He also stated (1999:7) that the conference seeks to ensure that every individual who attended the Summit returns to their respective organizations committed to work for racial and ethnic reconciliation. Lotz also hoped finally that the holding of this BAR conference would make a positive statement to the Baptist world, the wider Christian community and the secular world that Baptists are totally committed to opposing racism and ethnic conflict in the name of Christ.

The resolution that was taken at this Summit was a very significant one and was called "The Atlanta Covenant" (Lotz 1999 17). In summary, this covenant acknowledges the negative influences of racism amongst the Christian community and a commitment was made to eradicate racism and confront ethnic conflict.

The following resolutions were taken: -

2.3.2.1 To be committed to racial justice as an integral part of proclaiming the Good News in Jesus Christ;

2.3.2.2 To promote economic development as a way forward towards racial justice;

- 2.3.2.3 To understand the universality of Jesus Christ as a way to address issues of racial justice;
- 2.3.2.4 To call the churches to develop a programme of Education to promote a Christian Life Style that demonstrates justice and racial harmony;
- 2.3.2.5 To promote with appreciation the rich heritage of Baptist commitment to international mission. Notwithstanding the noble intentions, sincere motives and significant contributions in the area of education, health and church planting, it was stated that racism has often tainted these efforts, and expressed itself in the form of paternalism, and the manipulation of resources has caused much pain and frustration;
- 2.3.2.6 To discover and hopefully increase resources and support churches and individuals in promoting racial justice and reconciliation (Lotz 1999:170-176).

The BWA has declared 2000-2010 a decade to promote Racial Justice. In evaluating this Summit and the BWA's commitment to unity and reconciliation, the BWA must be commended for calling an International Summit on this important issue of racism and ethnic conflict. It was mentioned at this conference that one of the factors that influenced division within the five Baptist organizations in South Africa has been precisely racism and ethnicity. The BWA also protested against the racial policies of the apartheid government by not holding any of their General council meetings and Congress Meetings in South Africa until 1998 (Ragwan 2003:63).

The BWA under the leadership of its General Secretary led a delegation to South Africa

to assist in the reconciliation process between BUSA and the BCSA in November of 1998. Dr Denton Lotz chaired this important meeting at Rosebank Union Church in Johannesburg. This is a further demonstration of this world body's commitment and support for racial reconciliation and unity (Rosebank Minutes 1998:1).

The holding of the General Council Meetings of the BWA in South Africa in 1998 was a significant sign by this body to bring Baptists together. For the first time in the history of Baptists in South Africa, the Indians, so called Coloureds, Whites and Black Baptists were part of the Local Arrangements Committee of the BWA (Ragwan 2003:63).

The BWA has certainly translated words into action particularly in its relationship to South Africa. This was seen in its involvement in facilitating unity and reconciliation talks between the BUSA and BCSA as well as its holding of the General Council Meetings in South Africa in 1998.

2.4 HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE FIVE BAPTIST ORGANIZATIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA

The five main Baptist organizations in South Africa are BUSA, BCSA, BASA, BMSA and the ABK will be examined. They are: -

2.4.1 THE BAPTIST UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA (BUSA)

The history of BUSA is recorded by one of its historians, Rev Sydney Hudson-Reed. This history is a record of British Settlers that came to South Africa in 1820 and started the BUSA in Grahamstown. The following is a summary from a journal, *The History of the Baptist Union of South Africa* (Hudson-Reed 1977).

In 1820 a handful of Baptists left Britain to come to the Cape Colony. These settlers maintained close contact with their home churches and founded the first Baptist church in Grahamstown. The early pioneers of the BUSA churches were Mr. and Mrs. J. Temlett, Mr. John Miller and Mr. William Shepherd, Mr. And Mrs. Trotter and Mr. And Mrs. Prior. William Miller was elected and inducted as minister of the first Baptist church in Grahamstown. Their meeting place for worship was in a hut built with wattle and daub (Hudson-Reed 1983:15). In 1823 according to Hudson-Reed (1983:15) a permanent building was erected in St Batholomew Street, Grahamstown and in October 1977 when the BUSA celebrated its Centenary, it was declared a National Monument.

The early history of the BUSA church was not without problems. Hudson-Reed records that (1983:16) personality clashes, ideological wrangling and disagreements with the mother church in England resulted in division and disruption within the fellowship. In 1825 Miller was asked to resign. No reasons are given by Hudson-Reed for this, which saw the church being closed for a short period and later suffered a serious split. As a result of this, in 1849 another church was formed called the Ebenezer Baptist Church.

Many attempts were made to amalgamate the two churches. According to Hudson-Reed (1983:19) it was only after fifteen years that reconciliation and amalgamation came.

A second influx of immigrants was to play a very important part in Baptist beginnings in South Africa. They came from Germany in 1857 and were essentially military in character. On the 15 April 1861, the first Baptist church of German origin was formed at Frankfort. The work grew at an amazing rate because the German Baptists followed a motto "every Baptist a missionary". New churches were formed throughout South Africa.

On 11 July 1877, the Baptist Union of South Africa was formed. In 1892, the South African Baptist Missionary Society (SABMS) was formed. The purpose of this organisation was to get missionaries from England to witness to the "natives". Many Blacks were converted. Between 1898 and 1918, Black members of the BUSA grew from 172 to 4185. Ministry also spread to the Coloured and Indian people. Many of the missionaries that came to work among the Blacks, Coloureds and Indians were from England and Germany.

In 1947 the BUSA invited Ivor Powell of South Wales to South Africa for an evangelistic crusade. He won many souls from all the race groups. In 1951, the Baptist Theological College was formed with Rev J. Barnard from Birmingham as its principal.

From its inception until 1963, the executive of the BUSA had been composed of whites

only. None of the constitutions or by-laws had laid this down. It was just assumed that since Baptist work began among whites, all other works were merely missionary work. However, people realized that other groups needed to be represented. By 1966, representatives from the Black and Indian Baptist organizations sat on the BUSA executive. In 1976 a resolution regarding absence of race or colour discrimination in churches of the Baptist Union was passed. It was made clear that local churches should be opened to all persons irrespective of race or colour, in respect of membership and attendance at services. Today, the BUSA is very different in size from those early days, but its objectives have hardly changed. Its principles and doctrinal emphases hardly show any variation and its inner fellowship and attitudes towards others are similar.

In reflecting on the history of the BUSA there are many that have promoted unity amongst Baptists in South Africa but unfortunately only a few that have stood up and championed this cause. As mentioned early in the research individuals that have contributed to the unity process amongst Baptists in South Africa will be noted. The research will highlight two persons from the BUSA in this regard. They are Professor J. N. Jonsson and Rev. Terry Rae.

2.4.1.1 Professor J.N. Jonsson

There are several reasons for choosing Jonsson as a contributor to the unity process amongst Baptists in South Africa. His contribution has been both in the academic as well

as in the socio-political fields. What is interesting about his contributions especially in the area of theology and his views about the then apartheid state was that it did make him very unpopular amongst the conservative Baptists of his times.

Johnson's father was a Swedish and his mother a Norwegian. He grew up within the socio-cultural and political conflicts of Zulu, European and Asian speaking peoples along the South Eastern coast of Southern Africa. He pastored churches in Pietermaritzburg and Durban. Jonsson was also the principal of the Baptist Theological College of South Africa in Johannesburg. He taught at University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, Natal University, Pietermaritzburg, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in the USA and Baylor University in the United States of America. He also served the BUSA as its president (Curriculum Vitae 1998:1-2).

2.4.1.2 Academic Contributions

Jonsson has written a number of articles and presented many papers both here in South Africa as well as abroad. Mention will be made only of those that had a direct bearing on his work in South Africa. The following are his contributions: -

In 1985 the *American Baptist Quarterly Vol 1V* published Johnson's article entitled *Baptists in Socio-Political Life in Southern Africa;*

On the 10 December 1988 Jonsson at the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations, presented a paper on *Racial Justice as a Path to Peace*;

In 1998 in Cape Town Jonsson presented a paper entitled *Societal Turbulence in the process of Democratization in South Africa*.

In spite of Johnson's being highly academic he identified with the poor and the marginalized. It is written of Jonsson in an article entitled Liberation of Human Life by his colleague J.A.L. Saunders 11 " ...he developed a dialogical elliptical process of thinking as that which actually belongs to incarnational theology. Nowhere is this more highly dramatized, in its retrospective "infancy," than at Jonsson's baptism at 19 years of age, where the Zulu preacher proclaimed "John (in place of Moses) has chosen to suffer with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season" (Jonsson 1993:10).

In the midst of his teaching, Jonsson also became intensely involved in the organization of the 1973 Mission and Evangelism Conference in Durban, where nine hundred Christian leaders of all races lived for two weeks in a "whites only" hotel, the first breakthrough of apartheid policies. He was also invited to stand for parliament, opposing the Nationalist Party but was unsuccessful. Although not successful in his bid, his influence in terms of policy, one of a South Africa for all races, colours and creeds without distinction, was profound in bringing to the fore an agenda of mutuality and dialogue within the political decision making process (Jonsson 1993:10).

Jonsson also communicated to leaders such as Desmond Tutu, Nico Smith, Beyers Naude and Piet Koornhof. These men were his personal friends. The following is an excerpt from a letter written to Piet Koornhof, the Chairman of the Presidents Council:

“ ... It is not possible to formulate a strategy for a new dispensation belonging to all peoples of South Africa without calling a convention which is representative of all the socio-political polarities and aspirations of all peoples in the Republic” (Jonsson 1993:11).

In the researcher's view Jonsson was preparing Baptists to move beyond their exclusive mindset and to work towards embracing all types of people irrespective of their race, colour, creed or background. He boldly wrote about his convictions regarding race relations and the need for reconciliation and was the most outspoken Baptist critic of the apartheid government. He was not popular among his fellow white Baptists given the political conditions in the country where Baptists generally kept silent during the apartheid years.

2.4.1 3 Rev. Terry Rae

Terry Rae a Baptist Minister served the BUSA at various levels, notably as President and General Secretary. Rae differs from Jonsson in many ways and his contributions to the unity process became evident when he served as General Secretary of the BUSA in the late 1990s and early 2002.

Unlike Jonsson, Rae had strong pastoral and leadership qualities.

2.4.1 3.1 Contributions to SABA

Rae was one of the pioneers of the SABA. His involvement with the unity process as mentioned took place during his tenure as General Secretary of the BUSA. It was also during the period where the BCSA under the leadership of Re. D. Hoffmeister was being recognized and supported by the International Baptist Community. The BCSA had engaged in an international effort to expose the BUSA and its racial attitudes and policies. Many of these took place at Baptist World Alliance Meetings in different parts of the world where Rae attended as a representative of the BUSA. Rae in representing the BUSA had to respond to these criticisms from the BCSA. He was able to steer through those difficult and sometimes embarrassing experiences.

A very significant contribution of Rae was his input in the formation of the SABA. Ragwan records (2003:63) that when the BWA held its General Council Meeting in Durban in July 1998, Rae requested that Baptist leaders in South Africa needed to meet. As result of the many meetings held by the leaders of the five Baptist organizations, the SABA was officially launched in July 2001 at the Durban City Hall.

Rae, as a leader in the BUSA, championed the ideals of SABA, which were unity, co-operation and reconciliation. It was the first time that a white representative of the BUSA

engaged leaders from the other Baptist organizations on matters such as race, apartheid and reconciliation. During a special Communion Service Rae apologized on behalf of BUSA to the other delegates at SABA for the hurt that the BUSA has caused over the years (Baptist Unity Minutes 1999:3).

2.4.2 THE BAPTIST CONVENTION OF SOUTH AFRICA (BCSA)

The following section is summarized from Makanya (1990).

William Mashologu, a Black spiritual leader started Black Baptist churches wherever he opened Black schools. He was aided by the National Black American Baptists. Later, German missionaries and British settlers also started missionary work among Blacks. However, their mission enterprise and the colonization policy were complimentary to each other. The missionaries' job was purely to evangelize the 'natives' but also to make them subservient to the British crown. Missionaries became promoters of racial segregation as they felt that separate churches for settlers and Africans were necessary.

The Baptist Union which was the only recognized Baptist Body in the country at that time remained passive when the state, in 1957, proposed an additional clause to the Apartheid laws, barring Blacks from attending churches in the so-called White areas. Even the policy of the Missionary Society (formed in 1892) was racist because only whites dominated the mission field and church work. However, in the 1960s, the motto of

this society was “Evangelization of the Bantu by the Bantu”.

Bantu Pastors were employed to evangelize Bantu communities. The Baptist Union appointed White missionaries to oversee the Bantu Pastors. Black churches rejected this policy because of the dominating attitude of many white missionaries (Makanya 1990:34).

Dr John N Jonsson (1992) in his paper *Institute for Baptist and Anabaptist studies*, notes that within the Baptist Churches, everything was seen from a white perspective. Whites made the decision regarding Black worship. The thinking behind this was based on the government’s task of keeping law and order, which meant ‘keeping Blacks in place’. The government sought the help of the church. And the church volunteered. The missionaries continued to work among the Blacks. There was, however, a weak emphasis on spiritual commitment and growth. Old clothes and small financial grants were the main means of attraction. Through the work of Rev. Elijah Mkhwanazi (1957 to 1960), the Bantu Baptist church began to emphasize the need for members to be saved. This move caused disquiet among the missionaries and even some senior Bantu Pastors who had no knowledge of Jesus’ saving power. Uniforms were introduced to Bantu church members, which became a form of false hope of salvation.

The Bantu Baptist Church was growing fast in membership. In 1966, its leadership felt it wrong and unbiblical to remain racially segregated. In 1968, the name was changed to the

Baptist Convention of South Africa. (BCSA). In 1986, the Baptist Union of South Africa gave the Baptist Convention of South Africa six years to dissolve and join the Union. The Baptist Convention of South Africa felt a merger would be more appropriate. This was not accepted by the BUSA. At the BCSA assembly of 1987, it was decided that the BCSA will stand on its own as an independent autonomous body. In so doing, the BCSA reaffirmed its commitment to maintain a healthy and sound relationship with the BUSA on the basis of brotherly love and Christian fellowship.

Apartheid has had a very detrimental effect on the BCSA. Hoffmeister (1990:30) lists the following effects of Apartheid on the Black churches of the BCSA: -

Inferior Theological Training;

Division within the body of Christ;

Financial implications;

Spiritual decline.

At present the BCSA exists still as an autonomous body with its own structures and a full time general secretary.

2.4.2.1 Rev. Desmond Hoffmeister

There are several leaders in the BCSA that have contributed to the unity process amongst

Baptists in South Africa. Hoffmeister stands out as one who gave vision and direction to the BCSA when he was the General Secretary of the BCSA. He is a graduate of the Baptist Theological College of South Africa and served as the pastor of a church in Ennerdale in Johannesburg.

2.4.2.1.1 Hoffmeister's Contributions

During Hoffmeister's tenure as General Secretary of the BCSA he mapped out a vision for the Baptist Convention of South Africa. An important area of this vision was the unity of Baptists in South Africa. The following were initiatives undertaken by him in this process of unification: -

On the 31 May 1990 he co-ordinated a National Workshop in Barkly West in the Northern Cape. This Conference was called the Barkly West National Awareness Workshop. The purpose of this workshop was to find an alternate interpretation of the experience of the BCSA which was previously affiliated to the BUSA and to move forward which Hoffmeister and Gurney says (1990:5) "... which the Convention could move forward with godly expectation and faith. This hope includes all Baptists worshipping together without regard to race, colour, gender or status".

After meeting with the National leadership of the BCSA he set about making contact with leaders of the other Baptist organizations. Regular contact and meetings were held with

the BUSA and its General Secretary. A very significant consultation between the BCSA and the BUSA was held on 15 May 1998 in Colesberg. Hoffmeister initiated this groundbreaking consultation, which saw the BCSA and the BUSA committing themselves to unity and reconciliation.

In 1994 Hoffmeister met with the BASA and BMSA at Springfield in Durban. The purpose of this consultation was to build relationship with leaders of the two largely ethnic based organizations as well as explore ways of co-operating with BASA and the BMSA with regards to ministry in South Africa.

He envisioned a united Baptist organization in South Africa. He together with Rev Terry Rae of the BUSA invited the BWA to South Africa to hold its General Council Meetings. It was Hoffmeister who insisted that the non-BWA members i.e. BASA and BMSA be part of the Local Arrangements Committee to plan for the BWA General Council Meetings. The two organizations did become part of the LAC and as a result this gave Baptists an opportunity to work together. This working together was the beginning of the process of unification. SABA was created as a result of the LAC working together which represented four of the five Baptist organizations (Ragwan 200339).

2.4.3 THE BAPTIST ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AFRICA

The history below is a summary from the BASA Annual Brochure (Israel 1998:2).

During the year 1900, hundreds of Indian Indentured labourers came to South Africa, among who were about 150 Baptist Christians who originated from Madras, India. Many of these workers were dispatched to the Tea estates of Kearsney on the North Coast of Natal.

The owners of the tea estates, the Hulettts, sought the assistance of the Wesleyan missionaries for the spiritual needs of their employees. Soon language and denominational problems emerged. The Baptist Indians expressed the desire to have a Telugu Baptist Minister. In the meantime, the American Baptist Telugu Church in South India planned on sending out missionaries of their own, one of their countries on their list being South Africa.

In 1903, Rev John Rangiah and his family accepted the call to come to South Africa to work among the Indians in Kearsney, Natal. Rev Tomlinson of the South African General Mission (SAGM) took him to Phoenix, Durban, Duffs Road, and Verulam where he ministered to Indians. However, a short while later he felt the need to go to the people of Kearsney because it was at their request that he was sent to South Africa. The Hulettts gave the Rangiahs a large house in Kearsney. The first Indian Baptist Church was formed on 25 December 1903 at Kearsney. Later churches were established mainly in the Natal region. Rev Rangiah also established a school in Kearsney. In 1914 the Natal Indian Baptist Association (NIBA) was formed. Rev Rangiah died on 23 December 1915. Rev Tomlinson assisted the Indian Baptist Churches regularly and so did the Baptist Union of South Africa. His son, who continued with the work among the Indian Baptists,

succeeded Rev John Rangiah. He arrived in Kearsney on 7 March 1921. His goal was re-organization and church planting. A number of churches were planted under his leadership. After his death in 1947, European Baptists assisted the Indians to continue with the Indian Baptist work.

In 1951, Rev D.N. Nathaniel and his family arrived in Natal from the Nelore Baptist Church in India. He was trained at a College in Bangalore, which was supported by the Baptist Mission of England. He became the superintendent missionary of NIBA. He wrote many Telugu songs and translated some popular hymns into Telugu. The staff of the South African Baptist Missionary Society (SABMS), a body formed by the Baptist Union, visited the Indian churches regularly. Rev T.D. Pass of the Baptist Union worked closely with Rev Nathaniel. Rev Pass introduced Nathaniel to the circuit system, where a minister pastored churches in a particular region.

All three missionaries stressed the value of education. The first sent his ten-year-old son to India to study. The second budgeted to buy a book a month and the third as a personal example, gained his Masters in Divinity degree at the age of seventy years. Rev Nathaniel died at the age of 77 on 20 December 1985. Rev R. Ellaya, a graduate of Johannesburg Bible Institute, then assumed the position of senior minister in the BASA.

From this history we need to note that Indians were influenced by Britain as they converted them in India. Furthermore the missionaries from the SABMS that visited the Indian churches were Europeans. The ministers and missionaries from the Baptist Union

who assisted the Indian churches had either a British or a German background.

Moving from the British influence on the Indians we now highlight the influence and contributions of these Indians on the unification process in South Africa. Whilst there were many who have played a role in the spiritual and sometimes upliftment of the people in South Africa very little was done to work towards unity amongst Baptists in South Africa. Any tendencies towards unification with other Baptists were viewed by many in BASA as being disloyal or rather critical of the close-knit organization. There have been a few that shared their desire to unite with other Baptist organizations. They are: -

2.4.3.1 Rev. D. N. Nathaniel

Rev.D.N. Nathaniel, born in India arrived in South Africa on 9 June 1951. He served the BASA as a superintendent missionary for almost thirty-five years (Israel 1978:7).

2.4.3.1.1 Nathaniel's Contributions

As leader in the early years of the BASA he wrote about unification. Later in the research the split that occurred between the BASA and the BMSA, is recorded and Nathaniel makes reference to this split. His view is that there should be one united Indian Baptist organization in South Africa. This must not be seen as a sectarian view, which is dealing

with the Indian Baptist work. Nathaniel was responding to the split that occurred within his own people. He was also critical of the views held by Rev T. M. Rangiah who was the son of the pioneer missionary of BASA. Nathaniel in his thesis entitled *The Origin and Development of the Indian Baptist Church in South Africa, 1900-1978* responds to Rev. Rangiah's remarks regarding the amalgamation of BASA and the BMSA of which Rangiah was not in favour Nathaniel says (1979:53) "This statement does not show the spirit of forbearance". He further responds (1979:54) by stating, "This separation of the Indian work has culminated in decline rather than progress at the end of the ministry of the sons of the pioneers of the Natal Indian Baptist Association as well as the Indian Baptist Mission".

The strongest call for unity between the two organization from any BASA leader came from Nathaniel when he states (1979:111) that "To this end no stone should be left unturned, unity then must be advocated and encouraged by every member and by every church".

Other BASA leaders that have played important roles in the formation of SABA are the late A. Poliah, N.M. Israel, M. Nathaniel, R.S. Nathaniel, R. Israel and R.Ragwan. Ragwan served as a facilitator for SABA from November 2002 to October 2003.

2.4.4 THE BAPTIST MISSION OF SOUTH AFRICA (BMSA)

2.4.5

The following is a summary from the Indian Baptist Mission Golden Jubilee Brochure (Jacob, et al 1953).

To a large extent, the Indian Baptist Mission, now called the Baptist Mission of South Africa has similar a history to the BASA. Indentured labourers arrived from Nellore, Ongole, Kurnool and other Districts. Among them were Baptists. Most of these Christians were allotted to Messrs Sir J.L. Huletts and Sons Ltd tea planters at Kearsney on the Natal North Coast. Of this number some were educated at the American Baptist Telugu Mission Schools in India. Mr. D. Benjamin, an educated Christian, conducted services and took care of the spiritual interest of the Christian community at Kearsney. Others that assisted him were Yellamandha and Mr. Yacob. Mr. Benjamin continued with his pastoral work for three years as the spiritual leader of his community.

The Huletts enlisted the services of a Wesleyan Minister from Stanger to minister to these Indian Baptists. This proved unsuccessful as they felt the need to have a minister of their own denomination and race minister to them. In June of 1903 Rev John Rangiah arrived in Natal to take up a request to assist with the Indian Work in Kearsney. During 1903 to 1912 the numbers of believers increased from 80 to 218. During these years Rev N.C. Tomlinson of the South African General Mission was of great assistance to the Indian Baptists. Rev V.C. Jacob, on 21 April 1911, responded to an invitation by the Rev D. Downie for a Telugu missionary to reside in Durban. Rev D. Downie laid the foundation

of the Depot Road Baptist Church now called Somseu Road Baptist Church in 1909 and on 12 August 1911, the Somseu Road Baptist Church was formally opened. In 1912 Rev V.C. Jacob, through ill health, returned to India after handing all the books and documents to Rev John Rangiah. A rift occurred in 1913 when a section of Rev Rangiah's congregation was in dispute with him.

Attempts by the Telugu Baptist Convention to investigate and settle the differences were unsuccessful. A representative, Rev. Wheeler Boges from the Telugu Baptist Convention in India was sent for this purpose. It took a marathon meeting to deal with this matter. A council of sixty members headed on one side by Rev Rangiah and on the other by Mr. Y.A. Lazarus deliberated on this matter. Rev Boges left for India disappointed at the outcome of the meeting. Rev John Rangiah resigned as missionary of the Mission to the Home Missionary Society. His resignation was accepted by the Convention. Rev Rangiah broke away from the mission and formed the Natal Telugu Baptist Association.

Rev V.C. Jacob returned to Natal on 13 December 1915 to continue with the work left over by Rev John Rangiah. There were several attempts by the Baptist Mission of South Africa to amalgamate with the Baptist Association of South Africa. The first was made in 1917. Mr. K. David a representative from the Association opinioned that matters should be allowed to remain as they stood since the Association was not desirous of amalgamation. Another attempt at some kind of amalgamation failed once more in 1923. After a lengthy discussion, the following was agreed upon, " We unite separately, that is, we unite in helping each other when necessary in regard to Church discipline and to

safeguard the independence of the churches.” Between 1923 and 1932 the two organizations kept to the 1923 agreement.

In 1923, Rev T.M. Rangiah of the Baptist Association was asked to formally open the Compensation Baptist Church, a Mission church and when Rev T.M. Rangiah went on study leave to India, Rev V.C Jacob of the mission was asked to assist in the work of the Association. Rev V.C. Jacob died in 1932. The work of the Mission carried on under the leadership of Mr. S. John. In the meantime there was a desire to invite Rev V. J. Jacob, the son of the late Rev V.C. Jacob, to take charge of the Mission Work. The officials of the Natal Baptist Association were asked to assist in bringing Rev V. J. Jacob to South Africa. The Natal Baptist Association, represented by the late Mr. T.C.C. Sloane, M. Smith and others advised the Mission Executive to amalgamate with the Natal Indian Baptist Association. The Mission Executive, who wanted to amalgamate and at the same time who desired to invite Rev V.J. Jacob, joined the Natal Indian Baptist Association. In 1934 Rev T.M. Rangiah took over the work of the mission.

On 28 July 1936 Rev V.J. Jacob arrived in Natal. In 1938 the people felt that the arrangement made with the Association was not satisfactory because the treasury was decentralized. It was decided in 1936 to divide the Association into two branches one, to be called the Northern Division and to be under Rev T.M. Rangiah and the other to be called the Southern Division, which was to be under Rev. V.J. Jacob. This set-up also proved to be unsatisfactory. Between 1938 to 1948 the membership in the mission churches declined. Rev Jacob left for India in 1947. In his absence the Mission Executive

appointed Mr. Kidd as their Permanent Superintendent to carry on with the work. In 1948 Rev V.J. Jacob returned from India and the Mission dispensed with the services of Mr. Kidd.

On 29 July 1951 the mission executive decided to join the BUSA. The BUSA, at their General Assembly, accepted the Mission as a member church. The Mission, while enjoying the privilege of membership, was free to carry on its own work. Today the BMSA has 13 churches and is also a member of the newly formed Baptist body called SABA.

Within the leadership of the BMSA there were those that contributed to the unification process amongst Baptists in South Africa. Several leaders have been in the forefront advocating for the unification of Baptists in South Africa. During the 1990s leaders such as Rev. P. Daniels, Rev. A. Premanandha, Rev. D. Mosiah and Mr. Daniel Philip convened the Deep River Consultation. At this conference these men promoted the creation of one united Baptist organization in South Africa. Presently Daniel Philip, Jacob Moses, Brain Naidoo and Leslie Benjamin are making contribution to the discussions at the SABA meetings. These leaders were also responsible for the creation of SABA.

2.4.4.1 Daniel Philip

Daniel Philip, presently an educator and pastor of a church in Durban has led the BMSA

at many of the SABA meetings. Philip as the General Secretary of the BMSA, has always championed the cause for a united Baptist organization in South Africa. On the 31 July 2001 Philip played an important role in co-coordinating the launch of the SABA (SABA Minutes 2001:4).

2.4.5 THE AFRIKAANSE BAPTISTE KERK (ABK)

Reed (1983:207-232) in his book, *By Taking Heed*, records that the ABK had its roots in the 1800's. Jacobus Daniel Odendaal, who was baptized by a German minister in 1867, played a significant role in the formation of the Afrikaanse Baptiste Kerk. In the early days, before the formation of the ABK a previous body called the Afrikaanse Baptiste Vereeniging did not last long. Reed further records that the Afrikaanse Baptiste Vereeniging was short-lived.

Dissension arose which stunted co-operative efforts and led to the dissolution of the Association. The break-up was as a result of personality clashes, lack of communication and theological differences, which sometimes called for a polarization between English-speaking and Afrikaans Baptists.

The ABK was formed on 29 September 1944 at Warden with most of its members living in the then Transvaal. The introduction of the ABK was in principle a continuation of the Afrikaanse Baptiste Vereeniging. The ABK went through a constitutional evolution. In

1944 the ABK drew up their constitution.

Then it was discovered that a clause covering voting rights of church officials needed to be included in the constitution in 1950. Another change was made in 1951 where the concept of an Executive Committee was introduced. In 1957 the ABK revised its constitution. This motivation to change came from younger men who felt that changes would lead to a forward movement. The revised constitution was introduced by way of a succinct statement of basic Baptist principles. Reed states that the influence of the Constitution of the Baptist Union of South Africa is unmistakably discernible in the revised constitution.

A new lease of life became evident when the ABK opened its Seminarium in 1961 for the training of men. Unfortunately this was short lived as many ministers resigned and the stream of students for the Seminarium dried up. Reed states that concern among members of the executive led to the calling of a General Congress at Aloe Fjord in November 1971. This Congress was called to discuss the congregational prayer, church administration, training and strategy. Reed goes on to say that in spite of the theological differences, which came to light during the Congress, a spirit of mutual understanding and appreciation was discernible.

In 1972, after its revised constitution was adopted, the ABK called Rev W.J. Venter as its fulltime Secretary. The churches of the ABK are still largely concentrated in the Gauteng Province with a few in Kwa Zulu –Natal, North West Province and Eastern Province.

2.4.5.1 Dr. Carl Lehmkuhl

Dr Carl Lehmkuhl represents the ABK at the SABA meetings. As the General Secretary of the ABK for many years he is open to the idea of a united Baptist organization in South Africa. He is the most consistent representative of the ABK at the SABA meetings. He serves as the treasurer of SABA and plays an important role in the formulation of policies at SABA meetings.

As an Afrikaner Lehmkuhl has embraced leaders from the other organizations and is appreciated for his sincerity and dedication to the unification process. He together with a fellow ABK delegate Rev. J. Du Preez, promoted the creation of a Federal Theological College within SABA. The ABK under the leadership of Lehmkuhl agreed for the BCSEA and BUSA to use their campus at Kempton Park for such a College (SABA Minutes 2001:2).

2.4.6 Conclusion

The above is an overview of the histories of the ecumenical movement and its different organs. The significant developments as far as church unity is concerned were reflected in these different organs. This history also included the history of the BWA and the strong call by its General Secretary Dr Denton Lotz for unity and reconciliation amongst Baptists. The BWA's conference on Baptist Against Racism and Ethnic Conflict was also

examined. Finally, the histories of the five Baptist organizations in South Africa were recorded. Whilst their histories have been characterized by great sacrifices and dedication, it was also a divided church. The five Baptist organizations in South Africa to a very large extent functioned independently from each other. What were the key reasons for this? Chapter three will present the process of diversification and what were some of the key issues that caused division within the Baptist Church in South Africa.

CHAPTER THREE

3. THE PROCESS OF DIVERSIFICATION

3.1 INTRODUCTION

As far as division in the Baptist Church in South Africa is concerned the following played an adverse role in the life of the church; apartheid, racism, and ethnicity. Each of these will be defined and examined in this chapter. The relationship of the BUSA with the other four Baptist organizations will be critically analyzed. Finally this chapter will examine and study the two mainly Indian Baptist organizations.

3.2 APARTHEID

It could be said that apartheid started in the late 1800's. Many would be tempted to suggest that it started in 1948 when the National Party came to power with its racist policies (de Gruchy 1979:53). It is within such a milieu that Baptists began their work.

It also must be stated that Baptists were part of the settlers that came to South Africa. Hudson-Reed (183:15) confirms this by stating, "among the intrepid British Settlers of 1820 was a small group of Baptist laymen".

Due to historical reasons Baptists too were divided along racial and ethnic lines. It may seem unfair to single out two of the organizations that historically enjoyed full citizenship

and were protected by the law of the land. The other two Baptist organizations namely the BASA and BMSA, despite being disadvantaged in many ways, had their own shortcomings, particularly in the area of Christian unity. It will also be helpful to state that Baptists never started off as one single organization. History records that the five Baptist organizations started their organizations at different periods in history, BUSA was formed in 1877 (Reed 1983:361), ABK in 1944 (Hudson-Reed 1983 :218), BCSA in 1927 (Hoffmeister & Gurney 1990:33), BASA in 1914 (Rangiah 1964:10) and BMSA in 1903 (Indian Baptist Mission Golden Jubilee 1953:3).

It is important to look briefly at the general history of South Africa from the early 1800's to get a sense of the realities that the five Baptist organizations were faced with. This general history must be seen in three phases. Loubser calls them the Dutch Period (1652-1795), the British Period (1795/1814/1948) and the Afrikaner Period (1924/1948-7).

3.2.1 The Dutch Period

Jan Van Riebeeck was dispatched by the Dutch East Company (DEIC) to build a fort and establish a garden at the Cape. This was to serve as a halfway station for ships between Holland and the East. The purpose of this was to increase the profit of the DEIC's trade and small-scale farming. According to Regehr, Jan Van Riebeeck had no interest of conquest and subjugation.

The early Dutch Settlers depended upon the Khoikhoi for their cattle. The Khoikhoi who were the indigenous inhabitants were a nomadic people who followed their herds of cattle and sheep to grazing areas. They later became known as the Hottentots (Regehr 1979:105).

Whilst both these communities lived side by side, the Dutch settlers according to Regehr initiated the first sign of apartheid when they erected a hedge that separated the Khoikhoi from the Dutch settlement. Further conflict between the two communities arose when problems over grazing rights and land occurred. This eventually led to two wars, which forced the Khoikhoi to accept the Dutch occupation. The Dutch hired the Khoikhoi as farm labourers and domestic servants. As a result of miscegenation between the San, khoikhoi, slaves and Whites the coloured population (people of mixed blood) emerged (Stack & Morton 1976:11).

Despite this mixing of races during this period, the whites however, according to Loubser (1987:5) viewed themselves a distinct group from the others. Loubser further states that in 1788, a number of Stellenbosch people protested against a corporal who was "dark of colour and of heathen descent". At the end of the eighteen-century, race prejudice was firmly established everywhere and shortly after this, the Afrikaans language became a symbol of white identity (Davenport 1977:5).

The Bible played a part in the lives of the settlers as it guided and informed their lives in the colony. Contrary to Loubser's assertion that the Bible and the church did not directly

play such a part in their lives, scriptures from the Bible were used to justify their customs and practices. Psalms chapter 105 is but just one text that was used for such purposes.

The following New Testament texts will show how the mind of the Afrikaner at that time justified apartheid: -

2 Corinthians 6:14 " ... do not be yoked together with unbelievers ... "

2 Corinthians 6:17 " ... come out from them and be ye separate ... "

2 Corinthian 6:17 " ... touch not the unclean: and I will receive you ... "

Furthermore, the Bible was their only contact with literacy and they came to identify themselves, according to Regehr, with the chosen people of the Old Testament, whom God led to the Promised Land. So, one can conclude that the Bible indeed played a part in their lives (Regehr 1979:113).

Generally many have been critical of the Afrikaner because the Afrikaner is synonymous with apartheid. One must apportion blame to a certain extent as well to the British for the divisions in South Africa. The researcher recalls as a student attending a special lecture by John Stott with the entire student body of the Baptist Theological College of Southern Africa in Parktown, Johannesburg. The subject was apartheid in South Africa and the Christian's response to it. John Stott shared the lecture with a few local English speakers. During the question and answer sessions, the Afrikaners were blamed for apartheid in South Africa. A fellow black student confronted the speakers about the role the English

had played in the divisions in South Africa. Confessions were made and apologies followed because of a one sided viewpoint, especially by the South African speakers.

On the other hand it can be argued that the British promoted racial harmony and cannot be blamed for apartheid. Advocates of this may cite the British's sympathy for blacks. They took issue with the Boers as far as their treatment of the blacks were concerned. They were also concerned at the provocation of the blacks by the Boers. The imperialistic attitudes of the British towards the Boers were evident.

3.2.2 The British Era

According to Loubser, within a decade the Cape suffered a change of government three times (1795 - 1803 - 1806) and each time the church had to adapt itself to new situations. During this period more freedom was experienced by Blacks, who could now enter the colony freely under a pass system to sell labour and trade. Dr John Philip who championed the cause of the Blacks was not well received by the Boers because of his influence on the government to issue Ordinance 50 which was in favour of Blacks enjoying the same legal rights white colonists enjoyed (Regehr 1979:121). Although he advanced the course of the Khoikhoi he felt that Blacks should live separate from whites until such time as they could compete with whites in white culture on a an equal footing. Regehr (1979:121) also states that John Philip wanted African chiefs to safeguard their land against the incursion of white farmers.

There were further attempts by the English to advance their imperialistic supremacy. They attempted to anglicize the Dutch, but this failed. However Regehr states (1979:116) that the Afrikaans language became dominant amongst the "coloured" people.

3.2.3 The Afrikaner Period

During this period in the History of South Africa apartheid was introduced by the National Party when it came into power in 1948 (Stack & Morton 1976:16). It was during this period apartheid became legally sanctioned in South Africa. Below will follow a definition of apartheid and racism and its effects on the population especially on the Blacks.

Having described the three main periods in the history of South Africa, the two white Baptist organizations namely the BUSA and the ABK have been viewed by the other three organizations as either collaborators or supporters of apartheid and have been largely silent in voicing their opposition to apartheid.

The single most disuniting force amongst Baptists has been Apartheid. Apartheid manifested itself in many forms in the church such as inferior theological education for blacks, insensitivity of white Baptists towards black Baptists and structures of the white Baptist Union of South Africa that were considered to be racist. Reading of the various papers presented at the BCSA's Awareness Workshop held in Barkly West in 1990 one

will discover that these papers reflect the claim of the BCSA that the BUSA still practices racism and apartheid within their structures and ministries. One would have thought that the church would be free from the influence of this ideology. Unfortunately it brought about much conflict between black and white Baptists, as well as allowed other Baptists to maintain their separateness such as the Afrikaanse Baptiste Kerk, the Baptist Mission of South Africa and the Baptist Association of South Africa. Before proceeding with the factors of disunity amongst the five groups, a definition of the main factor apartheid will be defined and a description of this ideology will follow.

3.2.3.1 Apartheid and racism

Apartheid literally translated means "apart-ness" or "separation." It is pronounced, "apar-hate" and was first used in a leading Afrikaans newspaper in 1943 (Stack & Morton 1976:17). Dr Malan, the first Nationalist prime minister, used the term frequently to describe South Africa's goals of government. Central to this system was the notion that the different races and cultures of South Africa could never be an integrated whole, sharing a common citizenship. The different race groups such as the whites (English and Afrikaans speaking), blacks and Indians each had either perpetuated or suffered as far as apartheid was concerned.

Stack and Morton describes apartheid and its effects on the black population of South Africa. This gives one a sense of the conditions of apartheid under which both black and

white Christians and Baptists had to live out their faith. Black people were deprived of their land and were forcibly removed and given arid tribal "homelands". They were stripped of their right to vote for the all-white government, which controlled their destinies. They were reduced to offering their labour at poverty wages to gain the right to re-enter the "white" land where white people owned eighty seven percent of the land, and where they worked separated from their families eleven months out of the year as migrant labourers. The fruits of the apartheid state accrued mainly to the whites, which swallowed up almost seventy percent of the total national income. This fact was that apartheid was all about a life of privilege, power and plenty for the whites, based on the exploitation of cheap "non-white" labour. Martin M Marger in his book *Race and Ethnic Relations* states that the cruel ironies of apartheid were that it was financed primarily by its victims. All non-whites – Africans, Coloureds and Indians were discriminated against, yet they had to underwrite the oppressive system by accepting artificially low wages and seriously deprived working and living arrangements (Marger 2003:440).

In reality the entire population were daily victims in one sense or another. Blacks suffered daily disasters, from homicide to humiliation. The researcher himself was thrown out of a first class coach while traveling from Johannesburg to Germiston because of the colour of his skin since the first class coach was reserved for whites only (Ragwan 2003:19). From expropriation to grinding poverty, from brutal torture and imprisonment to relentless persecution, family life was shattered, careers wrecked, education withheld, and life was a round-the-clock survival. Even the supporters of apartheid says Stack and Morton (1977:18) paid a price, living in constant fear that they have created a monster

and were losing basic human sensitivity.

Perhaps the best way to describe apartheid is to read the words as recorded by Stack & Morton (1976:18) of two Prime ministers namely Mr. Strijdom and Mr. Verwoerd. Mr. Strijdom said "Our policy is that the European must stand their ground and must remain baas (boss) in South Africa. If we reject the Herrenvolk idea and the idea that the white man cannot remain baas, if the franchise is to be extended to the non-Europeans, and if the non-Europeans are developed on the same basis as the Europeans, how can the European remain baas? Our view is that in every sphere we must retain the right to rule the country and keep it a white man's country." T.R.H Davenport in his book *South Africa – A modern History* confirms this by stating that the mystique of apartheid as elaborated by its exponents after 1948 came to mean separation in all possible fields, political, territorial, residential, cultural and economic (Davenport 1977:331). Upon analysis of a statement of this nature the principles of apartheid are clearly reflected which strongly advocated the separation of races.

Stack and Morton records (1976:17) Mr. Verwoerd's, speech in the House of Assembly on 25 January 1963 in which he stated, "Reduced to its simplest form the problem is nothing else than this: We want to keep South Africa white. Keeping it white can only mean one thing, namely white domination, not leadership, not guidance, but control, supremacy." Here, too, the strong insistence was that South Africa be a country where the separateness of the two races be maintained with whites enjoying supremacy over blacks.

If separation meant separation in all possible fields such as political, territorial, residential, cultural and economic where does it leave the church particularly the Baptist Church in South Africa with regards to having a united Baptist Church comprising both black and white? The laws of the country meant that Baptists did not have the freedom to become members of white churches and vice versa. It is not fair to criticize the Baptist Union and the Afrikaanse Baptiste Kerk at that time for having all white congregations as the laws of the country prohibited them from accepting black members into their churches. Others will argue on the morality and theological basis of such a scenario.

Having described briefly the apartheid system, it should be made known that this system occurred in a country that was populated by a majority of Blacks (Stack & Morton 1976:10). The population of South Africa was separated from each other politically, socially, culturally and territorially along racial lines. Racism played a major role in this process. Apartheid meant the separation of Blacks in every field.

3.3 RACISM

Having looked at an ideological system that caused so much of division we now examine another phenomenon that also adversely affected the population of South Africa.

The term “race” is defined as A.S. Park in his book, *Racial Conflict and Healing* as “A group of human beings possessing in common certain physical characteristics which are

determined by heredity”. He further states that racism is the “dogma that one ethnic group is condemned by nature to congenital inferiority and another group to congenital superiority” (Parks 1996:24).

Lotz (1993:22) defines racism as being rooted in the belief that a group or groups of people are by heredity and nature intrinsically superior to the rest of mankind, demands, supports and legitimizes the use of power in order to define, devalue, dominate and discriminate against those considered inferior.

Lotz answers an important question of how we get to this point of racism that has become a worldwide problem. He states that from the beginning of human history there has been racism that manifested itself in very different forms. According to Lotz (1993:10) this is shown in “rudimentary drawings on the walls of prehistoric caves and paintings in Egyptians tombs. Lauren in his book *Power and Prejudice*, maintains that discrimination is ancient in its origins. He goes on to say that from the earliest periods of human existence, groups developed prejudices towards others and then discriminated against those whom they regarded as different or inferior (Lauren 1988:5).

Denton Lotz stated that the real problem of the twentieth century would be the problem of the colour line – the relation of the darker to the lighter races (Lotz 1993:9). Lotz (1993:9) highlights information from the Human Rights Watch World Report of 1993 where racial and ethnic conflicts around the world have taken place. They are: -

Liberia: Krahn clan and the civil war;

Somalia: the violent destruction caused by fighting among the clans and sub clans;

Sri Lanka: the Sinhalese against the Tamil minority, resulting in 1.5 million displaced persons;

Sudan: the Arab North against the black animist/Christian South;

Turkey: the Turkish majority against the minority Kurds;

Iraq: Iraqis against the Kurds;

Palestine: the Arab - Israeli conflict;

Kenya: tribal tensions;

Nigeria: Ethnic conflicts, thousands left dead;

Germany: conflict with foreign workers;

Myanmar: Conflict with Muslim minority, and tribal aspirations;

Mauritania: Arab-Berber government used fraud and violence to disenfranchise large number of Blacks (Human Rights Watch World Report 1993).

The European people, after setting foot on African soil, were involved in a racial conflict and a struggle for survival. Loubser writes that because of their European background they were totally unprepared (Loubser 1987:3). To add to their frustrations, the Afrikaners did not favour racial integration of the churches and this caused divisions between the Dutch Reformed Church and the English speaking churches.

De Gruchy elaborates further on the struggles of the Afrikaner against British imperialism (de Gruchy 1979:18).

This frustration and unhappiness of the Afrikaner with British imperialism led them to trek northwards with a hope of building their own permanent nation (Regehr 1979:103). This outrage and frustration is reflected in the words of a Voortreker woman called Anna Steenkamp (de Gruchy 1979:19).

"It is not so much their freeing which drove us to such lengths, as their being placed on equal footing with Christians, contrary to the laws of God, and the natural distinction of race and colour so that it was intolerable for any decent Christian to bow down beneath such a yoke, wherefore we rather withdrew in order to preserve our doctrines of purity".

The real reason for the Afrikaners trekking away from British control seems to be a theological one. This can be disputed. In fact Hexham argues that the origins and underlying causes of the nationalist movement are matters of academic dispute. He goes on to say that some seek to analyze the movement's class dynamics, others seek less comprehensive solutions or invoke ideal types to explain its historical significance. But according to him most agree that the ideological roots of Afrikaner Nationalism are to be found in the Calvinist religion of the early white settlers who arrived at the Cape of Good Hope in the mid-seventeenth century (Hexham 1981:1).

Hexham further claims that another factor that played a continuing role in holding the Afrikaner people together and shaped their philosophy, is the Calvinism preached and practiced by the three largest Afrikaner reformed churches of which ninety percent of Afrikaners were adherents. The Old Testament was also like a mirror of their own lives.

In it they found the deserts and fountains, the droughts and plagues, the captivity and the exodus. Above all they found a chosen people guided by a stern but partial Deity through the midst of the heathen to a promised land. Hexham says that the Old Testament and the doctrines of Calvin molded the Boer into the Afrikaner of today. This exclusive and sectarian view of themselves did very little in race relations, which for decades had become an impediment to a free and just South Africa.

This divisive system of apartheid had an adverse effect on the Baptist church in South Africa as well. By this time all five Baptist organizations were in existence and all five of them were affected by apartheid and racism, with some more adversely than others.

It also must be stated that white Baptists were part of the settlers that came to South Africa. Hudson-Reed (1983:15) confirms this by stating that among the “intrepid British Settlers of 1820 was a small group of Baptist laymen”. Hudson-Reed in his book *By Taking Heed* however tends to see the past from a settler perspective. Hoffmeister and Gurney records Louise Kretzschmar’s paper *A Theology of Dominance – An alternative History of the Baptist Union of South Africa*, which she presented at the NAW. Here she recalls (1990:27) a settler type ideology in a pamphlet of the BUSA. In this pamphlet it is said that the Baptist settlers “ventured the stormy seas of the Cape where the scattered settlers were too few to keep the kaffirs to their agreed upon eastern side of the Great Fish River. They treated their pledges as scraps of paper, and when it pleased them they crossed the river to plunder cattle”.

In examining this accusation by the Baptist settlers, they seem to regard their possession of the land as being justified on the spurious grounds that the Xhosas were treaty breakers, cattle thieves and invaders and thereby understandable (though not excusable), the repetition of such views in the recent years says Kretzschmar (1990:27) is completely unjustifiable. C. M. Wilson in his book *Co-operation and Conflict: The Eastern Frontier* agrees with Kretzschmar by referring to the findings of a historical analysis. He states (1969:233) that the extent of the of these treaties were greatly misunderstood by both the settlers and colonial authorities, that the Xhosa were not the only cattle thieves and that the series of border conflicts were, at least in part, desperate attempts by the Xhosa to defend what remained of their land.

As stated earlier it may seem unfair to single out the BUSA as an organization and accuse it of apartheid and racism. Historically the BUSA as well as the ABK and its membership enjoyed full citizenship and were protected by the law of the land. The other three Baptist organizations namely the BASA, BMSA and the BCSA, despite being disadvantaged in many ways, had their own shortcomings, particularly in the area of Christian unity. It will also be helpful to state that Baptists never started off as one single organization. History records that the five Baptist organizations started their organizations at different periods in history, BUSA was formed in 1877 (Reed 1983:361), ABK in 1944 (Reed 1983:218), BCSA in 1927 (Hoffmeister & Gurney 1990:33), BASA in 1914 (Rangiah 1964:10) and BMSA in 1903 (Indian Baptist Mission Golden Jubilee 1953:2). Despite these five organizations being formed at different periods in history they all fell within the apartheid milieu and became influenced by it.

In the recording of the histories of the five Baptist organizations by their respective historians all but one writes about the social, political and economic injustices that apartheid created. Instead they highlight their achievements, victories and strides they have made as Baptists in South Africa. Hudson-Reeds recording of the BUSA is one such example. In his view (1983:7) the Baptist History particularly BUSA history is an outstanding one. Whilst from a BUSA perspective it has been an outstanding one, the reality is that the history of Baptists in this country has been one of division and for many years existed along racial lines. The existence of five different Baptist organizations is proof of that.

How did the Christian church respond to the problem of apartheid, which contributed to the disunity of the church as well as among the peoples of this country? Although there were racial divisions in South Africa prior to 1948 not much was being done by the church to address this problem. De Gruchy states (1979:39) that generally the church in South Africa prior to 1948 was preoccupied with the desire for peace. The Christian Council, which was formed in 1936 to foster co-operation among the churches, had called a conference at the University of Fort Hare to discuss the task of the churches in "Christian Reconstruction" after the war (de Gruchy 1979:39). It seemed that after the war with Hitler the world would be at peace. Seven years later the Christian Council convened another conference, this time at Rosetenville in Johannesburg. The theme at this conference was "The Church in a Multi-Racial Society" De Gruchy records that the optimism of Fort Hare had gone. The mood was one of apprehension. Apartheid had arrived (de Gruchy 1979:53).

How did Baptists in South Africa respond to this Apartheid that had arrived? The Conference convened by the Christian Council in 1949 invited leaders from various denominations including the Baptists to deal with the churches response to Apartheid. Unfortunately the BUSA represented Baptists at this Conference. Given the position of the BUSA on matters such as politics as well as it being white, would not have been a fully representative voice and therefore most likely would not be a strong opposition to Apartheid. Furthermore the Baptist Union of South Africa according to de Gruchy (1979:61) generally is more cautious on political matters.

In 1990 the mainly Black Baptist Convention of South Africa convened a Workshop to deal with the issue of Apartheid and to come up with a way forward. Most of the Black Baptist's response was expressed at a Workshop that was held in 1990 in Barkly West called the Barkly West Awareness Workshop. This workshop brought together their leadership who applied their minds to working out an 'empowered future'. In doing so they made an attempt to come to terms with, in the words of the editors Rev Desmond Hoffmeister and Brian Gurney the "official history of Baptist witness in South Africa". It was also stated that apartheid had wound itself into the structures of the Baptist witness in Southern Africa (Hoffmeister & Gurney 1990:5). This workshop dealt mainly with the BCSA's response to the history of the BUSA, which in their opinion were racist. The response and reactions of the other groups will be dealt with later in this chapter.

At this NAW conference the Baptist Convention listed the effects of apartheid on the Baptist Convention. It lists firstly the training of their pastors. BCSA pastors were fist

trained at Millard Bible School in Orlando in Soweto. The school was later removed to Ciskei. This was motivated by apartheid as the government wanted to remove blacks from the urban areas (NAW 1990:54). Stack and Morton in their book *Torment to Triumph* explains the Influx Control Act, which stipulates that no African may be permitted to remain in an urban area for longer than 72 hours without a permit, unless he or she was born and has been continuously resident there. Exceptions were made for persons who worked in one area continuously for ten years for one employer or for fifteen years for more than one employer (Stack & Morton 1976:26).

Black pastors of the BCSA received inferior theological education. Hoffmeister (1990:54) bemoans the criteria applied by the then white Baptist Union, which stated, "It is desirable that a candidate should have passed at least the equivalent education of junior (standard eight), ...". With regards to the training of the BCSA pastors he says, "Theological training of Convention pastors was subjected to the standards imposed by the Baptist Union. Our potential was limited. The curriculum was foreign in all respects. It became an insult to our dignity and humanness..." (NAW 1990:54). Kretzschmar (1990:30) calls the education taught at these institutions as both Euro-centered and privatized. By this she meant that the questions, subject matter, books and lecturers were predominantly based on European and North American theology. Further criticism of the theological education received by the BCSA pastors according to her was that students were not exposed to the significance of the rise of African and black Theologies. She adds that social ethics, especially issues directly related to the South African context, received little or no emphasis. It is quite obvious that the pastors trained at a black

Theological School were not being adequately prepared to minister within a context of political oppression and economic deprivation. Nor were they given the tools to evaluate the BUSA's own perception of the Christian gospel (NAW 1990:30).

When one reads de Gruchy's recording of the Baptist Union's statement to the apartheid government when the government wanted to deprive Africans of their limited Parliamentary representation, one is tempted to come to the defense of the Baptist Union of South Africa, but Hoffmesiter (1990:28) makes one realize that, no practical steps were taken to challenge the state. Nevertheless BUSA together with the Presbyterian Church of South Africa, the Methodists and the Congregational Assembly stated its opposition to the government's proposed legislation aimed at depriving Africans of their limited Parliamentary representation and according to de Gruchy (1979:54) the Assembly of the Baptist Union condemned this proposed legislation by stating, "any tampering with the accepted constitutional understanding that the franchise rights of non-Europeans will continue to be entrenched as provided in the South Africa Act. Furthermore it was gravely concerned at the rising tide of bitterness and resentment, non-cooperation and hatred, which is evident among those people concerned, by any suggestion of the limitation of their existing rights and legitimate aspirations, and the Assembly resolutely dissociates itself from any policy which would restrict or reduce the present rights of representation in Parliament or Senate of any section of the community" (de Gruchy 1979:54-55).

The above statement sent to the government was not the only one where BUSA expressed

concern about apartheid laws. Over the years there have been many individual within the BUSA who have supported Assembly statements, which were critical of the government, or they addressed letters to the State President and other officials. As mentioned earlier one is tempted to come to BUSA's defense as one reads of their criticism of apartheid laws but Louise Kretzschmar in a paper presented at the BCSA's Awareness Workshop entitled *A theology of Dominance - An Alternative History of the South African Baptist Union* helps us understand the level of commitment the BUSA has in truly opposing apartheid when she states". But to agree to a statement of protest at Assembly is one thing, to devise practical steps to implement such protest is quite another" as stated above. This indicates a lack of commitment by the BUSA to address and help remove the injustices of Apartheid (NAW 1990:28). It could be said in the words of Villa-Vicencio in regards to the protests of most English speaking churches "... their protest was neither harsh nor rigorous" (Villa-Vicencio 1988:1).

Kretzchmar further cites (1990:29) another discriminatory practice employed by the BUSA. A close examination of the BUSA's mission policies indicates discrimination and white domination. It is, according to her, revealed in their Missions policies. Rather than pursuing a policy of partnership in mission, or practicing a form of mission that included concern for the material needs of communities, mission was conceived of as evangelism by whites to blacks. The South African Missionary Society (SABMS), which was a division of the BUSA, undertook the mission work of the BUSA and the Black churches that were started by BUSA fell under the control of the SABMS. Increasingly the pattern of separate churches for different races became entrenched. Kretzchmar

continues in her criticism of the BUSA by stating that these churches with the SABMS had very little representation on the BUSA executive and yet these black churches according to her were subject to the policy decisions of these bodies as well as to the White missionary superintendents (NAW 1990:28-29).

The listing of the Baptist Ministers in the BUSA's handbook along racial lines illustrates apartheid practiced by the BUSA. Kretzchmar's further contention is that the BUSA stated in their 1976 Assembly: "Assembly reaffirmed that the Baptist Union of South Africa is open to all churches which desire to join it and which qualify in terms of the constitution, regardless of race or colour". It affirmed that such churches would be welcomed into the Union, and charged the executive to make this known to all churches within the Baptist Union Associations, but yet the BUSA have the names of Black ministers on a separate list.

Racial discrimination was reflected in the BUSA 1989 Assembly, which was held in Kimberley. Racially separate accommodation was provided for all delegates. The venue of this Kimberley Assembly, which was held in a military barracks, was hurtful to the black members of the BUSA attending this Assembly. The Baptist Union was accused of being insensitive to Blacks as the venue was a symbol of white oppression and violence. The military in South Africa was an instrument of the apartheid state that crushed anti-apartheid activists. This resulted in the walkout of blacks in protest against the BUSA for their choice of venue.

3.4 ETHNICITY

Cornell & Hartman in their book *Ethnicity and Race* asserts that the word ethnic has a long history and that it is a derivative of the Greek word ethnos, meaning nation. This term ethnic was previously thought of as race or nation. In English the word “ethnic” referred to someone who was neither Christian nor Jewish, in other words a pagan or heathen (Cornell & Hartman 1998:16). These terms according to Marger (2003:10) are clearly different in meaning. They have the following character traits: -

3.4.1 Unique cultural traits

Marger (2003:11) draws our attention to the fact that ethnic groups are groups within a larger society that displays a unique set of cultural traits. Marger draws in the comments of Melvin Tumin, a sociologist who provides a definition of ethnic group as a “social group, which, within a larger cultural and social system, claim or is accorded special status in terms of a complex of traits (ethnic traits), which exhibits or is believed to exhibit”. It can be said that ethnic groups are subcultures that maintain certain behavioural characteristics that in some degree set them off from society’s mainstream culture.

Three of the five Baptist organizations, BASA, BMSA and ABK would fall into this

category of ethnic group. The ABK, which represented Afrikaans speaking people, held dearly to their language and culture. According to Reed (1983:218) the ABK is a language-union of the BUSA.

3.4.2 Sense of community

Marger's second assertion (2003:11) is that in addition to a common sharing of cultural traits, ethnic groups display a sense of community among members. He says that there is a consciousness of kind or awareness of close association. Gordon Milton in his book *Assimilation in American Life* suggests that the ethnic group serves, above all, as a social-psychological referent in creating a "sense of people hood".

He further states that this sense of community, or oneness, derives from an understanding of a shared ancestry, or heritage and that ethnic groups view themselves as having common roots (Milton 1964:84).

Rangiah's editorial comments in the *Natal Indian Baptist Golden Jubilee Brochure* supports Marger's suggestion that in ethnic groups there is a sense of community, which is derived from an understanding of a shared ancestry or heritage. He states, "NIBA is our sacred heritage handed to us by those who have gone before us. By the grace of God, we have, with all our limitations and inadequacies, guarded the interests of the Association jealously, upheld it's traditions sacredly, its principles resolutely and kept

aflame the spirit our forbears put into the Association. May we be privileged to hand over this cherished heritage to our children when we depart from them” (NIBA 1964:2).

In analyzing Rangiah’s comments against the definition of Merger’s (2003:11), it is very clear that he was reflecting ethnic characteristics. BASA has remained largely an ethnic Baptist organization for the past 100 years. Whilst BASA is a member of the South African Baptist Alliance, any suggestion to form a united Baptist organisation will not be easily accepted by this organization (SABA Minutes 1999:6). As far as the BMSA is concerned which is another ethnic organisation, it is ready and willing to form one united Baptist Body. Although it is also a largely ethnic organization it remains to be seen what influence ethnicity will play when Baptists finally agree to form that one united Baptist organisation in South Africa.

It will be naïve to think that ethnicity has not influenced the unification process in South Africa. As was stated, the three ethnic Baptist organizations held strongly to the traditions, heritage and in one case language. The true test will come when structural unity becomes a reality amongst Baptists in South Africa

SABA has allowed for the five Baptist organizations to engage each other in the area of unity and cooperation. However, there is a past that was painful and challenging. The relationship of the ABK, BASA, BSCA and BMSA with the BUSA has its challenges and at times caused pain. Each of these four organization’s relationships with BUSA will be examined.

3.5 THE ABK AND THE BUSA

The ABK was an ethnic and language union of the BUSA. Although strong representations were made by the ABK to the BUSA to discuss having its own legal entity, these attempts were unsuccessful. It was accepted that the ABK, because of language and cultural differences should make provision for the expansion of its own membership (Hudson-Reed 1983:218).

Hudson-Reed in his book, *By Taking Heed*, records the relationship between the BUSA and the ABK. He states that the stunted growth of the Baptist community among the Afrikaans speaking people is attributable in large measure to the sometimes negative and unsympathetic attitude of the BUSA. Despite this a good relationship between the two organizations followed. Tensions arose when, the BUSA formulated a strongly worded resolution to the National Party that came into power in 1948, which dealt with race relations in particular. Reed records the disappointment of the ABK to these resolutions. The ABK regarded these actions as unwarranted and felt that the BUSA was meddling in politics. Furthermore these resolutions according to Hudson-Reed proved to be a real obstacle in the way of reaching Afrikaners with the Gospel (Hudson-Reed 1983: 229).

Relationship with the BUSA deteriorated and in 1960 a BUSA delegation visited the ABK to discuss its relationship with the Union. The purpose of this meeting was also to find ways of overcoming misunderstandings and to establish better relationships. The Committee of the BUSA recommended to the ABK that it consider the formation of a

separate Baptist Union. The motivation for such a recommendation is recorded by Hudson-Reed as follows: -

- 3.4.1 the ABK's attitude in respect of race relations;
- 3.4.2 the frustration experienced in some congregations on account of the limited representation on the Baptist Union's Executive Committee;
- 3.4.3 the importance of the development of Baptists among Afrikaans-speaking people;
- 3.4.4 the foundation of the Seminarium as an official training center of the ABK;
- 3.4.5 the fact that the ABK already functions as an independent Union.

The BUSA executive did not accept this resolution. A recommendation was made to the BUSA to strengthen the bonds of unity. In assessing this relationship the BUSA still had some control over certain matters such as that ministers of the ABK would be interviewed by the BUSA, all applications for marriage licenses would be made by the General Secretary of BUSA and that the minutes of the ABK be sent to BUSA. It must be stressed here that although the ABK remained an integral part of the BUSA it functioned as a separate Association. Furthermore the BUSA did not make any provision for representation of ethnic and language groups within the BUSA. The BUSA promised the ethnic groups that they would be consulted from time to time. Hudson Reed states (1983:230) that the ABK members of the BUSA executive regarded the long drawn-out uncertainty in connection with the policy with suspicion.

The BUSA allowed Associations to be in membership with it. These Associations had

representations at the BUSA Executive of which the ABK, BASA and BMSA, as associations, were members. The ABK felt comfortable with this, as they would not have to join the territorial associations of the BUSA. The territorial associations, as the name suggests, in various provinces and churches in that particular province would be affiliated to that territorial association which had representation on the BUSA Executive. As an ethnic and language association they desired to have their representations on the executive of the BUSA and not through the territorial association. The ABK feared that by joining the territorial association this would be a threat to its existence as the Territorial associations would be wholly multi-racial. Reed (1983:230) records that attempts were made to keep the status quo in respect of ABK representation on the Executive Committee of the BUSA, and these were eventually accepted by the BUSA Assembly.

Although they were accommodated on the executive, each association still maintained their respective identities more so the BASA.

At an interview of Dr C.W.R. Lehmkuhl, the present General Secretary of the ABK, on the 18 October 2003, it was learnt that in 1996 the BUSA terminated the membership of Associations with the BUSA. The BUSA had hoped that all churches including the ethnic and language Associations would disband and their churches affiliate directly with the BUSA. The BUSA's rationale was that the BUSA was a Union of Churches and not a union of Associations.

The relationship of the ABK and the BUSA did have its high as well as low points. There were times when they differed, like when the BUSA applied for membership to the South African Council of Churches. The ABK, according to Hudson-Reed, considered this as unacceptable. Only a limited number of ABK members attend the BUSA Assembly meetings. Reed hoped that both sides would take advantage of the current changing political climate to work for a greater degree of unity (Hudson-Reed 1983: 231).

Having read through the history of the Afrikaners in South Africa as recorded by Stack and Morton, Loubser, Davenport, De Gruchy, and Regehr one sees the pattern amongst Afrikaners in general as well as in the ABK at that time. The issue of race relations became an issue in the ABK. The BUSA raised this with them in a protracted meeting held in 1960 and as mentioned earlier the BUSA recommended to the ABK that it should form a separate Union (Hudson-Reed 1983:229). Was that British imperialism or Afrikaner leaning towards apartheid? The response of BUSA to the government on several occasions where they opposed certain laws concerning the rights of blacks suggests that the BUSA was serious about the issue of race relations, at least in words.

3.5 THE BCSA AND THE BUSA

William Mashologu is recorded as being the person who started the BCSA, formerly known as the Bantu Baptist Church. During his missionary activity in the Transkei, now

called Eastern Cape, Mashologu made the painful discovery of how fragmented Baptists in South Africa were (Hoffmeister & Gurney 1990:33).

In a document “Proposal Concerning promoting Reconciliation Between the Baptist Convention and the Baptist Union of South Africa” it was stated that one of the basic reasons for the present divisions between the BUSA and BCSA appears to be different perceptions of the past. This document goes on to qualify this statement. The BUSA has repeatedly claimed that it did not support apartheid. Indeed, it spoke out against Apartheid. However its perception of the BCSA’s own structures as well as its failure to actively resist Apartheid is questionable. Kretzschmar strongly supports this claim about the lack of practical commitment by the BUSA to oppose Apartheid as stated earlier in this chapter.

It seems that a misunderstanding of the terms of reference for the unity process between the two groups, namely the BUSA and the ABK can be attributable as one of the reasons to the failure of these two groups in making progress as far as unity and reconciliation are concerned. This document states “... was merger to be understood to mean that Convention churches ought to join the Assembly of Union churches, or did it mean that both the Union and the Convention ought to be dissolved and a new, single body be formed?” This special committee also asks questions pertaining to constitution, a single Minister’s Roll, a joint theological education, equal representation at Assembly and on committees and equity with regards to salaries and pensions. The matter of the discrepancies within the Union regarding the status of churches where some of their

churches did not have equal standing in the first place were also raised.

The Baptist World Alliance under the leadership of its General Secretary Dr Denton Lotz captured other reasons for the disunity that existed between the BUSA and the BCSA. He did this by gathering his leadership to listen to the voices of both these organizations, which took place on the 18 November 1995 at the Rosebank Union Church in Johannesburg. Lotz called this a Listening Tour where on Thursday 16 November 1995 he together with his leadership met separately with the BCSA and the following day with the BUSA. Each of the delegates of the BWA was required to summarize what they heard.

Their summaries reflected the same underlying misunderstanding of the past by the two groups. Emmet Dunn, the youth Director of the Baptist World Alliance observed that the same story of the past was told but from different realities. He also stated that he is not sure if the younger generation understood the issues of the past. He warned that this division might produce two generations of fighting. This was echoed by Paul Montacute of the BWA who went on to say that historical perceptions differ between the two organizations. Eleazar Zihembere (BWA) admitted that the deeper he got to listen to the two sides, the less he understood the problem. He called the two organizations to work together.

Lotz, who acted as the facilitator at these talks summarized their observations. The following themes surfaced during this 'Listening Tour'.

3.6.1 Merger: Revision versus New Vision

“The failure of the merger talks of 1987 revolves around the understanding of unity and the Constitution. Merger failed because one wanted a revision of the constitution and the other wanted a new vision exemplified in a completely new constitution, not a re-write of the old one”;

3.6.2 History: Mission versus Submission:

“Whereas the Union viewed their history as a glorious story of mission to the unevangelised and non-Christian natives, the Convention viewed this history as one of submission. The natives suffered the indignities of being treated as children and inferiors, ruled by the white leaders with no power sharing”;

3.6.3 Theology: Evangelism versus Diakonia

“There are two theologies at play between the two organizations which according to him, is the main driving force that has caused much misunderstanding. The BUSA constantly speak of church growth, evangelism and personal conversion. The BCSA speaks constantly of diakonia, service and justice”;

3.6.4 Theological Education: Indoctrination versus Contextualization

“Training of pastors is a key to the future ministry of the church. Indoctrination versus contextualization may be a caricature of how the union and the convention do theological education, but it does highlight two different streams of structures of education. Whereas the BUSA has an elaborate system of theological colleges and Bible Schools, the BCSA is financially prevented from this. The BCSA theological courses are too Western and white and do not understand the contextual problems of the Blacks”;

3.6.5 Leadership and the Unity Process: Evolution versus Revolution

“The Union leaders seem to be saying that it is inevitable that ten or fifteen union leadership will be black, they will be the majority and they will rule. In a sense it will be a growing process, an evolutionary process. The BCSA leadership, on the other hand, is not prepared to wait. The secular government of Nelson Mandela assumed power in a peaceful revolution. What are Baptists waiting for?”;

3.6.6 Repentance: Gospel versus Law

“The BUSA feels that their resolution of repentance sent by the letter to the BCSA is enough of a sign of repentance and should be received with forgiveness by the BCSA.

This is the Gospel way. The BCSA feels that the content of the repentance is not enough. There can be no cheap repentance. It needs to be the cross and suffering. It needs to mention specific acts of evil perpetrated by the BUSA, e.g., sending chaplains to minister to the other side of the border. What about specific instances where the intelligence forces used Baptists to report on activities of Black Baptists causing harm? What is the solution and what is the content of repentance? Is it “an eye for an eye” or is “it love your enemies?”;

Lotz, being an outsider, demonstrated a high degree of objectivity and his observations of the tensions, perceptions and interpretations of issues by the BUSA and the BCSA were summarized very well. Whilst the Awareness Workshop of the BCSA held in 1990 dealt with many of the issue summarized by Lotz, such as inferior theological education for Blacks, mission work by the BUSA to the Black churches, the structures of the BUSA and its understanding of repentance, Lotz is very specific in the areas that contrasted the polarized views, which had often been portrayed or misunderstood by one side about the other. His thematic analysis of the differing views reflected by the two organizations were well presented (Rosebank Union Minutes 1995:119).

3.7 THE BASA AND THE BUSA

As mentioned earlier in this research there is not much available literature, which reflects the history of BASA that highlights the relationship between these two organizations.

The available literature on BASA's history is found in brochures, in a book written by the researcher himself *In His Service* and a book entitled *By Taking Heed* edited by Sydney Hudson - Reed. Information regarding the history of BASA and its relationship with the BUSA were received orally as well.

According to Hudson-Reed formal contact with the BUSA is first referred to as having occurred in 1923. He also records the acceptance of Rev T.M. Rangiah as a ministerial member of the Union. The BASA was also accepted as a Special Association of BUSA and had representation on the executive of the BUSA. BASA had a good relationship with the SABMS, a missionary society of the BUSA where BUSA sent a number of missionaries to work among the Indians in BASA and BMSA. When The BUSA changed its constitution where it encouraged Special Associations to affiliate to its territorial Association and the churches within those Special Associations were requested to join the BUSA directly, two organizations opposed this. They were the ABK and the BASA. The then General Secretary of BASA, V.P. Nathaniel, sent a letter to the BUSA outlining its objection to such a decision. In summary BASA objected for the following reasons: -

3.7.1 Fellowship/Interaction

Through apartheid generally and the group Areas Act in particular, Indians have lived in Indian areas and developed Baptist work in their own areas. Nathaniel's rationale is that

it is not practical for fellowship and interaction. He also cited the absence of white churches between Durban North and Empangeni to further substantiate his rationale.

3.7.2. Cost

Nathaniel stated that the cost of traveling to the executive meetings is another factor and that the building of their churches is a priority.

3.7.3 Disputes

In the event of disputes according to Nathaniel in churches, the arbitrators could be BASA, NBA or the BUSA, perhaps all three. Nathaniel expressed his fear that in the event of a split the aggrieved party has a ready haven in the NBA/BUSA. Such a pattern appears to be developing.

3.7.4. Identity

Nathaniel stressed BASA's intentions to maintain its identity. Affiliation to the BUSA will lead to dual allegiance. He labours the point that BASA was of the opinion that dual allegiance will militate against the organizational norms, practices and control so

carefully nurtured over 90 years.

3.7.5 BUSA- BASA Relations

The letter expressed disappointment in the reporting of the BASA work by the BUSA at their Assembly. Nathaniel describes an incident that caused BASA disappointment. The BUSA president and his wife were in Natal during 1992. Mr. N.M. Israel of BASA met them accidentally and hastily arranged a trip for the following day. A car was provided to take them to Kearsney and the Bible College on the Natal North Coast. They covered seven churches and four hundred kilometers in five hours. The next day, at the BASA Easter assembly, the President brought greetings and mentioned with appreciation the trip and history of each church related by Mr. NM Israel. Two months later, at the BUSA Assembly, our representative gave the president an album of photographs of the trip. In his report to the executive the President mentioned his visit to the Western Province churches but there was not a single word about the Indian experience.

Nathaniel registers a further concern and disappointment in that the Women's President of the Baptist Women's Department of BUSA who was invited by the Women's Department of BASA, in reporting to her executive, reports in a few sentences, if anything at all, about the BASA women's rally at which she was a guest speaker.

BASA youth department was sending their newsletter 'Youth Update' to the Youth

Department of BUSA but no communication regarding their youth work is shared with BASA youth.

Nathaniel drew the BUSA's attention to the recording of minutes of BASA's representative to the BUSA executive. N.M. Israel, at the March executive meeting of BUSA held in Claremont, shared the history of Indian Baptist work in South Africa as well as the split that occurred, resulting in the formation of BASA and the BMSA. The minutes read, "Mr. N.M. Israel addressed the Executive on some historical details of the split between two Indian groups in Natal". Fortunately at that meeting no representative from the BMSA was present otherwise those minutes would have caused problems if they were read by non executive members.

It is apparent that BASA no doubt has been aggrieved by the attitude and actions of the BUSA. The reasons given by Nathaniel are no way seen as obstacles to unity, instead they are obstacles to closer co-operation and more so obstacles to affiliation to the Natal Baptist Association, which as mentioned earlier is the Territorial Association of BUSA. Presently BASA has no representation on the BUSA or on its Territorial Association but has a cordial relationship with BUSA.

3.8 THE BMSA AND THE BUSA

The BMSA is the smallest of the five Baptist organizations in South Africa. It has 13

churches with a combined membership of approximately 1500.

On the 29 July 1951, the BMSA executive decided to join the BUSA. By the decision of 1951, the general assembly of the BUSA accepted the BMSA as a member church. This implied that the BMSA enjoyed the privilege of having the liberty to carry on with its own work.

Hudson-Reed writes that later, in 1974, the BMSA applied for association status with the BUSA but this was unsuccessful. Some of the BMSA churches affiliated directly to the BUSA such as Arena Park Baptist Church, Asherville Baptist Church and Bethel Baptist Church in Stanger. Although the BMSA was not accepted as an association within the structures of BUSA, they were however represented on the executive of the BUSA (Hudson-Reed 1983:276).

The BUSA was the only recognized Baptist organization in South Africa. Other Baptist organizations had to apply to the BUSA to represent them on matters such as the application by ministers to obtain marriage licenses. Both BMSA and BASA ministers had to follow this protocol.

3.9 DIVISION IN THE INDIAN BAPTIST WORK IN SA

Indian Baptists in South Africa once belonged to the Telugu Indian Baptist Mission

Church. Rev John Rangiah, an Indian born missionary, is the founder of the Telugu Indian Baptist Church. However 1911-1914 saw the Indian Baptist work went through difficult times. Division amongst Indian Baptists surfaced. Rangiah, editor of the *Natal Indian Baptist Association Brochure* describes this division,

“Rev Rangiah preached a sermon on sin and its results and this was interpreted as excommunication by the dissentient group. The group then persuaded a few others to join it and wrote without Rev Rangiah’s knowledge, to the Home Missionary Society (HMS) in India. Rangiah was disappointed that he was not informed of this decision to write to the HMS in India and that the proper channels were not followed. After meeting with Rev W.B. Boggs who was sent by the HMS in India to settle the dispute, Rev Rangiah resigned from the HMS. Rev Boggs returned to India without success in settling the dispute” (Rangiah 1964:10).

The BMSA’s *Golden Jubilee Brochure* also records the schism in the Indian work in South Africa in the following words: “The year 1913 was an unpleasant one for the Mission, for differences arose between the Missionary, Rev John Rangiah, and a certain section of his congregation”. The recording of this schism is also recorded in both the records of the BASA and BMSA. A Council of sixty-six members sat at Kearsney on 30 and 31 May 1914 to settle the differences, which lasted twenty-four and a half hours. Despite the intervention of an arbitrator, Rev. Wheeler Boggs, the talks failed. Rev. Rangiah formed the Natal Indian Baptist Association on the 27 December 1914 (*Golden Jubilee Brochure* 1953:12). *The Golden Jubilee Brochure* of the BMSA states that the

two parties, headed by Rev. John Rangiah on one side and Mr. Y. A. Lazarus, on the other were not willing to come to a compromise. The BASA records this same schism as follows: "The missionary found that some of his members in Kearsney, Tinley Manor and Darnall were living sinful lives. Persuasive talk and pleading from the missionary did not help. Special prayers hardly moved them" (*NIBA Golden Jubilee* 1964:10).

T. Paul in his research on Pentecostalism amongst the Indians Churches in the Stanger area records this schism between the two organizations. According to him (Paul 1987:4-5) the reasons cited in his research are similar to the one in the NIBA Golden Jubilee of 1964 except he gives the following information that is not contained in the above publication. He states that the dissentients sent a petition to the HMS accusing the missionary of living a sumptuous life at the expense of the labourers and that he was making efforts to sever his connection with the HMS in India. These accusations however do not appear in any of the minutes of the BASA and the BMSA.

The difficulty is that both of these records are not specific as far as the differences were concerned. Rev T.D. Pass, a BUSA missionary to the Indian Baptists is quoted in the *Diamond Jubilee* Brochure as saying, "Explaining the causes of the rift between Rev. Rangiah and the group now called the Indian Baptist Mission is difficult since only BASA has offered any explanation and not with enough detail to permit evaluation and judgment". He continues by saying that: "It may be that the real roots lie below the surface and their germination in relationship between various parties before they left India". To date neither the BASA nor the BMSA are able to specifically state the reasons

for the schism. It may seem by Rangiah's version, the differences were either one of morality or of theology. A deeper analysis would lead one to probe the nature of the 'sinful lives' as stated by Rev. Rangiah as well as the theological credentials of the two, Mr. Y.A. Lazarus and Rev. John Rangiah.

Firstly Rev. Rangiah's vocal and forthright utterances about the "sins" as recorded in the *Diamond Jubilee Brochure* of 1978 was misconstrued as "excommunication" by the dissident group. If this was the dispute then could the two not sit and talk about this with their minister and did the minister speak to those concerned privately about these alleged sins? In researching Rev. Rangiah's life it has to be said that he was a very organized, methodical person who maintained accurate records. Once in two years he issued a report of his work. In a report submitted by the Telugu Home Mission Society, to the American Baptist Missionary Society, the Secretary wrote that most of those of Africa were as sheep having no shepherd. The Telugu Home Mission Society decided to send them a man as soon as a suitable one was found. He continues by stating that one of their best men, John Rangiah, who had been engaged in educational work in the Mission for a number of years, volunteered for the Foreign Mission Service (*NIBA Diamond Jubilee Brochure* 1978:2).

It may be correct to claim that Rev. Rangiah was a theologically trained minister as he is referred to by the title Reverend and that when a request was made by the Baptists from South Africa for a minister, a three man committee appointed by the HMS in India had to find a suitable candidate. (*Golden Jubilee* 1964:6). It seemed that a thorough screening

process of Rev. Rangiah was undertaken.

On the other hand there is very little information on Mr. Y.A. Lazarus, leader of the aggrieved group in the records of the BMSA. The only information about him was that he later became the President of the BMSA. The date of his presidency is not recorded in the *Golden and Diamond Jubilee* Brochures of the BMSA. These brochures place him in the period 1914-1934. This however cannot be used to dispute his presidency. What is strange is that he is not recognized as a leading force in the BMSA. Other leaders of the BMSA such as Revs. V.C. Jacob and V.J. Jacob are accorded much honour. Mr. K.D. Moses editor of the *Indian Baptist Mission Diamond Jubilee* Brochure praises leaders that have made great contributions to the Indian Baptist Work in South Africa. He writes "We cannot bypass this rare opportunity of recording names of such spiritual giants as Rev. John Rangiah, Rev. T.M. Rangiah, Rev. V.C. Jacob, and Rev. V. J. Jacob, who in the obedience call laid themselves on the missionary Altar". Whilst he goes on to acknowledge the contribution of laymen of which it is assumed Y.A. Lazarus is one of them, he does not mention names, understandably so because of the large numbers that were involved in the work of the BMSA.

If Mr. Y.A. Lazarus was a layman would that have played a part in his lack of understanding and interpretation of Rev. Rangiah's sermon, which dealt with sins in the church? If Mr. Y.A. Lazarus was a layman then he could have been there before Rev Rangiah. The *Diamond Jubilee Brochure* of BASA states that before the arrival of the pioneer missionary in 1903 faithful laymen administered the work and tendered the

scattered flock. (*The Diamond Jubilee Brochure* 1978:3). One could speculate that these two leaders could not work together since Rev. Rangiah came after Mr. Y.A. Lazarus or that the new minister did not recognize the presence of laypersons in his congregation. With reference to the latter, the people that were said to have been living sinful lives were in different churches. Some of the members at Kearsney, Darnall and Tinley Manor were living sinful lives. (*The Diamond Jubilee* 1978:4). If Rangiah's sermon was of a confrontational nature why did the others from these churches not respond in the same manner that Mr. Y.A. Lazarus did?

The other reason for the differences between these two leaders is one of speculation as well. The subject of the caste system surfaces. Whilst there is no visible evidence of this it must be borne in mind that these two leaders came from India where the caste system is practiced. Furthermore it is recorded in the *Natal Indian Baptist Association Golden Jubilee* that Rev John Rangiah was a son of an orthodox Hindu priest in India (*Natal Indian Baptist Association Golden Jubilee Brochure* 1964:6).

J.H. Hutton in his book *Caste in India* describes India as a country composed of all sorts of different elements of great diversity, of different creeds, different customs and even different colours (Hutton 1946:1).

A sociologist would define caste as "hereditary, endogamous, usually localized group, having a traditional association with an occupation, and a particular position in the local hierarchy of castes. Relations between castes are governed among other things by the

concepts of pollution and purity, and generally, maximum commensality occurs within the caste” (Srinivas 1962:3).

In the above definition, it is assumed that a caste group is always easily identifiable and that it does not change its social boundaries. Srinivas disagrees with this. He goes on to say that a caste is usually segmented into several sub-castes and each sub-caste is endogamous. There are thought to be some three thousand castes in India, however the scope of this research does not allow an exhaustive account of individual castes but salient aspects as far as its definition is concerned will be mentioned. According to Hutton the caste system is an exclusively Indian phenomena and no comparable institution to be seen elsewhere has anything like the complexity, elaboration and rigidity of caste in India.

Hutton’s definition of the caste system is very helpful. He defines it as “a collection of families or groups of families bearing a common name, claiming a common descent from a mythical ancestor, human or divine; professing to follow the same heredity calling; and regarded by those who are competent to give an opinion as forming a single homogeneous community” (Hutton 1946:47,48).

Whatever the reasons for this schism that took place between 1911 –1914 where the BASA and BMSA parted ways, there has been many attempts to amalgamate but without success. In assessing these attempts not many leaders especially in BASA have examined the theological basis for unity except the late Rev D.N. Nathaniel an Indian born minister

who arrived in South Africa in 1951 and have served the BASA until his death in the late 1980's. In his research he provides a theological basis for unity by making reference and providing important interpretation of them as well. Of significance he quotes John 17:21, the prayer of Jesus for unity. He goes on to state: "As we strive to achieve Church union under an appropriate title it would be right and proper if we eliminate selfish and divergent views". Nathaniel strongly advocated unity. His statement that no stone should be left unturned substantiates this (Nathaniel 1979:109-111).

3.10 CONCLUSION

This chapter examined the obstacles to unification. The historical periods in which these obstacles such as apartheid, racism and ethnicity surfaced or came about were examined. This chapter also covered the relationship of each of the Baptist organizations with the BUSA. The involvement of the Baptist World Alliance in helping the BCSA and the BUSA move closer towards unification was studied and examined. The split between the two largely Indian Baptists organizations was critically examined as well.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. THE THEOLOGY OF UNITY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The Complete Word Finder defines unity as " oness, being one, single, harmony or concord between persons" (Tulloch 1990:1714). Theologically it has the same basic meaning. Vine, Unger and White in their book *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* define unity as "one" (Vine 1985. 652). Having stated this, this word although very prominent in the Bible is very rare in the Biblical text. Bromley in the *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* shares this observation as well. He says that the word unity is very rare in the Bible, but the thought behind the term, that of one people of God, is extremely prominent (Bromley 1984:1127). The word unity will be examined so as to present a theology of unity. Since this chapter is dealing with the Theology of Unity the quest will be to understand what the Biblical text is saying about unity. Reference from both the Old and New Testaments will be examined.

4.2 THE OLD TESTAMENT

A compelling reason for unity is the fact that in the Old Testament Israel is descended from the one father. Although the tribes are later divided the Psalmist commends unity.

4.1.1 Psalms 133:1 *“How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity! It is precious oil poured on the head, running down on his beard, running down on Aaron's beard, down upon the collar of his robes. It is as if the dew of Hermon were falling on Mount Zion. For there the Lord bestows his blessing, even life forevermore”.*

This is a poem about the scattered tribal clan coming together at the pilgrim feast. Poetry especially in the form of song or hymn in the Old Testament occupied an important place in Hebrew literature. The largest collection of Hebrew poetry is in the book of Psalms (Douglas 1962:1007).

Here the writer exclaimed how wonderful it is for these members of the clan to dwell together in unity. This thought was appropriate for the religious festivals when Israelite families came together to worship their Lord. There is a strong commendation for unity here. The word together in Hebrew means “in full harmony” as indicated by the emphasis intended by **gam** in the phrase **gam yahab** (Dahood 111:251).

In verses 2 and 3 of chapter 133 the author describes this unity by using two imageries. Firstly he compared this unity mentioned in verse 1 to the oil that consecrated Aaron, which is recorded in Leviticus chapter 8 verses 12. "He poured some of the anointing oil on Aaron's head and anointed him to consecrate him (The Holy Bible 1999:96). This imagery from the Priesthood was appropriate because of the pilgrims being in Jerusalem. The oil poured on Aaron's head flowed down on his beard and shoulders and onto the

breastplate with names of all 12 tribes. The oil according to Douglas (1962:534) has the general significance of joy with the related ideas of fragrance and comfort. He however states (1962:534) that the oil of priestly anointing was a sanctifying thing. As the oil consecrated Aaron, so the unity of the worshippers in Jerusalem would consecrate the nation under God.

Secondly he uses the imagery of the dew where he compares the unity in verse 1 to the dew that covers the mountains. The picture of oil running down in verse two no doubt suggests dew coming down from Mount Hermon; it symbolized what was freshening and invigorating. The refreshing influence of the worshiping community on the tribal clan was similar to the dew on vegetation. This was a fitting symbol of the Lord's blessing on these people (Walvoord & Zuck 1985:133).

4.1.2 Ezekiel 37:17 *“Join them together into one stick so that they will become one in your hand”*

In order to help understand the author's intentions in this text it would be helpful to examine his role, historical and cultural background.

The Bible when recording the history of the Israelites does not hide the fact that even this nation experienced division. The Bible chronicles this division of the Israelites in the Old Testament. A nation that was once united in a united Kingdom for almost 120 years was

divided into Southern and Northern Kingdoms. A tragic civil war, split the nation of Israel into two opposing kingdoms (Willmington 1981:104,140). A comprehensive study of both these kingdoms will not be possible, however salient aspects will be highlighted.

The once united Kingdom which spanned a period of approximately 120 years and is recorded by the following Old Testament books, I and 2 Samuels, I kings, 1 and 2 Chronicles, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Song of Solomon with Saul, David, Joab, Abner, Absalom, Goliath, Zadok, Bath-Sheba, witch of Endor, Nathan, Jonathan and Queen of Sheba. The Divided or Chaotic kingdom stage according to Willmington is from 931-605 BC. This stage is recoded in the following Old Testament books, I and 2 Kings, 2 Chronicles, Obadiah, Joel, Jonah, Amos, Hoses, Isaiah, Micah and Nahum.

Without getting into the technical aspect of the authorship, the book of Ezekiel according to Cooke (1936:XXV1) was written by Ezekiel himself. Ezekiel was a priest and a prophet. In 597 BC he was deported to Babylon where he spent twenty-five years ministering to his fellow exiles. That places this period in the captivity stage.

His role as shown in the book of Ezekiel is twofold, to remind the exiles of their sins and to encourage them concerning God's future blessings (Willmington 1981:210).

He was accustomed to deliver his message by symbolic acts. There are at least ten such examples in the book. They appear in Ezekiel 3:25,26; 4:1-3, 9-15; 4: 4-6,8,13, 5:1-4; 12:3-7; 12:17-20; 21:11-12; 24:3-5; 24:15-24 and 37:15-27.

As stated, his role was twofold. In carrying out his roles one discovers that after the introductory vision of chapters 1-3, he concentrates exclusively on laying bare the iniquity of his fellow exiles. He pitilessly drags their sins to the light and pronounces judgment of God on them.

The second section chapters 25-32 he confines himself to addressing those that had plundered the people of Israel in their hour of distress. Surprisingly or rather one is curious to learn that he is silent as to the fate of Babylon, the chief destroyer of Jerusalem. It is said that he regarded Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon as a servant of God and so regarded his actions against Jerusalem as divinely ordained (Guthrie 1970:6650).

Whilst in Babylon he receives message from a messenger from Jerusalem, announcing the City's fall. Ezekiel sets out in the task of rehabilitating the scattered tribes of Israel. Was he interested in the unification of the scattered tribes and more especially the two divided kingdoms? The text that follows will be examined in response to that question.

In examining the text one has to refer to the original text in the Hebrew language where translated, it reads (1936:401) “ ... *bring thee them together, one to the other, into one stick, and they shall become one*”. Two important features are identified in this text. One is that it is a tautology where the same thing is said twice over in different words. Secondly the word “one” in Hebrew is in the plural, which denotes either “a few” or as here “one and the same”. An example of this is found in Genesis 11:1 where the text

reads “And the whole world had *one* language ...”.

Ezekiel looks to the time when there shall be "one stick". The stick that is used here according to Charles Feinberg as quoted by Willmington that the sticks that Ezekiel were referring to are scepters, which according to him, was reminiscent of the days of Moses in the Old Testament. This prompts us to look at this ‘days of Moses’. This is located in Numbers 17:1-2 where the Lord said to Moses to speak to the Israelites and get twelve staffs from leaders of each of their ancestral tribes and Moses was to write the names of each man on his staff (Wellmington 1981:115,210-220).

Ezekiel carves the name Judah on one stick and Ephraim on another and then holds both sticks in one hand, indicating God would someday reunite all twelve tribes.

In analyzing Ezekiel’s statement and the context in which he is writing, one makes the following deductions.

Firstly the tautology that is used in the text makes the action more explicit. Secondly idea of unity as seen in this text is very evident given the division of the two kingdoms as well as the tribes of Israel being scattered especially in Babylon with some being influenced by the Babylonian way of life.

4.2. THE NEW TESTAMENT

When we examine the New Testament texts we are now dealing mainly with the church, even to texts prior to the book of Acts, which saw the church being inaugurated. Jesus nevertheless was preparing his disciples for the church and its ministry to the world.

4.2.1 John 17:21 *"... that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me".*

It will be helpful to look at the background information in John's writings. John writes this gospel either from Galilee or Syria, where conflicts with the Judean Pharisees would be most easily felt in the 90's of the first century. After AD 70, the strength of many Jewish religious groups in Palestine began to take more leadership in religious matters, and the influence of their successors eventually became felt throughout Mediterranean Jewry. There was conflict between these Pharisees and Jewish Christians. It is said that the extent of hostilities from the side of the Pharisees was so great that a line was added by them to a prayer that cursed sectarians, among whom they included the Jewish Christians (Keener 1993:261). The conflict between the Pharisees and the Jewish Christians tie in with the unity of Christians as one considers John's argument particularly for the unity of the congregation, which broke away from the synagogue.

The text under examination forms part of a prayer of Jesus where it is divided into divisions. Chapter twenty is the third division of the prayer of Jesus for his disciples as well as for future disciples who should reach discipleship through their ministry or as Guthrie states (1970:962) it is a prayer for the church. The prayer in verse twenty-one is a repetition of the prayer in John 17:11 which in the Greek reads "*ina osin in kathos emeis*". Jesus does this stating more fully what the nature of this ideal unity was to be as seen in the Greek "*ina pantes in osin*".

What type of unity is Jesus referring to in this text? Is it organizational or spiritual? Bernard contends (1928:576) that there is no suggestion that this "unity" in the prayer of Jesus was a unity of organization. Such as that which appears in Pauline theology of the church as one body with many members, each performing its appropriate function.

Now to John's reference to the prayer of Jesus, mention is made of the unity of the Father and Son. Bernard calls (1928:576) this unity the highest form of unity in which the father is "in" the Son and the Son "in" the Father. John 10:30 and 11:52 the neuter singular is used. In John 10:30 the Son and the Father is referred to as "one" and in John 11:52 reference is made of the "...scattered children of God, to bring them together and make them one".

It seems then this unity that is referred here in John 17:21 is for Christians disciples witness in this world where it must be visible so that those outside of the Christian faith will be convinced according to Bernard (1928:577) of the "Divine mission of the

common Master of Christians”.

A call is made for unity and Keener says (1993:262) that the unity of Father and Son models the unity to be experienced by their people in whom they dwell. Furthermore Israel acknowledged that their God was "one" and recognized the importance of this factor in their own solidarity among the nations, in a world hostile to them.

Within the ranks of John's readers there were opposition as well. People that were once part of the Christian Community now withdrew from that community. They were the real “trouble makers”. These people were secessionists (Keener 1993:306). There is certainly no doubt in one's mind that John was calling for unity among these people.

Keener also draws the reader's attention to the possibility that John may be calling for unity because of ethnic and cultural divisions. John's constituencies comprised emigrants that were Galileans and Asians. Commentators may not fully agree with this, nevertheless on reading the introduction to John's gospel this possibility emerges. Chapter four of John's gospel clearly emphasizes ethnic reconciliation in the case of the Samaritan woman.

Walvoord and Zuck, on the other hand, contend that in this text Jesus was praying for a unity of love, a unity of obedience to God and His word, i.e., the bible and a commitment to His will. According to them, this is a call to spiritual unity. Another commentator covers the basic meaning of the text under discussion that this unity is a spiritual unity

but makes a further point by stating that all believers are one with each other, "...you may live an exclusive life, never going beyond the walls of some small conventual, or the barriers of some strict ecclesiastical system; you may bear yourself impatiently and brusquely towards those who differ from you; you may even brand them with your anathema: but if you are also one with Him, you positively cannot help being one with them. Your creed may differ, or your mode of worship, or your views about the church; but you cannot otherwise be one with those who are one with God in a union which is not material but spiritual" (Mayer 1987:327).

Mayer's exegesis of this text includes the explanation of this spiritual unity. He explains that the text deals with the unity of the Godhead. He says, the first article of the Jew is also the first article of the Christian, that the Lord is one God, one in essence, one in purpose and one in action. Mayer's conclusion is that if the unity of the church is to resemble the unity of the Godhead, according to Jesus' request then the unity of the church should not be expected to be physical, nor mechanical, nor uniformity but it will be a variety in unity. Whilst these commentators hold to this view Keener goes deeper into the text where he makes reference to the cultural and ethnic dynamics (Keener 1993: 304).

4.2.2 Romans 14: 19 *"Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification".*

Here too, the social, cultural and historical background to this text is essential in

understanding Paul's writing.

The Roman Empire was the political background of Christ's life as well as of the Apostles. Its capital was Rome. The Romans according to Miller (1952:620) under Pompey in 63 B.C assumed power in a world, which for more than a century and a half had been dominated by the successors of Alexander the Great. We also read of the family of Herod rulers that ruled from Jerusalem.

According to Miller (1952:620) there existed corruption among rich patricians at Rome, hostility between the rich and poor, the corruption of the powerful Roman Senate, the landlessness of ambitious farmers, the destruction of farms by war, the decay of wholesome town life, the presence of barbarians admitted legally to towns and armies, the decline of business, the shortage of metal for coinage, excessive taxes, and famine and plagues. All these factors led to the overthrow of the Roman Republic and the rise of military dictators. Miller (1952:621) lists Pompey, Julius Caesar and Crassus.

Caesar's great nephew became the Master of the Roman Empire in the East and West and in 30 B.C. added Egypt to his realm. He divided the Empire into imperial and senatorial provinces and inaugurated the two centuries of "Roman peace" within which Christianity was born (Miller 1952:621). It is within this period that Paul writes a letter to the Roman Christians.

In Romans chapter 14, Jewish and Gentile Christians were exhorted by Paul to unity. It

is important to refer to the entire chapter so as to understand the author's call for unity. During this time there existed some cultural divisions. Jewish people did not expect most Gentiles to observe their food laws or holy days but did expect Gentile converts to Judaism to do so. In chapter 14 of Romans there is a recording of tensions between the Jewish Christians and Gentiles over food. Most distinct cultures in the ancient world had their own food customs; some philosophical schools also had their own food rules (Keener 1993:442-443). According to Keener few cultures were as insistent as the Jewish people that a deity had assigned their food laws (*The New International Version* 1999:99).

Keener also mentions the extent to which Jewish people would go to in maintaining their customs regarding food. He says that in the two centuries before Paul many Jews had died for refusing to eat pork.

The author also cites the observance of Holy Days by the Jews, which was causing division between the Jewish and Gentile Christians. In verse 7 of chapter 14 the author Paul, writes " For none of us lives to himself alone... ". Keener helps us understand this statement of Paul against the background of Jewish people's peculiarity as far as food, customs and culture were concerned. Keener says that like their separate food laws, their Sabbath regulations forced Jews to form their own moderately self-sufficient communities in the Greco-Roman world, and Gentiles often regarded Jews as separatist and unsociable. This situation increased the social distance between most Jews and Gentiles. Whilst Keener helps the reader to understand the background of the Jewish

people, the exhortation of the author to these people is very clear, "For none of us live to himself alone". What Paul means in verse 8, is that each Christian lives out his life in Christ's sight, and as Christ's servant; but a corollary of this is that each Christian's life affects his fellow-Christian and his fellow-men and women in general; therefore he should consider his responsibility to them, and not to consult his own interest only (Bruce 1985:232).

4.2.3 Romans 15:5 *"May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ".*

A very distinct motif runs through this text. It appeals to both the strong and weak, which is grounded on the example of Christ who did not please himself but gladly accepted whatever self-denial his mission required. Paul continues with his argument from chapter 14 and he begins with the ultimate example for Christians that is Christ. For Bruce rightfully says that Christ put the interest of others before his own. In Philippians chapter 2 verses 5-8 Paul records this very clearly that Christ did not assert his rights but instead he put the will of God first.

Paul presents endurance and encouragement as a strong incentive to the fostering of brotherly unity and he prays that God who teaches his people endurance and provides encouragement for them through scriptures may grant them oneness of mind, so that he may

be glorified by their united witness (Bruce 1985:240).

All the commentators stress the example of Christ. Paul the author prays for a spirit of unity (like-mindedness) that will minimize individual differences as well as fix their attention on Christ as the pattern for their own lives (Gaebelein 1976:152,153) Like-mindedness does not mean that the Jewish and Gentile Christians are to see eye-to-eye on everything. Keener also makes similar comments. He says that this "one mind" means thinking in unity, in this case a unity of love and not of complete agreement (Keener 1976:444). Gaebelein says that the more Christ fills the spiritual vision, the greater will be the cohesiveness of the church. Of great importance is the effect this unity will have on the worship of the people of God "with one heart and mouth glorifying the God and father whom Jesus so beautifully glorified on earth" (Gaebelein 1976:153).

4.2.4 1 Corinthian 1:10 *"I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no division among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought".*

Background information on the city of Corinth, its population, the environment and social forces would assist in understanding the text.

Corinth, the capital of the Roman province of Acaia was re-founded as a Roman colony by Julius Caesar in 46 B.C. Its strategic situation at the South end of the narrow isthmus

connecting continental Europe with sea routes to east and west (Miller 1952:113).

According to Guthrie (1970:1049) Corinth was a city notorious for “licensed sex”. It is said by Miller (1952:112) that the city had “33 taverns at the rear of a colonnade 100 feet long and 80 feet wide, the largest non-religious structure of Ancient Greece”. It is easy to understand why Paul, in combating the evils of Corinth and promoting Christian beliefs, unexpectedly remained in this city for 18 months (Acts 18: 11), and why he rejoiced in the arrival of Silas and Timothy from Macedonia to assist him.

Corinth was a teeming cosmopolitan city with half a million Greeks, Roman colonists and some Jews but most of them were Gentiles and ex-pagan in character. Included in the population were those that were rescued the very dregs of society.

Socially the church membership ranged from the well to do to Jewish refugees. Not many in the church were cultured or clever and lacked an understanding of the Old Testament background. According to Guthrie (1970:1049) some of them were former thugs. Many of them frequented the nightclubs, which had its own influence on the population.

The instability of the Corinthian church is not surprising says Guthrie (1974:1049) in view of the novel tensions to which their very strong anti-Christian religious and moral environment exposed them, not to mention the multiracial character of the church membership.

It was in this context that Paul addresses the issue of party quarrels in 1 Corinthians 16:12, opposite perversions, the attitudes towards incest on the one hand in 1 Corinthians 5 and celibacy on the other. Our examination takes us to 1 Corinthians 1:10 where Paul writes about the party quarrellings in the Corinthian Church and thereafter to 11 Corinthians 5:11-19.

The theme of verses 10-31 of chapter one is Unity in the Church. Verse 10 is the beginning of a long section of this letter written by the Paul, which continues to the end of chapter four. In this section Paul wrote about three aspects, one of which was the need for unity. He encourages the congregation at Corinth to be a united body. He had heard of their divisions, which Dunn in his Commentary on 1 Corinthians suggests that led to four rival parties. He names them as a Paul party, an Apollos party, a Cephas party and a Christ party (Dunn 1995:28). Hargreaves (1978:10) draws our attention to three important words: - "Dissensions", "cross", "wisdom".

Dissensions (v.10). Paul had heard that the members in the Corinthian Church had split into separate groups. He appeals to them to be united and his reasoning was that if they were divided they would not be able to do special work to which Christ has called them. Of great importance is the apostle's appeal and Morris (1958:38) in his commentary 1 Corinthians draws the reader's attention to the verb "beseech". He implores them by the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. The full title implies that Morris heightens the solemnity of his appeal. He says that this one name stands over against all party names. In fact Morris observes that the name of Christ is referred to at least nine times in the previous

verses and the apostle Paul uses it again in the next verse, which is the text in this research. Christ is absolutely central as is seen in the number of times it is being used (Morris 1958:38).

In continuing to examine this text Hargreaves (1978:10) refers to the following two reasons for the disunity; the Corinthian Christians neglected the basic teaching about Jesus' self-offering and they paid more attention to their human party leaders than to Jesus Himself (Hargreaves 1978:10-12).

In probing the reasons for the Corinthian Christians attaching themselves to the different parties, the discovery has been for various reasons. The various groups will now be considered.

4.3 A PAUL PARTY

Some who made a point of standing by the founder of the church show that there were others, who if they did not assail his position at least regarded him negatively and preferred new missionaries. Paul has no thanks for those who vocally took his part because, from the point of view of the unity of the church they were no better than the rest. Barrett in his Commentary *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* points out that there are no suggestions that this group were a serious problem (Barrett 1968:43).

4.4 AN APOLLOS PARTY

According to Acts 18:24 this person was an Alexandrian. The text in Acts reveals to the reader that Apollos was a learned (or eloquent) man. Given the high rating of the gifts of the Holy Spirit such as “tongues” the appearance of a particularly eloquent man says Morris should awaken partisanship, and some contempt for Paul the founder of the Church. This can be seen in 2 Corinthian 10:10 which reads, “For some say, His letters are weighty and unimpressive and his speaking amounts to nothing” (Barrett 1968:44).

4.5 A CEPHAS PARTY

Scholars are not very certain that Peter (Cephas is the Aramaic form of the name Peter) visited the Corinthian Church, however scholars allude to his presence in this church. The Cephas party is referred to in an argumentative way and also in another chapter of Corinthians. Morris asserts that Peter was an older Christian than Paul as well as the leader of the original twelve disciples. Morris continues by stating that Peter was more ready to conform to the Jewish Law than was Paul (Galatians 2:11f) and that there may possibly have been some different emphasis in his preaching from that of Paul. If so, the difference may have been slight if we consider Acts 10 as representative of Peter’s views. But a section of the Corinthians felt that there was something about Peter that made him the man to appeal to (Morris 1958:40).

4.6 A CHRIST PARTY

The most controversial of the four parties however has been the Christ Party. Dunn (1995:30) says that the problem with the Christ party is more ephemeral than the Cephas party. Commentators are very technical about this part of the text and it will not be helpful to get bogged down with these technicalities. Suffice to say that there was a party that stated that they follow Christ (Dunn 1995:30).

Having exegeted biblical texts, an examination of the church's definition of unity will be undertaken. To examine the various denomination statements on church unity will fall outside the scope of this research. However Groscurth editor of *What Unity Implies*, helps to put the church and its nature into perspective. He states that the church belongs together as one people. The Gospel the church proclaims speaks of God's action towards the whole of mankind as one people. It is addressed to all men, and since the church exists for the sake of the Gospel, its fellowship is also orientated to the same scope. The movement it supports is to spread across all borders to the ends of the earth, and on the way to this goal it is itself to be a fellowship open on all sides, in which hostility is reconciled and from which genuine peace radiates. Notice that he states that it is one people in many places.

He continues to affirm the oneness of the church in stating that the gathering, not the separation into individual parts, is what is primarily in view in the New Testament. The story of the Tower of Babel as recorded in Genesis 11:1-9 is sometimes used as a basis

for separate churches along language and perhaps other lines. For in the story of the Tower of Babel the peoples of the earth lost the possibility of mutual understanding and were scattered to the ends of the earth. The Tower of Babel narrative speaks to a quite different issue: it represents an aetiological study on the origin of the nations. However, in history, it has been used to legitimate various ideologies. During a conference at Bloemfontein in 1944 when the Federation of Afrikaans Cultural Organization held a forum, discussions were held in defense of apartheid. Loubser records (1987:56) the statements of one of the participants at this form, J. D. du Toit. He made reference to the Tower of Babel. He stated: "At Babel the "divider' again intervened". He argued that there should be no equality and no miscegenation because equality is directly against the great principle of God's order at the Tower of Babel (Loubser 1987:56-57).

The reading of Acts 2:8-11 negates the argument that the Tower of Babel provides a basis for separate churches along language lines. For in Acts chapter 2 Jews and devout men "from every nation under heaven" hear the Apostles speak in their own language. Groscurth concludes that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2 lifts the curse of separation, which lies over mankind. The Church is the fellowship in which this unity is to be symbolically realized (Groscurth 1969:73-75).

It is also worth considering the following that in the first place, the churches are bound together through the proclamation of the same message. Churches all witness to the same eschatological event, even if the interpretation differs and tensions between them can occasionally be found.

Secondly baptism and the breaking of bread have been signs, which bound together Christians in all places. In Romans 6:3 the Apostle Paul drew a line from baptism to the unity of the church. "... We were all baptized into one body". The story of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2 closes with mention of baptism, and Acts seems in general to place importance upon baptism as a sign of unity (Groscurth 1969: 81-83).

4.2.5 11 Corinthian 5:11-19 *"If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation".*

The other texts used in this chapter refer mainly to the relationship between people, here the text draws our attention to a unity between man and God and perhaps this gives enough reason to embrace each other in the spirit of true brotherhood.

The text refers to men and women who have embraced Jesus Christ and have accepted him as their Saviour. These people have been united and reconciled to Christ. The word "reconciled" in verse 18 is in the aorist tense in the Greek, which means that there was an action at a point in time and that has taken place at the Crucifixion. As a consequence of this action those that have embraced the Christian faith are reconciled and united with Christ.

In Verse 19 the participle denotes “reconciling past action with continuing consequences”. In other words according to Lotz (1999:38) who says that in our past, in our present, and in our future, we have been reconciled in Christ to God Almighty as we are twice-born men and women”. In Lotz’s assertion Christians have been reconciled to God and it is incumbent on them (Baptists) to be reunited to their fellow human beings. Lotz comments re-inforces this when he says “the fact of that vertical reconciliation which is symbolized by the universal symbols of the Christian’s common faith, the cross of Christ, gives them the hope of the horizontal reconciliation...”. He continues by stating that the Christian must understand that true reconciliation and unity that Christians seek can only come when it is rooted in, and witnesses to, by that vertical reconciliation that is in Christ (Lotz 1999: 38).

4.8 CONCLUSION

Various texts from both the Old and New Testament of the Bible were studied with the views of biblical scholars taken into account. This study included examining the Greek and Hebrew words in the text so as to provide a scientific investigation. The research also examined the historical and cultural background to these texts. Whilst Biblical commentators tend to project their views on the text, nevertheless their comments and views were taken into account.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. MOVEMENT TOWARDS UNITY

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The many changes in South Africa provided Baptists with opportunities to engage each other in dialogue. This chapter will record the various consultations and meetings of the five Baptist organizations. There was certainly a desire to move towards unification.

5.2 MOVEMENT TOWARDS UNITY

The new political dispensation in South Africa and the meeting of the Baptist World Alliance in Durban, South Africa, in July of 1998 saw a very significant development as far as Baptist unity is concerned. Leading figures such as Rev. Desmond Hoffmesier of the BCSA initiated discussions with BASA and BMSA, which took place at the Springfield College of Education in Durban in 1997. Another significant Consultation between the BCSA and the BUSA took place at Colesberg. All of these bilateral consultations between the various groups were a positive sign. The researcher will examine these important consultations as well as the very first Baptist Forum that included initially the BASA, BCSA, BMSA and the BUSA and, later, the ABK became part of the process of reconciliation.

The breakthrough came when the Baptist World Alliance held its General Council

meetings in Durban in 1998. The researcher in his book *In His Service* writes, "...this was the first time the Baptist World Alliance would be meeting in South Africa. They had not made a previous visit due to apartheid in our country, which they strongly opposed" (Ragwan 2003:40).

The BUSA and the BCSA invited the BWA to hold its General Council in Durban during July 1998. Rev Desmond Hoffmeister, General Secretary of the BCSA requested the BWA to include other Baptists in South Africa to form part of the Local Arrangements Committee for the BWA.

During this General Council Meeting Terry Rae, the General Secretary of the BUSA said: "We need to sit down and talk to each other". It was decided at that General Council meeting by three General Secretaries of the three Baptist organizations, Revs. Desmond Hoffmeister (BCSA), Terry Rae (BUSA), Mr. Dan Philip (BMSA), President of the BASA, Anthony Poliah and Vice-President of BASA and chair of the Local Arrangements Committee (LAC), Rev Rodney Ragwan to meet and begin a process of dialogue.

At a meeting in Durban in 1997 a LAC was elected with the researcher as chairman. For the first time in the history of Baptists, a multi-racial Baptist committee was to work together. Despite certain challenges, one of which was the resignation of the Secretary of the LAC at the first formal meeting of this committee, the General Council Meeting was a huge success (Ragwan 1990:63).

The minutes of the meetings of the five Baptist organizations will be recorded and examined. This chapter will also include the launch of the South African Baptist Alliance, which was a result of the above meetings held by the five Baptist organizations namely the ABK, BCSA, BUSA, BMSA and the BASA.

Before this watershed moment, the establishment of this forum which later became known as the South African Baptist Alliance (SABA), it is important to trace the events, bilateral meetings and consultations that took place between the various organizations.

5.3 THE SPRINGFIELD CONSULTATION

This Consultation took place as a result of conversations between Revs. Desmond Hoffmeister and Rodney Ragwan in 1997. Ragwan writes that in 1997 Hoffmeister in his foresight saw the bigger picture as far as Baptists were concerned and wanted to meet with the leadership of BASA. It was the first time that the BASA leadership was to meet a Black leader from the BCSA. Hoffmeister extended the invitation to the BMSA and so in April 1997 the three Baptist organizations BCSA, BASA and BMSA met in Springfield, Durban to discuss cooperation. The three organizations resolved to engage each other in working towards cooperation and unity. One specific event where cooperation could start was planning for the General Council of the BWA in July 1998 (Ragwan 2003:62).

5.4 THE COLESBURG CONSULTATION

This historic consultation took place between the BUSA and BCSA at Colesberg on 14 and 15 May 1998. It was facilitated by Dr. Ruben Richards at the request and invitation of the two General Secretaries of the BCSA and the BUSA. Dr Richard served as the Executive Secretary of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC).

Dr Richards outlined the government's TRC process with specific emphasis on its purpose, which he stated, was to deal with the past, the abuses of human rights, as well as to develop a mechanism to provide procedures to restore the damages done in the past. He went on to state that contrition, confession and forgiveness are necessary for healing to take place. He drew the attention of the delegates at Colesberg to the need for Baptists to acknowledge that crimes have been committed in the name of Christianity and that would be necessary for Baptists not only to have a shared memory of the past but to be accountable as well. Against this background both the organizations were given opportunities to share both their hurts and concerns.

According to the minutes (CBM 1998:9-12) representatives from each group shared their views about the hurts and concerns. They ranged from name calling to confiscation of property. Details of this follow later in this study. The Colesberg meeting was very important in getting the two organizations to deal with the past so that unification could take center stage in their future talks.

5.5 THE BULWER ROAD CONSULTATION

The first meeting of a multi-racial Baptist forum was held on the 19 February 1999 at the Bulwer Road Baptist Church in Durban. Present at this meeting were the following, the BCSA was represented by the Rev. D. Hoffmeister, Rev. M.J. Sibiya, Rev. L. Jacob, Rev. S. Dlamini, Rev. P. Sibiya, Rev. Anzima, Rev. A Dlamini, Rev. S.A. Khanyile and Rev. D.J. Mashiga. The BUSA was represented by Rev. T. Rae, Rev. B.E. Mcambi, Rev. A.Sibiya and Rev. GM.Ngamlana, the BMSA's delegates were Mr. Philip, Rev. L. Benjamin and Rev. J. Moses. BASA was represented by Mr. N.M. Israel, Mrs. R. Israel, Mr. A. Poliah, Ps R. Nathaniel, Mrs. F. Nathaniel, and Rev. R. Ragwan. At this stage the ABK were not part of this forum, they joined this forum later (Minutes of Baptist Unity in South Africa 1999:16).

This forum allowed each of the organizations to share their vision for Baptists in South Africa. All of the delegates were positive and committed themselves towards reconciliation and unity. A proposal to elect a committee to work toward continued reconciliation and co-operation between all Baptists in South Africa and to bring the others into the ongoing National process of reconciliation was unanimous. The committee comprised of: -

BUSA – Rev. Terry Rae;

BCSA – Rev. Desmond Hoffmeister;

BASA – Rev. Rodney Ragwan;

BMSA – Mr. Daniel Philip;

Facilitators – Revs. Dan Cole of the American Baptist Churches, USA and Rev. Dwight Reagan of the Southern Baptist Convention, USA.

The function of the above committee was to develop a resolution for a way forward and to establish the next meeting time for the process of dialogue to commence. The very first meeting of this forum was a positive sign that Baptists were at last willing to talk to each other and a commitment to reconciliation was evident.

The second meeting of this forum was held on 9 April 1999 at Bulwer Road Baptist Church and the facilitator, Rev. Dan Cole, a missionary of the American Baptist Churches, USA convened this meeting. At this second meeting a Memorandum of Understanding was formulated. In this Memorandum of Understanding a name was given to the forum –The South African Baptist Alliance (SABA), as well as its purpose, objectives, and governing principles were discussed and finalized.

The purpose as recorded in the memorandum state, “the purpose is to strengthen the Baptist witness and cooperate in ministry with each body remaining autonomous. The business of the Baptist bodies of the Alliance shall be facilitated by a co-coordinating executive comprising between two and four representatives from each group” (Memorandum of Understanding Document 1999).

The following statements were made by each organization (Bulwer Road Minutes 1999:16): -

BUSA stated that this process should bring about perfect unity such as discussed in 1 Corinthians 1:10.

BCSA stated that they are open to reconciliation and to this process and that a resolution was taken at their Easter Conference in 1999, which affirmed the need for reconciliation, fellowship and unity.

BMSA stated that there must be an unconditional commitment as challenged in Ephesians 4:1-5.

BASA stated that the walls that separated Baptists need to be broken down. There was a need for delegates to consider the love of Christ in order to become one as Christ and the Father are one as stated in Ephesians 2:14.

After a time of prayer there was a discussion concerning barriers in the relationship amongst the four Baptist organizations. Listed below are those barriers: -

5.4.1 Lack of Communication between Baptist groups;

5.4.2 Tone of communication;

5.4.3 Constitution that is inflexible and without representation;

5.4.4 Power struggle for dominance;

5.5.5 Ignorant of each other's history, hopes and character;

5.5.6 Access to International Baptist family.

For the first time these organizations were able to openly express how these barriers impeded their desire to cooperate as Baptists. In summarizing the listed barriers as expressed by these organizations, it was evident that there has been a lack of communication amongst Baptists. It was also found that the tone of the communication lacked respect for each other. As far as the issue of constitution was concerned this applied to the BUSA as the other organizations felt that the BUSA's constitution was inflexible and without representation and furthermore it was changed later to either cause the other organizations to join the BUSA on its terms or risk being left out of its structures. Prior to the changing of the BUSA constitution, BASA, BMSA and the ABK were affiliated as an organization to the BUSA where they had limited representation on its executive council only (Baptist Unity Minutes 199:2).

Baptists were to a large extent ignorant of each other's history, hopes and character. Delegates from the non-BUSA organizations expressed concern that the BUSA does not recognize the rich history and valuable contributions BASA, BMSA and the BCSA have made to the Christian witness in South Africa.

Another barrier that affected the relationship amongst Baptists in South Africa was racism. It would be naïve to think that, given the socio-political conditions in the country

and the racial composition of the five Baptist organizations, that there would be no racisms.

The facilitator engaged each of the organizations to discuss the hopes of how these barriers might be overcome and to provide a way forward. Below is a brief summary of the hopes that were articulated by the delegates at this forum: -

5.6 HOPES

Delegates discussed that with regards to the lack of communication, they are hopeful that there would be free communication with open language between leaders and members of the five organizations and should be characterized by love and respect for each other and their respective organizations. It was hoped that a constitution especially of BUSA would be open to all voices. The issue of racism received much attention and it was resolved that each organization work towards eradicating this barrier both within individuals as well as in the structures of the five organizations.

It was further decided that to overcome the problem of ignorance efforts would be made for pulpit exchange, promote fellowship amongst congregants of the different organizations as well as hold unity and reconciliation meetings. This according to the delegates (1999:2) will provide opportunities for the different organizations members to appreciate the richness of their diversity.

It was decided that there was the need for a mechanism to be put into place to move the four organizations closer to the goal of unity. Listed below are those elements: -

5.5.1 An element of confession where each one accept their responsibility and own what they have done;

5.5.2 Restitution – what are the responsibilities and obligations?;

5.5.3 Recognize particular conflicts that needs for intervention.

The BCSA on the 9 April 1999 went on to propose the establishment of a cooperative body of Baptists in South Africa. According to the BCSA this will cause cooperation, open communication and create a forum to deal with conflicts and issues unresolved from the past. The BCSA added that this body could be expanded to include other Baptist bodies and look at wider issues facing the country.

The BUSA made the following statement. Being the Baptist organization that was viewed with suspicion over the years by most of the other Baptist organizations their statement was a very significant one. It reads, “We acknowledge that in the past, we as the BUSA, have acted wrongfully and sinfully towards Baptist bodies in South Africa who were historically represented at a leadership level in our denomination. We confess as sinful our exclusionary mindset, our constitutional inflexibility, our lack of proper communication, as well as a deep-seated ignorance. We also confess that there have been times when co-operation did take place and we did not give proper acknowledgement or show adequate respect to smaller bodies. We have demonstrated a pattern of not noting

the co-operation, growth and development of smaller Baptist bodies. We acknowledge that this has caused deep hurt and division in the past for which we are deeply sorry and we trust you will grant us forgiveness. In order to prevent this from happening again and to move forward together we propose that delegations from the four Baptist bodies meet every six months for the purpose of communication, co-operation and unity. The goal is to engage each other so that we can ultimately become one Baptist Body in South Africa” (Baptist Unity Minutes 1999:3).

The BMSA, a predominantly Indian organization made the following statement: “The Mission confesses to many wrong doings for the way we treated each other because of the laws of our country. Our present ideals are to see restored relationships and to have some form of combined fellowship. Ultimately the Baptist Mission is committed to one Baptist body. In order for this to come about we suggest the formation of a facilitating committee, with each body having equal representation. We express the need to have one voice. Baptist Mission will take every initiative to Baptist unity. We will not commit ourselves to any process but Baptist unity. We need to have a neutral facilitator. We need to look at other denominations that have had a unification process, for help. We must adhere to the principles of honesty and transparency. Today is the beginning of a great day in our lives” (Baptist Unity Minutes 1999:4).

The strong call from the BMSA was as a result of their own consultation that took place in Deep River, Kwa-Zulu Natal from the 5-7 February 1993. At this Deep River Consultation sixty delegates from the churches of the BMSA mapped out a vision for the

future. The three days at Deep River were spent on formulating a mission statement, outlining objectives, making confession, recognizing the challenges for the future relationships among their churches and other Baptist denominations, developing strategies and a commitment to action. One of its objectives as stated in their covenant was to “promote unity and brotherly love among churches of the mission and Association within the mission”. It also committed itself to unification of the Baptist denomination and noted the fragmentation of the polarized state of the church in South Africa (*Deep River Consultation Document* 1993: 2).

The statement made by BASA, a largely ethnic organization, was summarized in the minutes as acknowledging the need to work together, to go beyond their hurt. They said in their ignorance they hurt others. They regret all their past actions which caused those hurts. They also said that they submit to the cleansing of the precious blood of Jesus. They wished to move with a new spirit of fellowship (*Baptist Unity Minutes* 1999:4).

Each of the organizations’ statements embodied confession and regret of past actions. There was optimism that this process would proceed to the next level. That next level as recorded in the 9 April 1999 minutes of Baptist Unity in South Africa was the discussion of the model for a Baptist forum in South Africa. A Baptist Federation, which was suggested was received positively. This BFSA would comprise the four groups, which would engage each other regularly, and work towards unity. It was also suggested that issues such as racism, tribalism, suspicion and resources be dealt with by this forum. Delegates shared some of the challenges of a “top down” approach, which required a

person of passion to drive the process.

A groundbreaking resolution was put together by a special resolution committee of this forum which reads: “We, the delegates of the Baptist Convention of South Africa, the Baptist Association of South Africa, the Baptist Mission of South Africa and the Baptist Union of Southern Africa, on this 9th day April of 1999, in order to explore reconciliation, forgiveness and unity among our constituent bodies experienced the guidance and conviction of the Holy Spirit as we expressed our past, our hurts, our divisions and our sins. A time of introspection led us to identify barriers to unite.

We have acknowledged the move of God in our midst, which led us to express our hopes for the future and our common desire for a single united Baptist body in South Africa.

We have resolved to take this report back to our executives for discussion and for them to appoint delegates to continue deliberation on the 2nd July 1999”.

The resolution was received and approved unanimously. It was then determined that each body would take the results of this meeting to their executives and appoint four persons to meet on 2nd July 1999 at the Bulwer Road Baptist Church to continue the process as stated in the last statement of the resolution. Delegates participated in a “Communion Service” with prayer offered for the process.

The minutes of the 31 March 2000 held at the ABK Seminarium in Kempton Park, Johannesburg, records the participation of the Afrikaanse Baptiste Kerk at the Baptist

Forum. At the outset the General Secretary, Dr. Carl Lehmkühl, in greeting the group stated that the ABK was willing and prepared to work together with the four groups.

The resolution that was accepted by the executive committee of SABA had to be discussed by the respective executives of the five Baptist Organizations and was to be reported on at the next meeting. It is documented in the minutes of the meeting of 31 March 2000 held at Kempton Park. The responses of the following five organizations after consulting with their respective executives were as follows: -

ABK accepted the proposal and was willing to and prepared to work together with the Alliance.

BCSA suggested that due to the prevailing problems and misunderstanding in both the BCSA and the BUSA constituencies, energies and efforts be focused on relationship building and reconciliation, first at the grass-roots level and then on other levels as well; and that co-operation be sought among the five Baptist bodies in South Africa in such areas as theological education, ministers and staff pension fund and mission so as to enhance a common Baptist witness in South Africa.

BUSA reported that their executive felt that the resolution was too broad. They felt that there was some work to do specifically with regards to what the Alliance was going to do with theological education. It was further reported that there would be no vote on the resolution until it is concrete and specific in this area.

BMSA stated it is interested in the process but would prefer to see some time frame as well as an evaluation process put in place.

BASA reported that their executive is generally in favour of the process but is waiting for specifics.

The facilitator Rev. Dan Cole is recorded to have said at this meeting that the group has to take ownership of this process and recommended that each of the Baptist organizations select one person to a committee of conveners. These five would become conveners for future meetings of the Alliance. Cole suggested that these conveners should rotate in the beginning and in this way delegates would learn to appreciate the leadership style of each group. The conveners selected by the five organizations were P. Msiza (BCSA), T. Rae (BUSA), C. Lehukuhl (ABK), D. Philip or B. Naidoo (BMSA) and R. Ragwan (BASA).

The conveners were given a suggested agenda for future meetings. The following agenda items had as its objective to cooperate as Baptists in South Africa. The Following were discussed and attempts were made to implement them: -

Definitive Statement: In the minutes of the meeting of 18 August 2000 which was held at Arena Park Baptist Church, it was recorded that the Rev. Terry Rae of the BUSA proposed a mission statement which read: "The purpose of the South African Baptist Alliance is to strengthen the Baptist witness in South Africa by vesting a forum where the participating bodies may forge a closer fellowship, discuss matters of common concern,

“speak with a united voice and develop a co-operative ministry”. This was accepted by the forum.

Pray for each other: this has been a strong feature of the SABA. At each executive meeting, special prayer time was given to each organisation to share and report about their activities after which prayer time was allocated to pray for one another and for the activities of each of the five organizations. These are too numerous to record, but are recorded in all the minutes of the SABA meetings.

Expand Publications: this has not been a successful function of SABA despite calls from delegates in their respective organization’s newsletters and brochure to include the progress, activities and the discussions being held by the five Baptist organizations. It was reported however at a meeting held at the Durban North Baptist Church on the 15 June 2001 that the BUSA would advertise the official launch of SABA in their National brochure, *Baptist Today*. Terry Rae is recorded as saying that he would request the editor of Baptist Today to put together a brochure of the event, which could also be circulated (SABA Minutes 2001:2-4).

Constitution: SABA delegates stated that this forum would not have a constitution. Each organisation according to the minutes of the meeting of 18 August 2000 which was held at the Arena Park Baptist Church, Chatsworth stated that the Alliance will follow a simple structure of fellowship with each organization remaining autonomous and that a co-coordinating executive council be formed to facilitate fellowship and co-operation. It

was also recorded that this executive would comprise between two and four representative from each group (SABA Minutes 2002:2).

Co-operation in Theological Education, missions, church planting, disaster relief and community projects such as HIV/Aids: As far as the above were concerned only two areas enjoyed the co-operation of the five organizations. One was theological education. The All Africa Baptist Fellowship (AABF) which is a regional organisation of the Baptist World Alliance (BWA), held a Theological Educators Conference in Johannesburg at the Honey Dew Conference Center on 24-27 June 2003. SABA elected a committee to arrange this conference on behalf of AABF. Delegates from three of the five Baptist organizations attended and participated at the conference (SABA Minutes: 2003:2).

The other significant co-operative ministry that all five Baptist Organisation participated in was the X-treme team ministry. The X-treme ministry concept is a youth programme of the American Baptist Churches (ABC), USA that allows individuals to experience Christian ministry in different cultural and geographical locations around the world.

Representatives from the five Bodies traveled to the United States of America and participated in this ministry from the 30 June to the 9 August 2003 (SABA Minutes 2003:2).

Thus far there has not been any co-operation in church planting and community projects such as HIV/Aids by the five Baptist organizations. Despite this, the five organizations

committed themselves to pursuing ways of co-operating which led to further resolutions.

Below are the resolutions taken by SABA: -

Sharing principles on Leadership: The minutes of the meeting on 18 August 2000 held at Arena Park Baptist Church in Chatsworth, Durban records the concerns of the BUSA concerning the tensions between congregational and leadership models of church leadership. According to the BUSA there is too much organizational leadership as compared to spiritual leadership. The other four Baptist organizations identified with this observation made by the BUSA and requested that these trends be examined against international trends. This examination however did not take place by the SABA (SABA Minutes 2000:3).

Pastors' Roll: no effort was undertaken to compile a pastor's roll of pastors within the five organizations.

Constitution: An explanation was given under item one of suggested agenda for future meetings. The decision was not to have a constitution.

A need for Christian Schools: This item appeared only once on the agenda and discussions took place but no real progress was made in this area.

Public Relations: In the short history of SABA the following were elected as facilitators. Rev. Terry Rae of the BUSA was elected the first facilitator of SABA in 2001(SABA

minutes 2001:1). The following year in 2002 Rodney Ragwan was elected as SABA's facilitator (SABA Minutes 2002:3). The main persons responsible for creating awareness of SABA and its objectives were supposed to be the General Secretaries of the five organizations.

Address the Government with one common Baptist voice on moral issues: In the past BUSA addressed the government on certain issues, one of which was of a political nature, that is, the government's proposal to deprive Africans of their limited Parliamentary representation. The BUSA condemned this proposal (de Gruchy 1979:54). Although the present government meets with religious leaders from time to time, SABA does not have an official voice at this religious forum nor has it attempted to get such a voice.

Form a Theological Education Committee: At the SABA meeting held at Arena Park Baptist Church in Chatsworth, Durban, the minutes recorded that a discussion was held to unify the Theological Colleges of the ABK, BCSA and the BUSA. It was decided to hold a meeting of all three Colleges. Those present viewed this in a very positive light and hoped that this will result in the merging of seminary programmes and sharing of resources and personnel. It was hoped that this new institution would be a truly African Seminary where the different languages, and cultural backgrounds will be considered. This concept was to be tabled at the respective meetings of the five Baptist organizations. Representation and input of BASA and BMSA were requested as well (SABA Minutes 2000:2).

There have been several meetings of this theological education committee in the last two and a half years regarding the forming of a single Baptist Institution in South Africa. The model that was being pursued was a Federal Baptist College. Some of the issues that were of concern to the main Baptist organizations were assets, resources, administration, salaries, legal implications and theology. The minutes of 31 October 2003 records that the concept of a Federal Baptist College in South Africa is desirable but not practical.

The main reasons given by the BUSA was that their theological institution is accredited with the education department of the state while the ABK and the BCSA colleges are not. Furthermore according to its General Secretary the state will not consider the concept of three colleges on one Campus. The other reasons cited by the BUSA are administration, which for the BUSA will be, in the words of the new General Secretary, Angelo Scheepers “a nightmare”, and salaries for the different College faculties will differ.

The concluding remarks as recorded in the minutes is that the BUSA feels that the ‘time is not right’ for such a concept. The other SABA delegates expressed disappointment at the failure of this proposed concept of a Federal Baptist College in South Africa. It was hoped that this united effort by SABA to form a federal College would have been a significant development in the unification of the five Baptist organizations (SABA minutes 2003:2). Failure by SABA to have a truly united institution where there would be three colleges sharing one campus demonstrated lack of will on the BUSA to go through with this concept.

5.7 OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN BAPTIST ALLIANCE

The Official Launch of the South African Baptist Alliance was done in three cities in South Africa, namely Johannesburg, 27 July 2001, Cape Town, 28 July 2001, and Durban, 29 July 2001. The President of the BWA, Dr Billy Kim was the keynote speaker at all three launches. His sermons were evangelistic in nature. The purpose of these launches was to formally introduce the Alliance of the five Baptist organizations in South Africa as well its objectives. Daniel Philip the General Secretary of the BMSA was the programme director at this historical of launch of SABA. Each of the General Secretaries of the five organizations participated in the programmes. A significant presentation was done by the General Secretaries Rev. D. Hoffmeister (BCSA) and Rev. T. Rae (BUSA). They reflected on their painful journey of separation and then healing.

The Johannesburg launch of SABA held at the Good News Center in Honey Dew was well represented by the BCSA, ABK and the BUSA as these organization's membership are well represented in the Gauteng area. However, the Kwa Zulu Natal based BMSA and BASA leaders attended and participated in this launch.

The Cape Town SABA Launch coincided with the BUSA's own Rally at the Good Hope Center, Cape Town. With no churches of the BMSA, ABK and BASA in the Cape, this rally was well attended mainly by members of the BUSA. The concept of SABA was not well appreciated by the audience as the programme of the launch was placed at the end of the rally.

The Durban launch of the SABA was held on the 29 July 2001 at the Durban City Hall, Durban. This province has churches from all five organizations except the ABK. Despite this, representatives from the ABK were in attendance. The absence of the white Baptist Churches of BUSA was conspicuous.

5.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter, “the Movement Towards Unity”, recorded the various consultations that the five organizations held as well as the significant resolutions taken at these consultations. The research also examined the important statements of the leaders of these organizations particularly at the meetings of the SABA. The official launch of the SABA was also mentioned.

CHAPTER SIX

6. DATA INTERPRETATION AND RECOMMENDATION

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In chapter five minutes of meetings that were held among the five Baptist organizations were examined. The desire of the five Baptist organizations to work towards unification was noted. The minutes of these meetings reflects the thinking and intentions of the key leaders of the five Baptist organizations. Their intentions and hopes as expressed at these meetings will be critically examined in the light of the stated objective of the five Baptist organizations i.e. unification and co-operation. They will be interpreted and thereafter the researcher's recommendation will follow. This process started with Baptists expressing a need to engage each other in dialogue.

6.2 BAPTISTS IN DIALOGUE

As mentioned earlier in this research the BWA's presence in South Africa in July of 1998 had a very positive influence on Baptists in South Africa. This resulted in the formation of the South African Baptist Alliance. The meeting of the four Baptist organizations at Bulwer Road Baptist Church on 19 February 1999 must be considered as a major breakthrough given the fragmented and polarized state of the Baptist denomination in South Africa. What is also significant is that the four groups extended an invitation to the

ABK, which is an Afrikaner group, the opportunity to join the process of unification thus making it an inclusive one.

The minutes of the Bulwer Road meeting records that a proposal was made to elect a committee to work toward continued reconciliation and co-operation between all Baptists in Kwa Zulu Natal and to bring other Baptist organizations into the ongoing National process of reconciliation and unification. This can be regarded as a breakthrough given the non-cooperation of the five organizations in the past. However they had to come to terms with the past in order to proceed into the future.

6.2.1. Dealing with the past

The wisdom of Rev Desmond Hoffmeister's suggestion that before a merger of the Baptist organizations take place there needs to be a forum where Baptists are given the opportunity to deal with the past hurts is a step in the right direction as one considers the scriptural basis for such an activity of confession and forgiving one another.

The dawning in 1994 of a new dispensation of a democratic country, gave hope to Black people and the conditions in the country in some way prompted Baptists to engage each other with the hope of uniting a fragmented Baptist denomination. The BCSA that represented the Black people of South Africa had suffered greatly under apartheid and it was important for them to share with other Baptists the hurts experienced by them as

well as the obstacles of the past so that these could be dealt with and hopefully never repeated. BASA and BMSA also felt that such a forum was needed. The starting point in this process for the BCSA was important and necessary. For in pursuing unification past hurts must be brought out in the open and dealt with. There needed to be confession and repentance for true healing to take place. This seemed to be a natural path to take given the fact that the five organizations hold strongly to biblical confession and repentance as far as salvation is concerned. The evidence of a biblical basis for such an activity is another reason for Baptists to embrace such a forum where Baptists confess and repent of the wrongs. In a process such as this there would be a number of challenges to consider.

6.2.1.1 Challenges

These past hurts and barriers that were cited by the five organizations at the Baptist Unity in South Africa discussions, that were held at the Bulwer Road Baptist Church on 9 April 1999 will be examined and interpreted. The following were cited as barriers, which caused, hurt and prevented unification.

Lack of communication between Baptist organizations – There has been occasions when areas of concern were communicated by BASA and BCSA to the BUSA. However response to these concerns were not acknowledged. The tone of the communications especially between BUSA and BCSA was not good.

The other obstacle was the constitution of BUSA, which was inflexible. When the BUSA

changed its constitution from a union of associations to a union of churches this left the other organizations outside of the greater Baptist family especially for the leaders that represented their respective organizations at the BUSA executive meetings.

Another barrier was the treatment of the history of the BMSA, BMSA and the BCSA by BUSA. Very little of these histories appear in their publications and newsletters. The contributions of men and women in the history of these organizations are often ignored or not acknowledged.

The BUSA specifically admitted in their statement that there had been times when cooperation did take place and that they did not give proper acknowledgement or show adequate respect to smaller Baptist organizations and also demonstrated a pattern of not noting the co-operation, growth and development of smaller Baptist organizations. At the first meeting of the four Baptist organizations held on 19 February 1999, there was a recognition that the past history of apartheid played a part in perpetuating five separate Baptist organizations and the five Baptist organizations participated in a time of confession and repentance similar to South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (Baptist Unity in South Africa minutes 1999:1).

The Memorandum of Understanding specifically defines SABA as a fellowship of bodies and each organisation will remain autonomous. It reflects non-committal of each organisation except the BMSA to a new united Baptist organisation in South Africa. This should not be misunderstood as reluctance by the other organizations to the idea of co-

operation and working together in ministry. It simply means that there are many issues at stake in the event of creating a new united Baptist organisation in South Africa such as assets, resources, theological differences, tradition and culture among other things.

At the SABA meetings there were mostly young leaders from the five Baptist organizations. Not all of them were part of resolutions that were taken previously by BUSA in the apartheid days that had brought about hurt. Despite this each organisation confessed their wrongs and apologized for their past actions. Each delegate participated in a Holy Communion service, which followed at the end.

A very important element of restitution at this forum was absent. Given the enormous damage that apartheid had caused in which two organizations, BUSA and ABK benefited namely in the areas of economics and education, no commitment from them was made as far as restitution was concerned. Whilst the creation of such a forum was a noble one, an important biblical principle of restitution was not considered. Embracing such a principle would be huge and costly but engaging in such a process however small, will be helpful symbolically.

The willingness of each of the Baptist organizations that is reflected in their statements at the first meeting in 1999 was an indication that leaders were open to the idea of eventual unification. The leaders that sat around the SABA table were mostly important and influential officers in their respective organizations. When the principles and objectives of SABA were reported at their respective constituencies they were received positively.

However most of these constituencies called for more specific details with regards to the unification process. One such example of this is recorded in the SABA minutes held on 31 March 2000 in Kempton Park, Johannesburg where the BUSA responded to the area of theological education. One has to bear in mind that Baptists also have variations in their theologies. The BUSA holds to a strong conservative evangelical theology with strong emphasis on evangelism and missions whilst BCSA tend to be strong on contextual theology with a strong concern for both the spiritual and social needs.

The failure of SABA to pursue a federal Baptist College according to the SABA minutes of 31 October 2003 was as a result of difficulties in areas of staffing, salaries, legal implications in regards to assets, property and administration. No mention was made of the curriculum. One is tempted to think that the issue of theology could have been a major stumbling block in this process. The statements in the SABA meetings reflect the differences as far as the theological positions of the two main organizations are concerned namely the BUSA and the BCSA. One is considered to be somewhat liberal and the other conservative in their theology. Many conservative evangelicals are not comfortable with the liberation theology, which attempts to unite theology and socio-political concerns (Elwell 1984: 635).

On the other hand Blacks from the BCSA as well as the two ethnically based organizations, BASA, BMSA and BCSA would argue that the conservative evangelicals from the BUSA and ABK with their strong emphasis on evangelism and church planting tend to be less concerned with the social issues facing the population of South Africa.

There needs to be an understanding that God is concerned with the whole person that includes his spiritual and physical make up. A holistic understanding and application of the gospel is needed rather than a narrow understanding of the gospel.

Another flaw in the unification process as set out in SABA is that the principles and objectives are not reaching the people on the ground. Rev. Hoffmeister is recorded as saying that the challenging task would be to create awareness among the grassroots members of each organization and cautioned against a top down approach. He also suggested that in order for this to be a bottom up approach there needed to be reconciliation drivers in each of the Baptist organizations (Baptist Unity Talks minutes 1999: 13).

In spite of the challenges that were cited by the delegates at the SABA meetings there certainly were achievements that the five organizations could be grateful for.

6.2.1.2 Achievements

Whilst there are many challenges facing SABA and the unification process, many positive aspects have been realized. They are as follows: -

6.2.1.2.1 Multi-racial forum

For the first time in the history of Baptists in South Africa, the different race groups

engaged each other in matters concerning unification. The regular meetings of SABA gave the different racial groups the opportunity to socialize, share personal concerns as well as agree to disagree on issues that would not have been possible with each Baptist organization working independently of each other. The simple activities of having tea, meals and traveling together of the different groups have helped positively as far as communication and acceptance are concerned.

6.2.1.2.2 An Educational Experience

Many of the misconceptions and suspicions that the five organizations had of each other were brought out in the open and cleared. The sharing of ideas and experiences contributed to a better understanding of one another. This included sharing of innovative programmes, community based initiatives and international conference participation experiences.

The honesty of the BUSA as recorded in a statement on 9 April 1999 should be acknowledged. The BUSA statement confessed that in the past they have acted wrongfully and sinfully towards Baptist organizations in South Africa. Their statement went as far as admitting their sinful and exclusionary mindset, their constitutional inflexibility, and lack of proper communication as well as deep-seated ignorance (Bulwer Road Minutes 1999:18-19).

6.2.3 Evaluation

In evaluating this process, it must be stated that the desired results were not achieved. Having praised the good intentions of SABA and its resolutions the practical manifestations have not really been fully realized. Whilst the new dispensation in the country gave impetus to the five Baptist organizations to work towards unification, this is not a good enough reason. Martin Lloyd Jones in his commentary on *God's way of Reconciliation* states that sometimes because of certain circumstances people get together, driven together, perhaps, by a common need or by a common danger, and they are to be seen talking to one another and cooperating and working together (Lloyd-Jones 1972:279). One is tempted to consider Lloyd Jones's assertion that sometimes people are driven together by a common danger. Perhaps the insecurity of being under a Black administration as well as the fear of being criticized by the International Baptist community for not taking advantage of the conducive political conditions in South Africa in pursuing unity are factors which have brought Baptist together.

In the case of SABA, political changes in the country as well as the presence of the BWA in 1998 caused Baptists to begin a process of unification. Once again, should circumstances or biblical motivation determine unification? The researcher thinks the latter, as Baptists are known to be the "people of the book" where the authority of the Bible is taken very seriously.

This statement of the BUSA about smaller Baptist organizations is a major shift. It has

been recorded earlier in this research that the BUSA had changed its constitution hoping that individual churches of the BMSA, ABK, BASA and BCSA would affiliate directly to the BUSA. This was regarded by the other Baptist organizations with suspicion as they felt that the BUSA had little or no regards for the smaller Baptist organizations. On the other hand one may come to the defense of the BUSA and argue that it was promoting the possibility of one single Baptist organization in South Africa. However a truly united Baptist organization would have to be negotiated by all the Baptist organization with a new constitution and a new name.

6.3 THE WAY FORWARD

In recommending a way forward for a united Baptist organization in South Africa, the researcher places at the forefront the biblical text which says that “if any man is in Christ he is a new creature” (NIV 2 Corinthian 5:17). He proposes the following: -

Intentions about unification – Baptists in South Africa must reflect a strong intention to unite with time frames put in place. If there is a time frame it will help those that are driving the vision to work within that time frame.

Transparency and openness – Negotiators should at all times be transparent and open in matters affecting their understanding of the process as well as the views of their constituencies. There may be difficulties later on if major decisions are being taken and

delegates become technical and thus not cooperative.

Place God's agenda above everything else – This may seem a highly spiritual recommendation and indeed it is. The researcher who is a minister by vocation and deeply committed to the Christian faith makes this recommendation passionately. As a participant in this process since 1999, the placing of tradition, history and the personal interpretation of individuals over the agenda of God poses a serious challenge to the unification of Baptists in South Africa. The prayer of “Thy Will be done” must be examined seriously (NIV 1999:855).

Consensus – Baptists have always applied the principle of consensus in decision-making. The application of this principle leaves much to be desired. During church business meetings the participation and input of youth, women and other departments of the church are not always taken into account. Full discussions should and must take place on all levels i.e. youth meetings, women's meetings and other departmental meetings of the church

6.4 CONCLUSION

The minutes of the meetings of the five Baptist organizations have been examined and interpreted. It has helped in understanding the process of unification. In this process the past experiences of mainly black Baptists, the challenges and achievements were

mentioned. These were also evaluated and a way forward was suggested.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

In concluding this research of An Inquiry into the unity process amongst Baptists in South Africa, the researcher navigated through the different stages of this process undertaken by the five Baptist organizations towards unification. In Chapter one the research design gave a broad outline of the research with particular emphasis on objectives and values of the research both locally and internationally.

The research was prefaced with the history of the church in which special reference to the heresies that resulted in schisms in the early centuries was discussed. The pursuit of the church for unity and cooperation resulted in the ecumenical movement. This chapter also sketched its origins, aims, main role players, challenges and the different organs of the ecumenical movement. The researcher then proceeded to the history of the Baptist World Alliance. Here too, its origin, aims and emphasis were examined. Significant conferences and statements of the BWA were noted and examined as well. Included in this chapter were the histories of the five Baptist organizations, the BCSA, ABK, BMSA, BASA and the BUSA were recorded. These histories were recorded in a particular milieu and this was reflected in the racially separated organizations.

Chapter three dealt with the process of diversification. Baptists in South Africa were divided and the researcher examined the factors that had caused disunity amongst the five Baptist organizations. Special reference was made of the role and impact of apartheid,

racism, and ethnicity in the history of the five organizations. The finding was that apartheid, racism and ethnicity did play a role in promoting racial separation among the five Baptist organizations in South Africa.

The researcher provided a study of important biblical texts in chapter four with exegetical comments, which clearly provided a theology of unity. Biblical texts from both the Old and New Testaments were studied. It was found here through the study of these biblical texts that there is a strong basis for unity.

Chapter five examined the minutes of the unity talks between the five Baptist organizations. This historical process was closely studied and critically interpreted and evaluated in the light of the resolutions and objectives of the unity talks. Leading figures and their contributions were noted followed by the researcher's recommendations. Here in this chapter it was found that leading figures in the unity process cited biblical texts to support unity as well as substantive talking that went on at the SABA meetings but very little practical steps were taken to express this unity.

Chapter six summarizes the entire process in the light of the Bible's call for unity and Baptist convictions that Baptists are people of the Word. The lessons from both the ecumenical movement as well as from the BWA were extracted for Baptists to learn from. The role of the Baptist denomination in South Africa in spiritual and social transformation is crucial. We need to learn from great Baptists such as Martin Luther King Junior who was an advocate of justice, reconciliation and unity as well as Billy

Graham who called people to be in the forefront of demonstrating to humanity Christ's love and reconciliation. It is necessary as Baptists to construct a new society that is based on respect for one another, justice, compassion and reconciliation. The movement of the five Baptist organizations to that ideal of unification although slow and with many challenges has, at least commenced. Mayet stated (1982:26) that technology has helped to make this world a neighbourhood, the researcher would like to add that Baptists in South Africa is challenged to make this world a brother and sisterhood.

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