

CAN A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF HANS KÜNG'S
EARLY ECCLESIOLOGY (1960-1970) YIELD SOME
PARADIGMATIC EXAMPLES FOR A CONTEMPORARY
REDEMPTIVE COMMUNITY IN SOUTH AFRICA?

By

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ABSTRACT

This thesis primarily analyses critically K  ng's early ecclesiology with the intention of identifying important paradigmatic examples to be related to a contemporary South African Church Community. It argues that K  ng's ecclesiology takes the hermeneutics of faith as its overriding theological rationale and as a result of this comes out with a particular understanding of the community of redemption. Subsequent to this primary focus in the nature of this thesis, the work further spells out clearly certain paradigmatic themes in K  ng's theology and seeks to show how they can inform the ecclesiology of the CPISA.

DECLARATION

This thesis is the original work by
Vikinduku Victor Mnculwane and has not been
submitted to any other university. Where use was made of
the work of others it has been duly acknowledged in the text.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Vikinduku Victor Mnculwane', with a stylized, overlapping flourish at the beginning.

(VIKINDUKU VICTOR MNCULWANE)

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To the countless precious people whose lives have influenced and shaped my thinking in a variety of ways. I will also remain eternally grateful to my supervisor Sister Susan Rakoczy IHM whose patience and encouragement helped me when my own confidence waned along the journey.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
ABSTRACT	i
DECLARATION	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii

CHAPTER 1

THE PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE THESIS

1.1	Introduction.	1
1.2	Motivation For The Choice.	1
1.2.1	The Paradigmatic Relevance Of Küng's Journey Of Faith.	1 - 3
1.3	Who Is Hans Küng?	3 - 6
1.4	The Thesis And The Wider Corpus Of Küng's Theology.	6 - 8
1.5	The Basic Structure Of The Thesis.	8
1.6	The Methodology To Be Used.	9
1.7	Conclusion.	9

CHAPTER 2

THE USE OF FAITH AS A HERMENEUTICAL PRINCIPLE

2.1	Introduction	10 - 11
2.2.1	The Christocentric Nature Of Faith.	11 - 12
2.2.2	Faith As Grace And Freedom	12
2.2.3	Faith Is Eschatological	12 - 13
2.2.4	The Epistemological Dimension In Faith	13 - 14
2.2.5	Faith Is Dynamic	14 - 15
2.2.6	The Communal Dimension In Faith	15 - 16

2.3	The History Of Theology And The Use Of Faith As A Hermeneutical Principle	16
2.3.1	The First Two And Half Centuries Of Christian Theology	16 - 18
2.3.2	The Hermeneutics Of Reason, Faith And Love: The Example Of St. Augustine	18 - 20
2.3.3	Developments After Augustine	20
2.3.4	The Advent Of St. Anselm And The Use Of Faith As A Hermeneutical Principle In Theology	21- 23
2.3.5	The Twelfth To The Fifteenth Centuries	23 - 25
2.3.6	From The Reformation To The Twentieth Century	25 - 27
2.4	The Relationship Between Faith And The Decisive Origins Of The Church	27 - 30
2.4.1	Is Küng's Theology A Fideism?	30 - 33
2.4.2	The Church As An Object Of Faith	33 - 34
2.5	Conclusion	34 - 35

CHAPTER 3

THE FAITH OF THE COMMUNITY AND THE STRUCTURE OF THE CHURCH

3.1	Introduction	36
3.2	The Priority Of The Call Of God In The Church	36 - 37
3.3.1	The Transcendental Nature Of The Church	37 - 38
3.3.2	The Essence Of The Church As A Contributory Factor In The Complex Nature Of The Church	38 - 39
3.3.3	The Context In Which The Church Is Situated	39 - 40
3.4	The Community's Faith And Ecclesiological Models	40 - 42
3.4.1	The Relationship Between Images And Models	42
3.5	The Church As Mystical Fellowship	42 - 44
3.5.1	The Church As People Of God	44 - 45
3.5.1.1	The Church As A 'Distinctive Sect' Within Judaism	45 - 48
3.5.1.2	The Relationship Between The Jews And The Church	48 - 50

3.5.2	The Community's Faith And A <i>Pneumatological</i> Ecclesiology	50 - 51
3.5.2.1	The Holy Spirit Is A Gift To The Church Received By Faith	51 - 53
3.5.1.3	The Church As The Temple Of The Spirit	53 - 54
3.6	The Faith Of The Community And The Body Of Christ Model	54 - 56
3.7	The Church As Servant	56 - 57
3.8	The Priority Of The Community's Faith In The Formation Of Ecclesiastical Office	57 - 62
3.8.1	Faith, <i>Diakonia</i> And Ecclesiastical Office	62 - 64
3.9	The Faith Of The Church Vis-A-Vis The <i>Notae</i> <i>Ecclesiarum</i>	64 - 65
3.10	Conclusion	65 - 67

CHAPTER 4

AN EVALUATION OF HANS KÜNG'S ECCLESIOLOGY

4.1	Introduction	68
4.2	How Does Küng Understand Holy Scripture?	68
4.2.1	Scripture Is The Original Testimony Of Faith	68 - 70
4.2.2	Scripture As A Source For Theologising	70
4.2.2.1	Scripture And Theological Methodology	71 - 77
4.3	The Ecumenical Character Of Küng's Ecclesiology	77 - 78
4.4	The Missionary Dimension In Küng's Ecclesiology	78
4.5	A Critique Of Küng's Ecclesiology	79
4.5.1	Some Weaknesses In The Ecclesiology Of Küng	79 - 80
4.5.2	The Church Exists Beyond The First Century	80 - 81
4.5.3	A Propensity Towards An Eclectic Use Of Scripture	81 - 82
4.5.4	The Shortcomings Of Mystical Models Of The Church	83
4.5.4.1	The Obscurity Of The Relationship Between The	

	Spiritual And The Visible	83 - 84
4.5.4.2	The Danger Of Deifying The Church	84 - 85
4.5.5	The Possibility Of Overemphasizing A Hermeneutical Position	85 - 86
4.5.6	An Implicit Mixture Of Obduracy And Faith?	86 - 87
4.6	Conclusion	87 - 88

CHAPTER 5

PARADIGMATIC EXAMPLES FOR THE CHURCH OF THE PROVINCE OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

5.1	Introduction	89
5.2	What Is A Paradigm?	89 - 90
5.2.1	The Hermeneutics Of Faith And Its Relationship To Paradigms	91 - 93
5.3	What Is The CPSA?	93
5.4	The Value Of The Scriptures For Anglican Piety And Theologising	93 - 96
5.4.1	1Kings 19: 4-8 And The Idea Of " <i>Umkhuphulo</i> "	96 - 97
5.5	The CPSA And Its Mission In A Post Apartheid South Africa	97 - 98
5.5.1	The Faith Of The Community And The CPSA's Prophetic Ministry In South Africa	98 - 103
5.5.2	The CPSA's Use Of The Tools Of Social Analysis	103 - 106
5.6	Specific Examples In The CPSA's Ecclesiology As Related To Küng's Paradigmatic Examples	106 - 107
5.6.1	Küng's Ecclesiology And The Rediscovery Of The Laity In The CPSA	107 - 108
5.6.2	An Ecclesiology In Dialogue With The Southern African Context Of The CPSA	108
5.6.2.1	African Culture And Anglican Ecclesiology	108 - 110

5.6.2.2	The Need For Dialogue With African Indigenous Churches	110
5.6.3	Mystical Models Of The Church And The Re-Appraisal Of The Charismatic Renewal In The CPSA	111 - 112
5.6.4	The Church And The HIV/AIDS Pandemic	112 - 113
5.7	Conclusion	113 - 114

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY AND PROSPECTS FOR FURTHER WORK

6.1	Introduction	115
6.2	In Retrospect	115 - 118
6.3	Conclusions	118 - 119
6.4	Areas For Further Study And Research	119 - 120

BIBLIOGRAPHY		121 - 126
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CHAPTER 1

THE PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE THESIS

1.1 INTRODUCTION.

The present thesis seeks to critically consider Küng's early ecclesiology, that is from 1960 to 1970, with the intention of identifying its relevance for a contemporary South African Church. The topic itself evinces an explicit two-pronged approach to the task at hand. While the primary focus of the study will be a critical analysis of Küng's early ecclesiology, a secondary task will be that of seeking to relate the findings to the contemporary Church, more particularly the Anglican Church in Southern Africa, often referred to as the Church of the Province of Southern Africa (CPSA).

1.2 MOTIVATION FOR THE CHOICE

The choice of Küng as the focus of this study has been motivated by a particular primary impulse, which can be briefly accounted for as follows: -

1.2.1 THE PARADIGMATIC RELEVANCE OF KÜNG'S JOURNEY OF FAITH.

Küng's theological development can be described as a journey motivated by faith. The late Roman Catholic theologian Dr. Catherine Mowry LaCugna has stated that Küng's epistemology evinces two strands namely, faith and history (LaCugna 1982:19). That is, faith and history when interwoven together form what we may call primary noetic principles, which enable the theologian to perceive, know and understand reality from a particular perspective. However, according to LaCugna, in as far as Küng is concerned, "*faith is the pre-eminent and normative of the two.*" (LaCugna 1982:19). It is for this very reason that the present study takes the community's faith as an overriding principle, which to a large extent determines the shape of Küng's early ecclesiology. That is, while there are two strands in his epistemology, according to the view adopted in this study, the two cannot be equated. History is in his theology not an overriding rationale and as a result, while it forms an

aspect of his theological methodology, it is nonetheless subordinated to faith, as this study will seek to demonstrate.

LaCugna further notes that there are both Biblical and rational dimensions in the kind of faith explicated by Küng as a hermeneutical principle. The Biblical notion of faith results from an evident conviction about the normative role of Scripture as a source for authentic theologising. LaCugna identifies a thread of the concept of biblical faith connecting and pervading all his major works beginning with his book, *“Justification: The Doctrine of Karl Barth and a Catholic Reflection”*, published in 1957. As a result, in the sixties, faith reverberates in his ecclesiology while in the seventies, when his attention had turned to the articles of faith, biblical faith features quite prominently in his Christology.

The fact that in Küng’s theology faith is a perspective, an overriding principle from which he approaches the theological task, is a significant observation. It would seem that explicit in this approach is the conviction that without this hermeneutical bias, one will never be able to understand the nature of the Church as it is. Such an observation regarding the normative role of faith as a hermeneutic principle in Küng’s theology demonstrates that he is in keeping with that old age dictum which explains theology as *‘Fides Quarens Intellectum’*, a tradition that while popularised by Anselm of Canterbury, nevertheless owes part of its provenance to St. Augustine. However, this search for self-understanding does not happen in a vacuum but in the evolving concrete historical situation. This suggests that the Church herself is constantly engaged in a journey of self-understanding, provided it remains a community of faith grounded in history.

On the other hand, implicit in what we have just alluded to above is the fact that while faith in Küng’s theology is undoubtedly an overriding hermeneutical bias, its influence in his theology is balanced by other factors. The fact that his theology can be regarded as a faith in search of understanding implies that reason has a role to play in his

ecclesiology. Secondly, the observation that the act of self understanding within which ecclesiology takes its shape happens in a particular historical context, presupposes that Küng's theology is to some extent shaped by both the said context and its culture. The balancing act provided by these other factors ensures that Küng in his ecclesiology comes up with a theology and not a Fideism of sorts. This will be clearly evident as we proceed to the main body of this thesis.

A theology motivated by faith can never be static. For this reason such a journey constantly compels the theologian to engage in a continuous attempt at breaking the limits. That is, Küng is not content with repeating dogmatic formulations as though theology was nothing more than an irrelevant dialogue with antiquity. On the contrary, his faith journey is a continuous pushing of theological horizons and thus lending credence to an observation that

Christian theology is the human activity of bringing a religious tradition into conversation with our contemporary situation in a mutually critical way so as to deepen our understanding of, and commitment to, living out our faith in this situation as well as to transforming the world for the better.

(Hill, Knitter & Madges 1997:293)

The relevance if exemplary nature of such a journey for the modern Church cannot be overemphasized. The contemporary Church has to discover itself anew as a pilgrim community. It is a historical community which finds itself within a given historical situation, where the demand to live out one's faith in the face of new challenges, is an ever present obligation.

1.3 WHO IS HANS KÜNG?

Hans Küng was born in 1928 in a place called Sursee in Switzerland. He began his schooling in his home town and later when he was fourteen, his parents moved him to

the grammar school at the cantonal capital of Lucerne, about thirteen miles to the south-east of Sursee. This early education of Küng is important for a number of reasons. The grammar school to which he was sent at this stage of his life was interdenominational. For this reason his early fellow pupils at Lucerne included Protestants, Jews as well as Catholics. As Nowell perceptively notes, this early upbringing ensured that, 'Hans Küng was thus brought up in a mature and resilient Catholicism that was fully capable of coming to terms with the world in which he lived.' (Nowell 1981:26)

When Küng was about twenty (i.e. 1948), he moved to the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. By this time he had already decided to become a priest. This situation brought him into contact with many philosophers and theologians of the time, e.g. Joseph Lotz, Yves Congar, von Balthasar etc. In 1957, he proceeded to Paris where he obtained his doctorate in theology based on the doctrine of justification (Jeanrond 1997:162).

Every theologian is a product of his/her context. There is a sense in which Küng's Swiss background provides some insight into the making of this theologian. That is, there are some factors provided by the situation of his upbringing in a Swiss environment of the 1930's, which have helped inform and shape his cultural heritage, and by implication, his theology (Nowell 1981:20f). The German-speaking world in the nineteenth century was slowly moving to unification. However, the membership of the German-speaking Swiss in this movement always remained as it were askance and critical. For this reason, the Swiss people always remained as a symbol of political pluralism in a world, which did not share much of those sentiments. On the other hand, the Swiss people, compared to their neighbours (Germany and Austria), have enjoyed a political development, which by comparison, can be considered healthier and less disastrous than that enjoyed by their neighbours (Nowell 1981: 21). As a matter of fact they often trace their democratic ideal and tradition as far back as the thirteenth

century. Consequently, Küng's early development as a theologian owes its provenance to a country with deeply entrenched democratic ideals.¹

Furthermore, the Church situation in which he grew up was a kind of ecclesiastical polity with a conspicuous congregational tinge. Nowell aptly describes this situation when he observes that,

It is not only in their political traditions and presuppositions that the Swiss are marked off from their German neighbours. There is also a distinction in the field of Church order that makes Swiss Catholicism unique. It is only in the Swiss dioceses of Basle, Chur and St Gall - and strictly speaking also in the Czech archdiocese of Olomouc, though under present political conditions this latter case is of academic interest only - that there has survived the tradition of the free election of the bishop of the diocese by the cathedral chapter.

(Nowell 1981:23)

The congregational ideal already implicit in the above quotation is further corroborated by the fact that in the Swiss Church in which Küng grew up, there persisted a practice of parish priests being elected by the actual community to which they are called to serve. The fact that such democratic and congregational sentiments left an indelible character in the theology of Küng can be identified at various points of his theological development. For an example, in 1967, when the Pope began to show a rather unhealthy interest in the election of the Bishop of Basle, Küng vehemently defended the existing practice (Nowell 1981: 23). By the same token, when in 1969, another fellow priest criticized the popular election of a parish priest to a particular incumbency Küng also defended the practice (Nowell 1981:24)

¹ It is however noteworthy that at least in some cantons of Switzerland, women have been denied a franchise as late as the twentieth century.

In 1962 - 1965, during the Second Vatican Council summoned by Pope John XXIII, Küng was appointed as *peritus* to the Council. The Council brought him right to the centre of the controversy between the reformers and traditionalists in the Church (Jeanrond 1997: 163). For this reason, Küng appears on the theological scene in what seems to be an opportune time in the Catholic Church. His 'advent' in the ecclesiastical-theological scene coincided with a time when the reformist Pope was making efforts to free the Church from stagnation and rigidity, which had characterised it for previous centuries. As Nowell observes, the antagonistic attitude the institutional Catholic Church evinced towards the intellectual developments taking place in the world meant that not only the advocates of the course were viewed with suspicion, but also the questions which they raised were to some extent anathema to the ecclesiastical hierarchy.²

On the other hand, the fact that other theologians like Karl Rahner, Yves Congar, de Lubac etc. had been working against this hostile theological environment earlier than the Swiss scholar, meant that Küng now had to work in a situation which was by comparison intellectually free (Nowell 1981:15). The fact that this new situation was conducive to his theology is further corroborated by the vehemence with which he advocated radical issues about the nature of the Church and theology in general in the period during and after Vatican II.

1.4 THE THESIS AND THE WIDER CORPUS OF KÜNG'S THEOLOGY.

A *prima facie* look into the period within which this study focuses seems to give an impression that the work will have an extremely limited scope in terms of the material to be covered. This has been occasioned by a number of factors. On the one hand, Hans Küng is a very prolific writer. His writing career can be roughly categorised into four periods (Jeanrond 1997:163). For the era ranging from the publication of his book, *Justification*, in 1957 until 1970, he seems to have concentrated on the subject of

² The case in point here would be the Church's attitude towards birth control condemned by Paul VI in 1968 in the Encyclical *Humanae Vitae*.

ecclesiology, although this does not necessarily mean that beyond this decade, he did not turn his attention occasionally to the said theme. During the 1970's, Küng seemed to have switched his attention to concentrate on the major articles of the Christian faith. From about 1983, Küng evinces a two-pronged interest in his theology. On the one hand, he has a fascination with the questions of theological methodology, while on the other hand, issues related to inter-religious dialogue between Christianity and other world faiths elicit a remarkable attention from his theology. Lastly, from about 1990 onwards, both global responsibility and the religious situation of our time begin to occupy centre stage in his thinking

The present thesis however, will focus strictly within the decade of the sixties, that is from 1960 to 1970, although some allusions, references and/or even quotations will be made from other works, which do not necessarily fall within the precincts of this period. For this reason therefore, the present thesis is not going to include even his famous book, which inaugurated Küng as a theologian of repute in 1957, namely *Justification*.

But now a question is worth raising regarding the choice of this early period as a focus of this study. That is, is one not simply succumbing to a misguided option for nostalgia which is irrelevant to the present? Put differently, can the present study be likened to listening to the Beatles again when they have long sunk into oblivion in the memories of the contemporary generation? I want to argue that this is not the case. One is of the conviction that to some extent, most of the issues which elicited a theological response from Küng in the said period are still a cause for concern in the contemporary Church. For an example, unity talks in various Churches, as well as ecumenical relations among various confessions still leave much to be desired. The problem of clericalism is still with us to this day. The rediscovery of the ministry of the laity is not a thing of the past in most of our Churches where office bearers, by virtue of their ordination arrogate to themselves the privilege of wielding more power than the laity. This is still a characteristic feature of a great deal of that Christianity which bears the label

“reformed”. These and many other related factors, in my view, indicate that the attempt ‘to play the tunes of the Beatles’ in the twenty first century cannot be pejoratively dubbed as irrelevant.

1.5 THE BASIC STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS.

The first chapter of this thesis is an introduction to the entire work. Chapter two attends to the question of the use of faith as a hermeneutic principle. Chapter three begins with a critical consideration of the interplay between faith and structure in Küng’s theology. Implicit in this argument will be a conviction that a given ecclesiological structure is primarily a result of an overriding methodological rationale of a given theologian. It is in the context of this discussion that the analysis will give the *rationale* for the use of models in studying the Church. The subsequent chapter continues with the analysis of Küng’s ecclesiology in the sense that it focuses on the evaluation of his ecclesiology. Both the strengths and the weaknesses of Küng’s ecclesiology will be highlighted. The fifth chapter attends to the second task that has been set for this thesis. It will identify paradigmatic examples or themes in Küng’s ecclesiology. Such paradigmatic themes will be related to the life of the Church of the Province of Southern Africa as a contemporary expression of a redemptive community. The very last chapter of this work will be a summary of the findings made, while at the same time it will also seek to identify some themes in relation to this work which warrant further research.

I am a black male, a South African, an Anglican cleric in the Diocese of Natal. As a matter of consequence therefore, there will be a sense in which this will, to some extent show itself in some aspects of this thesis. For this reason, there will be a limited amount of oscillation in this thesis between a critical analysis of Küng’s ecclesiology on the one hand, and my own context on the other.

1.6 THE METHODOLOGY TO BE USED.

The present work is based on research. Books, articles and the internet, were used for this purpose. There were no interviews and other related aspects of field work research on the subject. For this reason both primary and secondary sources were consulted.

1.7 CONCLUSION.

An attempt has been made in this first chapter to map the contours of this thesis by explaining the motivation for the choice of the topic, and also giving some biographical information about the theologian who is going to be the focus of this study. We have made some introductory comments on the question of methodology, more particularly those preliminary methodological issues related to the basic structure of the thesis. Consequently, the next substantive chapter of this thesis is to seek to show how Hans Küng uses faith as an interpretative standard in his ecclesiology.

CHAPTER 2

THE USE OF FAITH AS A HERMENEUTICAL PRINCIPLE

2.1 INTRODUCTION.

To a large extent, this thesis hinges on the assumption that K  ng's ecclesiology takes faith as the overriding principle for theologising about the Church.¹ Faith however, is a relative term which cannot be simply used in the abstract. This presages that one must, right at the outset, attempt to give a slightly elaborated discussion of the nature of this interpretative standard. This among other things, will help identify the perspective from which it is used and analyzed in the course of this thesis. Secondly, it is also intended to give some framework or criteria against which one's analysis of K  ng's ecclesiology must be measured. It will further help at a later stage in this work, to substantiate the claim that K  ng offers the contemporary Church (more particularly the CPSA), with some fundamental paradigmatic examples for emulation in its life and witness. This will form the first part of this chapter.

Our claim that Hans K  ng's theology uses faith as its interpretative standard needs to be backed by some historical evidence. This is important more particularly if we take particular cognisance of the role history plays in his theology, an observation we have

¹ The assertion that K  ng's theology operates from the premise of faith as its overriding principle can sound a bit ludicrous if one takes particular cognisance of the fact that all classical theology has been motivated by faith. For this reason, it can be argued that there is nothing peculiar with K  ng's use of faith as a starting point for authentic theologising. However, the fact that the present thesis seeks to identify fundamental paradigmatic examples for theologising in a contemporary ecclesiastical situation, attaches some importance to this observation. For an example, we cannot be always sure that in the CPSA, attempts by theologians to account effectively for the interface created between the Christian faith on the one hand, and African culture on the other, will automatically take faith as an overriding rationale for theologising. In fact there are indications in some attempts to the effect that it is African culture in its various manifestations, which is premised as offering the undisputed rules of the game. While the premise of faith sounds as a given for every conceivable classical theology, it will be in my view erroneous if not pastorally irresponsible to assume that all the theologians of the CPSA will always use faith as a critic of both the ecclesiastical status quo within which they find themselves, as well as for the culture which has already incarnated the gospel of Jesus Christ. What makes K  ng special in my view, is the fact that in spite of his overt radicalness in handling doctrinal issues, he still takes the premise of the community's faith very seriously, both as a critic of a given ecclesiastical status quo and as a critical tool for selecting and maneuvering the sources he is willing to countenance in his theology. It is important in my view that one should be cautious of the fact that in the legitimate quest to break horizons and give fresh interpretations of doctrine, one does not make shipwreck of one's faith in the process.

already made in the introductory chapter. The following section of the chapter therefore will seek to identify instances in the development of theology as a discipline where faith seems to have played an important hermeneutical role in the theological enterprise. It will further seek to demonstrate that even in those historical epochs where other dominant hermeneutical tools were in vogue, they did not totally supplant faith as a decisive interpretative standard. The third section of the chapter will concentrate on how Hans Küng uses faith as a hermeneutic principle in his ecclesiology. Lastly, we will make some conclusions based on this foregoing analysis.

2.2.1 THE CHRISTOCENTRIC NATURE OF FAITH.

According to Hill, Knitter and Madges (1997:9), faith is an intrinsic aspect of human existence. It is part of being human because, while animals can be said to be faithful pets capable of establishing trusting relationships with humans and other animals, the human beings are unique in that their faith is characterized by deep personal commitment and a loving response. This anthropological understanding of faith gives an indication that all human beings have faith and it is this faith, which enables them to enter into relationships. On the other hand, the fact that faith, as Paul Tillich once observed, believes that there is an ultimate source for all that exists, and as such there must be an ultimate goal to life, suggest that faith has something to do with the human person's ultimate concerns. Here then lies the origins of religious faith, for every religion speaks about a faith in some ultimate source of life often identified as God. For this reason we have Judaism, Islam etc, which are all expressions of a particular faith in some ultimate reality identified as the source of all life. This observation is important in that implicit in it, is the fact that at the centre of almost every faith stands something which happens to be the object of a person's faith. For an example, at the centre of Islam stands Allah, while Judaism has Yahweh as its object of faith and Hinduism has Brahman as the ultimate source of life and focus of worship.

Consequently, at the centre of the Christian faith stands Christ understood by Christians as the Son of God and Saviour of the world. For this reason, the Christian faith is

Christocentric in nature and it is this which makes it unique to other faiths. The use of the word faith in this thesis therefore refers to this type of faith, which regards and believes in Christ as the full and authentic revelation of the divine.

2.2.2 FAITH AS GRACE AND FREEDOM.

God has revealed God-self in the man Jesus, who is the eternal Word of God made flesh. When God reveals God-self in Jesus Christ, the content of that revelation is not only an aspect of God made known to the recipient of revelation. On the contrary, it is the sum total of the revelation of God. This act of revelation elicits a response from the human being. The human person's response to this divine revelation is known as faith. This observation has its own consequences about the nature of faith. On the one hand, the fact that God's initiative in revelation elicits this response of faith, suggests that the latter is a gift of grace whose provenance does not ultimately reside with the human person, but with God. On the other hand, the fact that the said response of faith is a free decision, which a human being makes without being coerced, presages that it is an act of freedom. It is for this reason therefore that faith can be described as both grace and freedom. Already implicit in this hendiadic explanation of the nature of faith is an indication of its multi-dimensional if composite nature, as we will seek to show in the subsequent sub-headings.

2.2.3 FAITH IS ESCHATOLOGICAL.

The Christocentric nature of faith gives rise to another dimension in the character of the Christian faith. In the Scriptures, there is evidence that while believers by faith share in the mystery of Christ here and now, there is still a consummation of this mystery and the believer's participation in it, which awaits its fulfilment in the future (1 Corinthians 2: 6-10). For this reason, the Christian faith is inevitably oriented towards the *eschaton* where the fulfilment of the said mystery of the believer's union with God will eventually take place. That is, a faith which in the present is centred on the mystery of Christ, is at the same time so ordered that it is oriented to the fulfilment of the mystery in the future of God. It is for this reason therefore that while the Christian faith engages

with life in the present, at the same time it goes beyond the limits of the present in anticipation of the future of God in the *eschaton*. However, this anticipation of a fulfilment in the future must not be understood as merely an other-worldliness which has no relevance in the present. On the contrary, it is this very future of God which informs the engagements of the believer with the present.

2.2.4 THE EPISTEMOLOGICAL DIMENSION IN FAITH.

There is a sense in which the truths of revelation of God in Christ are made known and accessible to us by human signs, which include statements of faith, symbols, metaphors etc. The very fact that God's revelation in Christ is adequately expressed and made intelligible to us in human language, suggests that in order to understand doctrinal statements, one needs to assent intellectually in order to comprehend their content. In this way therefore, a doctrinal statement corresponds to its content it proclaims. It is for this reason that faith becomes an epistemological stance enabling us to attain to the reality of God that is revealed. However, it needs to be pointed out that it will be inadequate to understand the epistemological dimension in faith in exclusively rational terms. The multidimensional nature of this epistemological dimension in faith also presupposes that there is both confidence and commitment built into its nature. To assent to something even intellectually requires a confidence which will lead to commitment to what is being made known. To this extent the content of what is being talked about services both the acts of confidence and commitment which goes with faith.

Why is it necessary that a recipient of God's revelation should eventually, as a result of the said revelation, attain to the reality of this revelation experience? The Christian faith lives by the reality of its object, which is the fact that God has intervened to save us in the man Jesus Christ. For this reason, faith includes knowledge of a saving event, which may have already taken place, or is still expected in the future. For an example, in the history of Israel, emphasis is on the God of the covenant who has revealed God-self in the history of God's people. A belief in one God becomes the characteristic

feature of Israel's faith. By the same token, in the New Testament, to be a Christian involved assent to the message of Jesus' death, resurrection and the salvation that accrues from the Christ event. Giving one's assent by faith to this truth then becomes very important for the unity of the Church. The common participation in the faith and the reality of its object ensures that we have a community of believers united in fellowship, faith and love.

However, for this community of believers to exist, the message of God's revelation has to be sociologically transmitted by means of concepts. This *kerygma*, expressing revelation in the form of statements, which then acts as a bond of unity in the Church, is accepted by faith as true. The Church therefore exists as a visible community because the act of faith, with which believers responded to the proclaimed gospel, included among other things, an intellectual assent to the statements objectifying the mystery of Christ.

2.2.5 FAITH IS DYNAMIC.

Closely related to the eschatological dimension in the notion of faith is in my view, its dynamic nature. It seems to me however, that if it had not been for the eschatological dimension deeply embedded in the nature of faith, it would not be so dynamic. The fact that the Christian faith, even in its engagements with the present, posits something that could be hoped for in the future creates a characteristic dynamism. For this reason, faith does not imply a static existence on the part of the person who is described as 'having faith'. Implicit in the concept faith therefore is a dynamism which often expresses itself as a kind of intellectual movement taking the knower from one level of knowing to the other.²

² Chapter eleven of the Epistle to the Hebrews is, perhaps, one of the revealing biblical 'treatises' on the subject of faith. One can argue that there is a sense in which this text works out the nature and meaning of Biblical faith in a language heavily couched in dynamistic overtones. According to 11:2 the many men and women who by virtue of their faith, received divine commendation, had nothing tangible to cling on, save the unshakable promises of God. In this sense, faith became the actual *υπόστασις* (substance) that men and women of faith hope for (cf. 11:1). Incidentally, the word *υπόστασις* conjures up reminiscences of the protracted Christological controversies of the earlier centuries of the Church's existence. In those debates, the word *υπόστασις* carried clear ontological overtones, for in that sense, the Son shared as it were, a common *υπόστασις* with the Father. However, it seems to me that if one were to understand the Biblical word in

Faith, on the other hand is the impetus which drives the inquiry that a theologian undertakes; hence theology is *fides quaerens intellectum*. It is for this reason that a Christian, by virtue of her/his faith in Christ is often described in the Scriptures as someone engaged in a pilgrimage which as a result of its forward looking nature, constantly opens up new horizons of thought and practice for the faithful.³

2.2.6 THE COMMUNAL DIMENSION IN FAITH.

The life of the Trinity is in itself, a life that is perpetually open to fellowship between the persons of the divine triad. One of the ways in which this is clearly demonstrated is in the concept of *perichoresis*. The *perichoretical* relationship of the divine triad takes as its starting point the fact that the three persons of the Trinity must not be understood independently of one another. They form a unity existing in a relationship of love. This is both true in terms of what is often regarded as the immanent trinity as well as in terms of the Trinity's relationship to the world, (i.e. the economic trinity)

By baptism, people of faith share in the life of this divine triad. If by faith in Christ and the subsequent baptism Christians share in the life of God, it therefore suggests that part of that sharing refers to the faithful's participation in the life of fellowship which characterises the life of the Trinity both with regard to its internal relationships as well as in its relationships with the world outside it. For this reason, it can be inferred that

exclusively ontological terms embedded in its Greek philosophical usage, one would unfortunately miss the dynamic orientation clearly intrinsic in its use in the said text. This dynamism is demonstrated on the one hand, by the fact that faith is able to bring to the present the future promises of God and make them accessible to the believer. In this sense therefore faith according to the letter to the Hebrews becomes a kind of *ὑπόστασις* with a dynamic eschatological dimension. On the other hand, the dynamic aspect of the faith attested to in the Epistle is demonstrated by what it effects on the individuals referred to in the text, namely, Abel (11:4), Enoch (11:5), Noah (11:7), Abraham (11:8), Sarah (11:11), Isaac (11:20), Jacob (11:21), Joseph (11:22), Moses (11:24), etc. All these heroes of faith, as Bruce (1964:277) notes, ordered their lives in accordance with what God had promised, as a result of their unwavering trust to the God of those promises. That is to say, their faith in the God who had promised them something in the future was so dynamic to the extent that it affected a change in their existence.

³ In the First Letter to the Corinthians, Paul uses the image of an athlete to describe the nature of the discipline expected of those who are 'running the race of faith' (cf. Corinthians 9:24f). The fact that Paul is particularly fond of this image is further demonstrated by the fact that he again employs its use in exhorting the Galatians to hold fast to the freedom that faith in Christ has given them (cf. Galatians 5:7). The unknown author of the Letter to the Hebrews, in the context of his arguments against Christians who were in danger of lapsing from their faith, implies this image of a running athlete in Hebrews 12:1

the centrifugal nature of the Christian faith, finds its proper expression in community. This suggests that ultimately, faith is not necessarily a possession of the individual but belongs to the community. Such an understanding of the nature of faith has important consequences for the life of the Church as we will seek to show in the relevant subsequent sections of this thesis.

Having considered in brief some of the important features of faith, we now turn our attention to look into the ways in which this interpretative principle has fared over time. The present survey however is not intended to be a comprehensive summary of the history of theology. On the contrary it is an attempt to see how over the vicissitudes of time, faith has afforded theologians a tool for doing their task. For this reason it will eclectically focus on certain epochs of the history of theology thus demonstrating the continued usage of faith as an interpretative standard and hermeneutical tool for theologising.

2.3 THE HISTORY OF THEOLOGY AND THE USE OF FAITH AS A HERMENEUTICAL PRINCIPLE.

2.3.1 THE FIRST TWO AND HALF CENTURIES OF CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY.

It was in the context of the apologetic theology of the first two and a half centuries of the Christian era that we begin to see faith used as a hermeneutical tool. According to Gaybba (Maimela & König 1998: 28), theology in this period was regarded as a constant reflection and interaction with the Biblical text. A theologian's task in this sense was to seek to arrive at a 'deeper meaning' of the text.⁴ However, in the quest for this deeper meaning, an important hermeneutical question is raised. That is, what are the rules and methodological principles that a theologian uses in order to arrive at an authentic interpretation of the Bible so that the text yields a legitimate authoritative meaning?

⁴ The obsession with a deeper meaning of the Scriptures as a characteristic feature of the theological milieu of the said era is clearly epitomised in Origen's early life. Kenneth Scott Lortie (1975: 149), observes that Origen would constantly perplex his father who acted as his teacher in his early life, with inquiries on the deeper meaning of Scripture which he believed could be found behind the Biblical text.

To begin with, the theologian who approaches Scripture with the aforesaid intention of seeking to find an in-depth meaning in the text, operates from a premise that Holy Scripture is primarily an expression of a community's faith in the revelation of God in Christ. The conviction that Scripture is a document of faith gives rise to an inevitable corollary. That is, a theologian who hopes to arrive at what may be regarded as a deeper meaning of the Biblical text will have to be guided in that search by the same faith which brought the text into being. What is the nature of this faith which is assumed to be an interpretative standard in the exegesis of the Biblical text?

Faith is faith because it has its own object. The object of religious faith is God who is made known in Christ, hence the Christocentric nature of the religious faith assumed in this thesis. Faith in God revealed in Christ is therefore regarded as the principle *par excellence* for a legitimate interpretation of the Scriptures. A person puts faith in the God who is revealed, because the believing person has, as a result of that revelation, come to know and believe certain propositions about the object of his faith. To have faith in the God who is revealed therefore presupposes that a believing person has, as a result of that faith, come to a relationship with the object of faith. To this extent it can be concluded that in faith, two persons have a relationship with one another; hence the relational character of religious faith. Understanding religious faith in relational terms as we are seeking to do here has a further consequence. That is, if faith presupposes a relationship between two persons, there is therefore a sense in which it can be claimed that the ultimate cause of the said relationship is the object of faith itself. By yielding to the believer, certain propositions about itself, the object of faith causes a relationship with its subject, a relationship which enables the object to be known to the latter.

Therefore, to observe that in the early centuries of Christian thought, faith was regarded as the guiding principle for arriving at a deeper meaning of Scripture is a claim implicit with meaning. That is, if religious faith is relational as we are suggesting, a personal relationship with the object of faith is a pre-requisite for a theologian who seeks to interpret Scripture.

The assertion that theology in this era regarded the faith of the community as an interpretative standard for a deeper meaning of Scripture does not necessarily suggest that theology in the first two and half centuries of Christian thought was eventually reduced to a Fideism. On the contrary, faith was used in the context of other sources of theologising while clearly given a privileged position in the hermeneutical process.

2.3.2 THE HERMENEUTICS OF REASON, FAITH AND LOVE: THE EXAMPLE OF ST AUGUSTINE.

The paradigm shifts which took place in the nature of theology from the fourth century onwards meant that theology made more use of reason as both a source and tool for engaging theological problems and questions. As Gaybba notes, 'The theologians who made the greatest contribution to the solution of such problems were those who took up the challenge by using philosophy's own ideas and arguments to show how Christian beliefs could withstand the most rigorous philosophical assaults.' (Gaybba 1998: 33) This important development however did not necessarily mean that faith was completely supplanted as a hermeneutical tool and gave way to a monopoly of reason in theological discourse. This is clearly demonstrated in the theology of St Augustine of Hippo (354-430) which marks not only the end of the era of early thinkers in the history of the discipline, but also ushers in the beginning of a new period in the theological enterprise. While his theology retains the developments of previous centuries, the incipient trends of later developments in theological thought are clearly visible. Gonzalez puts it rather aptly when he observes that,

He is the last of the ancient Christian writers, and the forerunner of medieval theology. The main currents of ancient theology converged in him, and from him flow the rivers, not only of medieval scholasticism, but also of sixteenth-century Protestant theology.

(Gonzalez 1971: 15)

One such area of St Augustine's theology where the 'main currents' of old and new thoughts converge is in his hermeneutics. Faith as a guiding principle in the task of interpretation is not, in spite of the new developments in theology, supplanted by reason, but combines with other elements to form a single multifaceted hermeneutical tool (Gaybba 1998: 34). The first of these tools is reason. In the hermeneutical endeavour, the latter plays the role of enabling a theologian to acquire the initial understanding of the object of the Christian faith. In this sense, reason is regarded as bringing faith into being. However, having been ushered to the inchoative stages of the process of comprehension by means of reason, faith on the other hand takes the inquirer a step further by enabling him/her to come to a fuller meaning of what the object of faith is. When a person begins to believe, faith enables him/her to make sense of revelation and thus comes to a fuller understanding of who God is. The epistemological role accorded to faith in this instance clearly demonstrates that for Augustine, it is the faith of a theologian which opens his/her eyes to understand revelation.

However, according to Hill one of the reasons why human faith differs from that of animals is that it is '... uniquely characterised by a depth of personal commitment and loving response that is beyond the potential of animals' (Hill 1997: 9). The observation that faith itself presupposes a loving commitment brings us to another important aspect of St Augustine's hermeneutics. There is in St Augustine an important role played by love in the epistemological process (Gaybba 1988: 32).⁵ Love as a moral disposition enables the inquirer to know his/her object not only ratiocinatively. The fact that love creates a desire for unity with God presages that it offers the inquirer a kind of intuitive insight to the object of faith. Gregory the Great puts it aptly when he observed that 'Love itself is knowledge: the more one loves, the more one knows' (Leclercq 1974: 257). The notion of the epistemological role of love is later developed by Monastic theology in the Middle Ages and thus forms a distinguishing feature of this type of

⁵ For an elaborate presentation of the role of love in the epistemological process see Gaybba, B 1985. Love and know what you will. The epistemological role of love in Augustine. In Landman, C & Whitelaw, D.P. (Eds), *Windows on Origins. Oorsprong in oënskou*, Pretoria: University of South Africa, pp. 107-133.

theologising. (Gayyba 1988: 32-43; Leclercq 1974: 263-270) It can be concluded therefore, that in the era of the Patristics, faith functioned together with other factors as a hermeneutical principle in theology.

2.3.3 DEVELOPMENTS AFTER AUGUSTINE.

While it is true that the conception of theology as a *Fides quaerens intellectum* was clearly popularised by St Anselm of Canterbury, the dictum owes part of its provenance to the patristic era. The patristics, in their respective reflections and commentary on Scripture as a dominant source of theologising came out with teachings enshrined in their writings. The four centuries after Augustine witnessed a new development in the nature of doing theology. The faith of a theologian sought an understanding of itself by engaging with the writings of the Fathers. Theology in this era, as Gaybba puts it ‘came to be seen as the faithful exposition not only of the Scriptures, but of the understanding of the Scriptures to be found in the writings of the Fathers’ (Gaybba 1998: 35). Focussing on the study of the patristic writings meant that while the faith of the theologian remained an indispensable hermeneutical tool, tradition nonetheless came to occupy centre stage as a source for authentic theologising.

In order to analyse and comment meaningfully on both the Scriptures and the writings of the patristics, theologians began to make use of the tool of grammar. The latter as a means of communicating meaning in language, analysed the structure of the sentences used to express religious truths. In this attempt by theologians one realises an honest attempt to recognise and acknowledge the legitimacy of using human sciences in a theologians endeavours to understand the revelation of God one accesses by faith in Christ. Faith as a hermeneutical tool is in this instance clearly used in collaboration with grammar to lay bare the deeper meaning of the text being studied.

2.3.4 THE ADVENT OF ST ANSELM AND THE USE OF FAITH AS A HERMENEUTICAL PRINCIPLE IN THEOLOGY.

The revival of learning which took place under the Emperor Chalemagne had already ushered in another era in the history of theologising. The debate regarding the use of reason in theological discourse reopened, and initiated protracted arguments amongst scholars. On the one hand, there were theologians who held the view that dialectics for an example had no place in helping the theologian reflect on the Scriptures which was still considered the main source for doing theology. For this group of thinkers, only pious meditation on God's Word was construed a key to understanding what the Scriptures taught. On the other hand, others believed that one can effectively and legitimately use his/her God given rationality in order to come to a fuller understanding of the Christian faith. For this group of thinkers therefore, dialectics as an art of logical analysis was considered an indispensable tool. It was in the theology of St Anselm of Canterbury that both faith and reason could be held together in some kind of creative tension and used as hermeneutical tools for analysing theological reality. For Anselm, theology begins with faith in the revelation of God in Christ. To this effect he writes in the Proslogium, 'The believer does not seek to understand, that he may believe, but he believes that he may understand: for unless he believed he would not understand. (Anselm 1962: 49) However, for Anselm, the Christian faith has an inner reasonableness which makes it amenable to reason as a tool of analysis. The inner logic of the doctrines of the Christian faith therefore is laid bare by the theologian if he uses reason to come to their fuller understanding. This is clearly demonstrated in the preface of his book, *Cur Deus Homo*.

From the theme in which it was published I have called it *Cur Deus Homo*, and have divided it into two short books. The first contains the objections of the infidels, who despise the Christian faith because they deem it contrary to reason; and also the reply of believers; and, in fine, leaving Christ out of view (as if nothing had ever been known of him), it proves, by absolute reasons, the impossibility that any man

should be saved without him. Again in the second book, likewise, as if nothing were known of Christ, it is moreover shown by plain reasoning and fact that human nature was ordained for this purpose, viz., that every man should enjoy a happy immortality, both in body and in soul; and that it was necessary that this design for which man was made should be fulfilled; but that it could not be fulfilled unless God became man, and unless all things were to take place which we hold with regard to Christ.

(Anselm 1962: 191)

There is a sense in which Anselm's position can be criticised that it places too much emphasis on reason and neglects revelation as a basis for authentic theologising. That is, theologians hailing from an evangelical perspective, may argue that the forensic orientations characteristic of his theologising (more particularly his soteriology) turns his theology to a cold legalistic theological framework. The Baptist theologian, Robert Culpepper epitomises this indictment aptly when he observes that,

As great as was Anselm's achievement, however, the view which he espoused was not without his weaknesses. Some of these weaknesses arise naturally out of its theological method, that of using reason apart from the revelation of God in Christ, as if Christ were not known.

(Culpepper 1966: 85)

I want to argue that such a criticism for Anselm in my view ignores a number of basic facts about his theology. To begin with, as has been noted earlier on, for St Anselm theology begins with faith in the God who has revealed God-self in Christ. Without faith in this revelation, there is, at least for Anselm, no legitimate theologising that can be entered into. Secondly, the criticism in my view ignores another very important aspect in an attempt to evaluate a given theologian's work. That is, it treats the theology of St Anselm outside its original context and by so doing neglects the type of theological interlocutors with whom he was in dialogue. The emphasis on rationality in

his theology presupposes that philosophical ideas were already clearly an intrinsic aspect of the intellectual climate of the day. If Anselm did not take the challenge to face the critics of the faith on the basis of their own philosophical understanding of reality, the Christian faith could not have made an impact on the culture of the 11th and 12th centuries of Christian thought. Theology can only live and make a lasting impact if it is able to adapt itself critically to the cultural status quo within which it is being practised. Thirdly, such criticism also ignores in my view, the fact that while the Scriptures were still considered an important source for theologising, there was a clear paradigm shift in terms of theological methodology evident in this era. The *Quaestio* was gradually becoming a more useful method of theologising with the result that theology was at this point in time more inclined towards being a systematic analysis of certain questions that a theologian seeks to deal with in his endeavours. This was not going to be possible if theologians of the time did not make use of the philosophical tools in vogue in an attempt to understand and explain their faith intelligibly.

2.3.5 THE TWELFTH TO THE FIFTEENTH CENTURIES.

There is some consensus that Monastic theology in the twelfth century became aware of its distinctive nature as a particular way of theologising, that can in some way differ from other contemporary trends in the enterprise. The theologian Jean Leclercq for an example argues that while it is true that not all the monks who wrote and read were theologians, it is however true that they all in varying degrees, created an ‘... environment which made the appearance of a “theology,” which was the work of one of their own, both possible and necessary.’ (Leclercq 1974: 233). Such a theology according to Leclercq was clearly intended for monastics as its primary interlocutors, and for this reason it sought to provide answers and to relate to the exigencies of life peculiar to a monastic community. It is for this reason therefore that Leclercq concludes that to refer to this type of theology as Monastic Theology is not a misnomer. Brian Gaybba on the other hand, while conceding that the distinction between Scholastic and Monastic theologies may on occasion be fraught with some difficulties,

nevertheless believes that there is enough reason to conclude that the latter did exist as a conspicuous brand of theology which reached its apogee in the twelfth century.

The twelfth century is regarded as the “Golden Age” of monastic theology, and for a very good reason. During that period it became conscious of its own identity and its practitioners devoted their energies to analysing it and its method. Obviously, the clashes with the schoolmen, beginning with Rupert of Deutz’s fracas with Anselm of Laon, triggered this self-reflection. But the result was a large body of work devoted to analysing how, from the viewpoint of monastic theology, one should go about doing theology.

(Gaybba 1988: 8)

The monks in the monasteries believed that God has revealed God-self in the man Jesus Christ. For this reason, revelation even in the thinking of the monks in the monastery was understood as something that could only be accepted by faith. However, the monks greatest desire was to seek a unity with God through contemplation and prayer. Through these acts, the monk believed that he was experiencing the revealed God. In this sense, an experience of God was considered indispensable for coming to a full knowledge of what has been revealed about him. The said experience therefore offered its own insight into that which faith had already accepted and believed. For this reason, Bernard of Clairvaux could boldly claim that ‘The touch of experience is necessary for understanding.’ (Gaybba 1988: 11) One can therefore conclude that in the theology of the Monastics, while experience was privileged as an important source for theology, faith in the revelation of God was assumed as a pre-requisite for the said *cognitio experimentalis*.

By the same token, when Scholasticism attempted to define theology in relation to the other disciplines of the Medieval University, theology was identified as that ‘... field of study covering all that can be known about God through revelation.’ (Gaybba 1998:

38). In this sense, faith was still regarded as the tool by which the content of revelation is received. The task of theologising therefore, presupposed that the data of revelation has been accepted before it could be legitimately studied and analysed. In this study and analysis, the *Quaestio* as a dominant method for doing theology had already supplanted commentary on the Scriptures characteristic of earlier centuries of theologising. Doing theology now entailed raising questions that warranted discussion about the data of revelation and its interpretation. The discovery in the West of some of Aristotle's works on logic aided theology in that it provided the discipline with the necessary tools for syllogistic reasoning as well as with the relevant principles applied in scientific demonstration.

2.3.6 FROM THE REFORMATION TO THE TWENTIETH CENTURY.

The Reformers, in their rejection of Scholastic theology, put the Scriptures once more at the centre of their theology. Tradition, although considered a source for doing theology, was nonetheless subjected under the authority of the Bible. For an example it was by considering the Scriptures that reformers like Luther gave a new interpretation of the doctrine of Justification. For this reason faith became a tool by which a theologian approached the atonement and appropriate it to his life. For Luther however, even this faith which justifies the sinner is itself a gift of grace that God's revelation effects in the believer. In Luther therefore, one realises that faith is construed to be the key which leads to a new understanding of what the gospel is all about.

The period after the Reformation (i.e. the 17th and 18th centuries) has often been described as a time when different confessions were bent on entrenching their particular orthodoxies. The creativity which had characterised the Reformation was now supplanted by the desire of theologians to defend and entrench the teaching of their respective founders. The result was that their style of theologising eventually became rigid, cold and academic. As a result it yielded no fresh insight in the interpretation of dogma. It was in the backdrop of this scenario that Pietism emerged in the theological

arena with its emphasis on personal experience of the reality of salvation as a prerequisite for authentic theologising. Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher's attempt to base Christian Theology on a more solid ground of experience, owes part of its provenance from the Pietist Movement. In complete contradistinction to privileging rationality as a basis for the Christian faith, Schleiermacher postulated a different view which effectively put paid to the criticism and hegemony of Kant in theological discourse. For him as Maimela correctly observes, theology entailed being, '... existentially involved and carried away through faith by the Being upon whom human beings (and all finite reality) absolutely depends, not as puppets but as responsible, free human selves.' (Maimela 1990: 30) By bringing experience to the centre of theology, Schleiermacher once again demonstrated in response to the challenges of the *Aufklärung*, that faith and God belong together.

In his overview of twentieth century theology, Daniël Veldsman observes that it is characterised by a multiplicity of trends. (Veldsman 1998: 49) The rationale for this multiplicity of theological pathways according to Veldsman is that, on the one hand, intrinsic to the theological enterprise are a variety of methodological approaches which eventually give rise to different theologies. On the other hand, he argues that the varied contextual realities within which different theologies are carved and advocated, also impact on the nature of seemingly heterogeneous trends of theological systems and products.

However, notwithstanding the characteristic multiplicity and heterogeneity of the trends, Veldsman concludes his survey by stating that three important foci are observable in twentieth century theologising. Two of these foci relate directly to our present inquiry of seeking to trace how faith as a hermeneutical principle has been used in theology over time. He argues for example, that German theology of the twentieth century, especially that brand of theology identified with such scholars as Albrecht Ritschl, Wilhelm Herrman, Rudolf Bultmann, Karl Barth, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Eberhard Jüngel, Jürgen Moltmann etc., seeks among other things to relate faith and

history to the question of hermeneutics. On the other hand, theology practised in the Netherlands in the century has the tendency to want to relate three concepts of faith, revelation and experience to one another and thus use them as hermeneutical tools in theology (Veldsman 1998: 78)

Our attempt to scan through the twenty centuries of tradition has revealed among other things that faith as a hermeneutic principle has been applicable in various attempts at theologising. In instances where it did not appear to be given a prominent position in the endeavour of a theologian, it was nonetheless assumed as a pre-requisite enabling the task of theologising to begin.

Our survey has also revealed that even in periods where faith was given a privileged position as an interpretative tool, it was always used in the context of other sources and pertinent hermeneutical tools, which prevented theology from turning into a Fideism. Having arrived at such conclusions therefore about this interpretative principle, the following section of this chapter will now seek to focus on the question how does Hans Küng's ecclesiology under investigation use faith as a hermeneutical principle?

2.4 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FAITH AND THE DECISIVE ORIGINS OF THE CHURCH.

Where does the Church come from? In order to account adequately for the origins of the Church, Hans Küng begins by looking at two aspects comprising the fundamental nature of the Church. That is what he regards as the essence and form of the Church.

By essence, Küng refers to the fundamental elements in the nature of the Church which do not change and persist even if the Church undergoes various changes in history. This refers to the inner core of what it takes to be Church. For this reason, Küng freely admits that the actual form in which the Church appears changes over time. However, its essence must be expressed in these changing forms and must be constantly reflected upon by the Church as an attempt at self identification and self-criticism.

What is the nature of this essence? For Küng, the essence of the Church is clearly identified with the actual origins of the Church.

At the same time, there is a constant factor in the various changing historical images of the Church, something which survives however much the history of mankind, of the Church and of theology may vary, and it is on this that we must concentrate.

There are fundamental elements and perspectives in the Church which are not derived from the Church itself; there is an “essence” which is drawn from the permanently decisive origins of the Church.

(Küng 1968: 4)

While there are changes and variations in the way the Church is expressed and reflected upon over time, its essence encapsulated and expressed in its origins, remains a constant critic and focus of identity for her. ‘The Church must constantly reflect upon its real existence in the present with reference to its origins in the past, in order to assure its existence in the future. (Küng 1968: 15). The Church therefore, owes its origins in the revelation of God in Jesus Christ. This is the event it must constantly reflect upon, because it is decisive not only for the Church’s origin, but also for its continued existence as the Church of Jesus Christ.

If God’s saving event in Jesus Christ is the event *par excellence* marking the beginnings of the Church, it therefore suggests that the origins of the Church are inextricably linked with faith. God’s revelation of God-self in Christ is made accessible and could only be made sense of by faith. In this sense, the latter becomes as it were, the principle, the interpretative standard by which the mystery of God in Christ is accessed and effectively appropriated.

But precisely because it is historical, ecclesiology can and must be influenced by the origins, the origin of the Church. This origin does not simply lie in a historical situation, and

still less in a transcendental “principle”, which supposedly set the history of the Church in motion. Its origin is rather “given”, “appointed”, “laid down”, quite concretely.; according to the Church’s understanding of faith through the powerful historical action of God himself, acting through Jesus Christ among men and for men and so finally through men. God’s salvific act in Jesus Christ is the origin of the Church...

(Küng 1968: 14)

I want to argue however, that by identifying the origins of the Church with ‘God’s salvific act in Jesus Christ’, Küng does not in my view, have in mind only the cross and its aftermath as having soteriological significance. On the contrary, for ‘God’s salvific act in Jesus Christ’ to be an object of faith, it should include all the episodes of the Christ event. That is, not only the death and resurrection of Christ elicit a response of faith from the believer, but our salvation by Christ begins with the incarnation through his eventual resurrection and the sending of the Spirit as Schmaus observes.

The incarnation of the Word and the course of his life - in particular, of course, his death, his resurrection, and sending of the Spirit - are fundamental for the foundation of the Church. It would be a narrow interpretation to view the Church only in terms of the incarnation, or only of the death, or only of the sending of the Spirit. Rather the whole life of Jesus, the Word made flesh, forms the foundation for the establishment of the Church. One cannot separate these individual phases in the salvation-event that bears the name of Jesus Christ. They form a salvific unity, as they form a natural whole.

(Schmaus 1972: 18)

The claim that God’s saving action in Christ forms the origins of the Church, has far reaching implications. It refutes the notion that the Church was born simply out of the will of the disciples to stay together. Privileging the Christ event as the ultimate source

setting the Church in motion indirectly affirms that the disciples desire for fellowship with one another, was itself a result of their faith in God revealed in Jesus Christ. In the fellowship that was created among the followers, faith demonstrated its centrifugal dimension clearly expressed in the formation of community.

For Hans Küng therefore, the Christ event is regarded as God's call to humanity. However, the fact that those who encounter God's call in Christ respond as individuals, does not mean that in Christ God calls women and men to an individualistic existence. For Küng, the communal dimension of the call, and the faith response that answers it, are clearly demonstrated by the fact that the call is directed to all and sundry.

Everyone is called, not as an individual, however,
but as a member of the one people, of the one body:
called in the one body (Col 3:15), *one* body and *one*
Spirit.

(Küng 1964: 10)

2.4.1 IS KÜNG'S THEOLOGY A FIDEISM?

The argument in this thesis privileges faith as a primary noetic factor in Küng's ecclesiology. Does this suggest that the latter is more of a Fideism than a theology? In our abridged survey of the history of theology, we have established the fact that even in those epochs where faith played a dominant role as a hermeneutic principle, it was nevertheless used in the context of other sources and hermeneutic tools. In Küng's ecclesiology, faith forms an overriding perspective as a starting point for his theologising, it is still used in conjunction with another subordinated tool. For Küng everything that God does including revelation, take place in the arena of history. History is important therefore because it provides revelation with a kind of *Sitz im leben* within which it can be explained. For this reason the actions of God which occur in history can therefore be explained in terms of their location in that history. If God's actions occurring in history can be explained in terms of their location, such events will

be conditioned by the historical framework within which they occur. To this extent history is important in their interpretation. The same claim can be made with regard to the Church. It is also a happening that occurs in history and to this extent is historically conditioned. To this effect, Küng observes,

Every age has its own image of the Church,
arising out of a particular historical situation;
in every age a particular view of the Church is
expressed by the Church in practice, and given
conceptual form, *post* and *ante hoc*.

(Küng 1968: 4)

In his attempt to formulate a theology of Ecumenical Councils, Küng vehemently argues for lay participation in ecclesiastical councils. In order to demonstrate the legitimacy of his claim, he does not only argue the position from the vantage point of the priesthood of all believers which undoubtedly forms his starting point, but he also summons the help of historical evidence. Küng, having cited some examples in conciliar history where there was possible lay participation, he infers that in the judgement of historians, it is extremely difficult to prove that the regional synods of the second and third centuries for example consisted exclusively of bishops.(Küng 1964: 67)

On the other hand, history is used as a balancing act in Küng's theology by affording him tools of historical-critical method of verification. In his theology of the Church for an example, he spends a fair amount of space investigating how the various images of the Church are developed in history. By so doing, he comes to a conclusion that ecclesiology itself varies in history, and that such a variation can partly be attributed to a number of factors ranging from the purpose for which a particular ecclesiology is written to the methodological starting point of a given theology. All these findings for

Küng bear witness to the importance of using the historical method of analysis when dealing with theological data.

By the same token, LaCugna further notes that the use of history as a strand in Küng's hermeneutics, serves an apologetic function. LaCugna (1982: 25), perceptively notes that there is a constant attempt in Küng's theology to dialogue with interlocutors who are not necessarily theologically inclined. To this extent therefore, the historical-critical method of verification is intended to address and take seriously the biases, prejudices as well as predispositions characteristic of a twentieth century mind.

Having made such claims about the hermeneutical significance of history in Küng's hermeneutics, we should briefly demonstrate why this thesis takes the view that Küng's is not a hermeneutics of faith and history. While LaCugna's discussion of Küng's methodology concurs that faith is a dominant strand in the theologian's hermeneutics (see section 1.2.1 of this thesis), LaCugna's presentation however leaves the reader with an impression that Küng's hermeneutics can be referred to as a hermeneutics of faith and history. I argue that history is subordinated under faith in Hans Küng's ecclesiology. While revelation itself occurs in history and is to that extent historically conditioned, Küng does not support the view that history therefore is the "hands" by which revelation is accepted, and to this extent, the Church owes its origin not to history but to the action of God in Christ perceived and made sense of by faith. This presages that while history is important as a strand in Küng's ecclesiology, its role as a hermeneutic principle is clearly conditioned by faith the primary noetic standard. In this sense, it can be concluded that history is what reason was for theologians like St Anselm of Canterbury. LaCugna herself puts it rather aptly when she observes that,

... however helpful historical-critical research may be,
it cannot produce faith, nor provide compelling reasons
for faith. Faith as confident trust is not the product of
any rational process or historical proof, but comes

about by free decision in “God as he addresses me in this Jesus.” (OBC 161; MG 592)

(LaCugna 1982: 32)

2.4.2 THE CHURCH AS AN OBJECT OF FAITH.

According to Hans Küng people who make up the reality called Church, differ from others because they believe. Their faith in God revealed in Jesus Christ constitute them as a fellowship of believers (Küng 1968: 30). This therefore suggests that it is untenable for an outsider to judge the Church if s/he is a neutral observer not in some way committed by faith to the reality that brings the Church to existence. If the Church is a community of believers united by faith in Christ, the same perspective of faith should be used to analyse, study and to judge it.

For Küng however, the assumption that the Church is an object of faith does not necessarily mean that Christians believe in the Church as they would to God revealed in Jesus Christ. He argues that,

... only God can be believed, in the fullest and most radical sense of the word. To believe in a man in this absolute and completely unconditional sense would be to make him into an idol; it would be blasphemy against God, who alone is worthy of totally unconditional self-surrender; ...

(Küng 1968: 31)

For Küng the Church is only an object of faith in so far as it is a reality acted upon by the Holy Spirit. In reality therefore, faith in the Church is actually faith in the Holy Spirit who sanctifies it.

However, for Küng to advocate the stance of faith as the legitimate perspective from which the Church could be studied and commented upon, raises a further set of old problems in theology. That is, can someone already committed by faith in the Church

and in the God who brings it to being be trusted to render as it were an objective analysis of the reality called Church? Is it not that faith as a stance already offers an unacceptable bias for arriving at the objective truth about the reality being investigated?

It seems that such indictments, among other things arise out of a conviction that absolute objective truth does exist. This, as has been demonstrated even in response to some of the criticisms of the Enlightenment thinkers, is a false notion to base one's argument on. There seems to be a growing consensus, even among the philosophers of science that the possibility of hidden pre-commitments and presuppositions cannot be ruled out completely in the quest for truth.

2.5 CONCLUSION.

Our survey in this chapter began with the question of faith. We outlined some of its aspects, more particularly as they apply to the argument presented in this thesis. To this extent we affirmed the particular nature of the faith by identifying it with Christ as its object. We also explored the concepts of freedom and grace as constitutive of the composite nature of faith. To this extent we argued that its ultimate origin is God and as such, it is not the fruit of coercion but it is a free response a believer makes to the revelation of God in Jesus Christ. We continued to explore the eschatological nature of this faith, yet arguing that its orientation to the eschaton does not necessarily suggest an other-worldliness in its nature and those who have it. On the contrary, the eschatological nature of this faith acts as a critic to the status quo and in this way informs the engagements of the believer in the present. To this extent we also asserted both the epistemological value and the dynamic nature of faith, thus accentuated its relevance as a way of knowing. Lastly we explored the communal dimension in faith and in this way underscored its ability to create fellowship among those who believe.

Subsequent to this analysis, we focussed on how this interpretative principle has been used in the development of theology. In doing this we eclectically surveyed the twenty centuries of tradition and came to a conclusion that even in instances where it played a

pivotal role as a hermeneutic principle it was used in the context of other tools and sources which provided a balance, lest theology turns into a Fideism. This prepared the context for discussion of Küng's use of the concept as a tool for interpretation. We argued for the case that his hermeneutics can be regarded as a hermeneutics of faith, even though history does play a role in his theological formulations. We did this first by demonstrating how faith is linked with the ultimate origins of the reality called Church. We also realised that the actual essence of the Church is accessible by faith according to Küng and thus observed that by so doing he makes the Church clearly an object of faith. In this way we demonstrated that for Küng to study a reality whose existence and essence are identified with faith requires that it be approached by a hermeneutics which does not privilege any other interpretative principle other than faith. To this extent therefore we can conclude that Küng uses faith as an interpretative standard for his theology and in doing so is supported by the history of the discipline. The next chapter will take the argument a step forward by attending to the question how faith as a hermeneutical principle shapes Küng's understanding of the structure of the Church.

CHAPTER 3

THE FAITH OF THE COMMUNITY AND THE STRUCTURE OF THE CHURCH.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In this second substantive chapter of the thesis, the intention is to critically analyse how the community's faith shapes Kung's understanding of the structure of the Church. The chapter will begin with some consideration of a few factors considered responsible for the Church's complex nature. This will set the scene for looking briefly at the question of models and their relevance in ecclesiology. The need to do this is occasioned by the fact that Küng uses models in the form of biblical images in his theology as will be demonstrated in the course of this chapter. The inquiry will proceed to an analysis of the extent to which a community's faith determines Küng's understanding and explanation of such phenomena as the various Church models, ecclesiastical office, and the marks of the Church. Lastly I will make some conclusions based on the foregoing analysis.

3.2 THE PRIORITY OF THE CALL OF GOD IN THE CHURCH.

The Greek word *ἐκκλησία* (church) has its roots in the verb *καλέω* (to call). This etymological consideration of the word points to an important idea about the nature of the Church. That is, the Church consists of people who have been called by God. The Apostle Peter for instance attests to this conviction when he observes that the Church is a

... chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who **called** you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

(1 Peter 2:9)

The people who have been called to faith in Christ are baptised and thus become members of the Church by virtue of this sacrament. Baptism is an entrance to all the sacraments, a gate to Christian life and its ultimate gift of eternal life. By the same token, for Küng, the Church exists because God has called people to faith in Christ. He writes: 'Everyone belongs to the people of God *through God's call*:' (Küng 1968:126). For this reason the Church always depend on the free choice and call of God. The attempt to make it a private and an exclusive community is as a result untenable.

God calls people so that they bear witness to God's saving grace by word and deed. To this extent, the Church is primarily a community that witnesses to the redemptive action of God. In her mission she primarily attempts to live out and to proclaim the salvation of God. However, it seems to me that the extent to which the Church is willing to engage in mission is motivated by the Church's self understanding. That is, a particular theory of the Church may have the tendency to bring about a particular understanding of the Church's participation in the *Missio Dei*. It may be eventually argued that in her attempts to live up to her calling in history, the Church expresses herself in a variety of images. The complex and multifaceted nature of these variations is such that it renders ordinary speech inadequate if it seeks to express ecclesial reality. At best one can only attempt to grasp and conceptualise some of its aspects in his/her explanation of its nature without claiming any exhaustiveness for such a theory, however comprehensive it may appear at first value. To what therefore, can one attribute this complexity in the reality called Church? Apart from the alleged impact of the soteriological motives embedded in the nature of the Community of Redemption, I want to argue that the following factors are among the most important causes of the said complexity.

3.3.1 THE TRANSCENDENTAL NATURE OF THE CHURCH.

I argue that there is an intrinsic transcendental dimension in the nature of the Church. To begin with, in every manifestation of the Church is the tendency to point beyond herself to a time where the kingdom of God will be fully realised. In this sense, in any given model there is a forward looking tendency to a consummation that will take place

in the future. This is clearly demonstrated in the life of fellowship and love which exists among the members of a given congregation. On the one hand, such a life, it seems to me, takes its cue from the life of fellowship and love characteristic of the Trinity itself. (See section 2.2.6 of this thesis). To this extent the life of the Church owes its origin to a source beyond itself. On the other hand, this life still awaits its consummation in the *eschaton*, where the whole of creation will be united in love and fellowship with itself and with God. In as much as this life is already made present and accessible in the life of the Church, it is at best, a sign of the breaking in of the kingdom in history, a foretaste of what is yet to come. If this is anything to go by then, one can argue that the Church is a servant of the kingdom, in so far as it makes present the promises of the future when this kingdom will be fully realised. To this extent therefore, the Church has a future orientedness characteristic of the nature of faith. (See section 2.2.3 of this thesis)

3.3.2 THE ESSENCE OF THE CHURCH AS A CONTRIBUTORY FACTOR IN THE COMPLEX NATURE OF THE CHURCH.

One can also argue that the nature of the Church's essence is also a contributory factor to the Church's complexity. Unlike other institutions of society, there is something in the nature of the Church which cannot be clearly accounted for by any carefully formulated definition. This is due to the fact that definitions of phenomena usually attend to the outside, that is, the readily observable features of the object under scrutiny. While outward characteristics admittedly form an integral part of the Church, there is in the community of redemption, something comprising her inner-most nature, which often eludes ordinary baroque and distinct definitions. This is normally called the actual essence of the Church. (See section 2.4 of this thesis). While in its outer appearance, the Church's structure bears semblance to other institutions of society, and as a result, can be easily defined by putting it into a category of familiar objects, such a definition will inevitably fail to account for the Church's essence which makes it peculiar when compared to other institutions.

But, what is the nature of this essence? God has given Godself in the person of Christ who embodies the fullness of God's revelation. God in Christ calls men and women to fellowship with God and with one another. The Church therefore is a fellowship of those who were called to salvation by faith in Christ. At the centre of the Church therefore is the mystery of Christ which animates the life of the Church in the power of the Spirit. It is this same Spirit who effects the benefits of this salvation to believers and further makes available to them the communal life of the Trinity. The word 'mystery' in this instance refers to God's plan of salvation as faith realises it in the divine self giving of God in the man Jesus Christ.

If at the centre of the Church there is God, it simply follows that the nature of the Church cannot be fully comprehensible to the finite human mind. Therefore, the Church is a mystery by virtue of its indwelling by Christ who reveals the mystery of God to us. It is this same Christ who indwells the Church who in the power of the Spirit constantly works out the plan of God's salvation.

3.3.3 THE CONTEXT IN WHICH THE CHURCH IS SITUATED.

Secondly, it also seems to me that the complex nature of the Church further arises from the variety of contexts within which the Church exists. The faith of the Church and its implications are not expressed in the abstract. On the contrary, faith itself engages with the realities of the context within which people of faith live. In this way historical location impacts on the understanding of the nature of the Church. Let us cite a pertinent example to illustrate the point one is making here. The Church of the first five centuries was, to some extent, coterminous with the Roman Empire. This period determined the nature of the Church in two ways. On the one hand, prior to the advent of Constantine in the political scene of the Roman Empire, the Church existed as a tolerated if not a vigorously persecuted organization within an extremely hostile background. On the other hand, after the ascendance of Constantine to the throne, relationships between Church and state changed drastically. As a result, there were instances where parallels were drawn between the Church and state. This took place in

two ways. On the one hand, there were instances where negative parallels were drawn between Church and state. Hippolytus (c. 170 - c. 236) for example described the state as a satanic imitation of the Church. On the other hand, Eusebius (c. 260 - c. 340), regarded the empire as an institution given the divine task of preparing the whole world for the coming kingdom of God. (McGrath 1994: 406) Both these parallels afforded by the context within which the Church existed in the first few centuries determine the nature of the Church and its self understanding.

The fact that different contexts give rise to different understandings of the nature of the Church can be further demonstrated by the South African situation. During the time of the struggle against apartheid for an example, the *kairos* theologians in particular, went to the extent of describing the Church as a site of struggle with the evil powers of bondage. Clearly, in this context, the Marxist view, (which among other things understands social reality in terms of conflict) impacted on the understanding of the nature of the Church and thus gave rise to the said explication. For this reason, different contexts therefore can bring about different understandings of the reality called Church. Consequently, the Church becomes a complex phenomenon as a direct result of faith's engagements with its varied contexts.

3.4 THE COMMUNITY'S FAITH AND ECCLESIOLOGICAL MODELS.

Having established that the reality called Church is a multifaceted entity, and that it is impossible for any given ecclesiological theory to claim being exhaustive and comprehensive in its presentation of this mystery, we are left with an important question to answer. How does one seek to present a synoptic view of the Church? Confronted with this complexity in the nature of the redemptive community, theologians therefore resort to the use of theoretical models when they want to speak intelligibly about Church. This thesis argues that Hans Küng regards the priority of the community's faith as an overriding rationale for his theology of the Church. We will therefore need to raise the question, how is the faith of the community expressed, in the models he uses to describe the mystery called Church? However, before we attend to

this important question, some preliminary remarks about the nature of models in general are in order.

The Jesuit theologian, Avery Dulles, who uses models quite extensively in his theology, notes that there exists a qualitative distinction between models that are used in the laboratory for scientific inquiry, and those that are used in the realm of theory formation. Theoretical models are simply created with the help of one's imagination, and as such are mental constructs used for the development of particular theories. Experimental models used in a laboratory, are models in so far as they seek to produce the same structural characteristics with the reality they seek to resemble. They tend to give a literal picture of the reality they attempt to represent, whereas theoretical models seek to develop theories which when excogitated in the imagination, explain the nature of the phenomenon being investigated (Dulles 1992: 31). A model therefore is an aid which seeks to emphasize and focus on an aspect of a multifaceted reality. It functions as an organising image which when used, gives a particular emphasis to an aspect of the reality being investigated and by so doing enables the inquirer to notice and interpret responsibly certain dimensions of a composite experience or phenomenon.¹

A Church model therefore, is an aid which helps the theologian identify and conceptualize certain dimensions of the Church. Consequently, every model has a particular focus and for this reason it cannot claim being exhaustive about the nature of the reality we call Church. It is a contingent and dynamic thing impacted upon by a host of other factors, (the socio-political situation, the overriding rationale of the theologian, the economic situation etc.), hence its subjectivity. In spite of their subjectivity they have a cognitive relevance which is not the same as that of an experimental model in a laboratory.

¹ The notion of paradigms has been popularised in the history of science by Thomas Kuhn (Kuhn 1970:43f). It was later used by Küng in his theology (Küng & Tracy 1991:7, Küng 1995:61f)

On the other hand, the fact that Church models are theoretical models, presages that they have their own limitations. To begin with they are not intended to be replicas of the reality they seek to explain. At best they are simply approximations of the said reality. Secondly, as theoretical models they are not static, but open-ended, and for that matter they are always subject to review, reinterpretation as well as adaptation.

3.4.1 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN IMAGES AND MODELS.

Theological discourse uses both images and models. What is the relationship between the two? Scripture itself is replete with religious imagery in its tentative references to the Church. For example, the Church is referred to as the building raised by Christ. Sometimes it is the temple or the tabernacle of God etc. Post biblical history of theology is also luxuriant with imagery. Eve and Mary are often used as images of the Church.

Just as the above examples demonstrate, images can be used metaphorically to create a mental picture of a particular object. An image is used metaphorically if in its attempt to describe a theological mystery like the Church, implicitly identify the latter with a completely different object, with the intention of underscoring some limited similarities that exist between the two. To this extent, Dulles (1987:23), observes a close relationship existing between images and models in theological discourse. For Dulles, if an image is used in a manner that is both reflective and critical it can be regarded as a model. That is, when a theologian uses a particular image, (e.g the Church as the flock of Christ), knowing that the said image can be both useful and deceptive in its usage, such an image becomes a model.

3.5 THE CHURCH AS MYSTICAL FELLOWSHIP.

Küng's theory of the Church evinces a particular bias towards those ecclesiological images classified by Dulles as mystical models. They are extrapolated from Holy Scripture. But why is this the case? By taking the faith of the community as his starting point for his theology, Küng avoids an overemphasized institutional

understanding of the community of faith. To this extent he argues that the Church has been founded on faith in the nearness of the kingdom of God in Jesus Christ (Küng 1968:76). This has important consequences for his ecclesiology. On the one hand, it suggests that those called to believe in the mystery of God in Christ, do so without being co-erced into an institution. That means the act of putting faith in Christ and in the salvation he offers is an act of freedom.(See section 2.2.2 of this thesis). On the other hand, it implies that a group of persons who put faith in the mystery of Christ constitute what must be construed more in terms of a *koinonia* than a juridical institution which exaggerates the place of law and penalty in its life. What constitutes the fundamental structure of the Church in Küng is the community and fellowship that faith in the mystery of Christ creates among believers. This is how the faith of the community expresses its communal dimension in Küng's ecclesiology. (See section 2.2.6 of this thesis). The faithful were called to fellowship. For this reason, the Church, according to this view, can neither be defined primarily in terms of its visible institutional structures, nor can it be understood solely in terms of the rights and powers of its officers.

It is in this context of wanting to re-enforce the ideals of fellowship and community in the life of the Church that Küng extracts from Scripture particular models, and gives them some degree of prominence. These images are the conception of Church as people of God (Küng1968:107f), creation of the Spirit (Küng1968:150f), and the Church as body of Christ (Küng1968:203f) etc.² They represent for him the earliest paradigmatic examples of ecclesiastical community brought about by the believers' encounter with the mystery of Christ. While these images are used by Küng to communicate the mystery called Church through their evocative power (Dulles1974:18); they are also intended by him to emphasise the indispensable role of community and fellowship in the nature of the redemptive community.

² Post Conciliar ecclesiology in the Roman Catholic Church depicts a remarkable interest in the Scriptures. (Dulles 1974:17)

By privileging the notions of community and fellowship as fundamentals, Küng is, in my view, not denying the institutional element in the nature of the Church. On the contrary, by approaching ecclesiology from the premise of the community's faith, he subordinates the institutional dimension to the elements of community and *koinonia* as deciding factors. For Küng, the institutional element in the structure of the Church exists so that it promotes community and fellowship among the people of faith, and does not stifle it. It is not the visibility of a clearly organised structure which defines Church; but it is the presence of community and fellowship that faith in Christ creates among the faithful which is a determining factor. According to Küng, any person who, when looking at the Church, does not realise that faith and fellowship are important distinctive features, misses the point.

Admirers and critics of the Church alike must be aware that the men who, in a real sense, make up the Church are different from their fellows in one vital aspect: they *believe*. They declare themselves to be a *fellowship of believers*. What they believe and hope for themselves, they want to hope and believe for others too. But those who, whether praising or blaming them, overlook the fact that they are a fellowship of believers, are in their view failing to understand them.

(Küng 1968:30).

Consequently, informed by such an understanding of the relevance of the community's faith in the formulation of theories about the Church, Küng goes on to identify the type of models which in his view belong to the fundamental structure of the Church.

3.5.1 THE CHURCH AS THE PEOPLE OF GOD.

In considering Küng's notion of the Church as the people of God, two important themes are to be discussed for our purpose. That is, we will seek to show how the hermeneutics of faith identified the early ecclesia as a distinctive community within

Judaism. On the other hand, we will look at how Küng sees faith determining the relationship between Jews as the old people of God, and the Church, thus underscoring the implications for such a relationship.

3.5.1.1 THE CHURCH AS A 'DISTINCTIVE SECT' WITHIN JUDAISM.

At its incipient stages of development, the early Church appeared more like a sect within Judaism. There are a few factors lending credence to this perception. The early Church existed alongside such groups as the Zealots and the Pharisees. This new community, unlike other sects (e.g. the Essenes etc), did not withdraw from ordinary life to mark itself a distinct community. For instance, there is clear evidence that the early Christians, like other adherents to Judaism, met in the temple for worship (Acts 2:46), and that they approved of the sacrificial customs of Judaism (Küng 1968:108). The 'new sect within Judaism' understood itself as the true Israel (cf. Rom. 9:6; Gal. 6:16; Jas. 1:1; 1 Pet. 1:1; 1 Pet. 2:9 etc.). This suggests that their faith in Christ ensured that they had some links with the mainstream religion of Judaism. For this reason, they could also describe themselves as members of Israel, the ancient people of God. Some of the religious and legal practices that the community engaged in, effectively marked the continuation of the life of the young Church as part of the established Jewish nation.³

I want to argue that Küng draws attention to this situation in the life of the early ecclesia for a reason. For him, the fact that the early Christians did not withdraw themselves as an organised institution, is intended to re-enforce his conviction that the idea of a Church understood in terms of an institution, did not occupy the minds of the

³ Religious and legal practices which seemed to link the new community to Judaism include the following:- a. Implicit in the phrase *ἐὰν οὖν προσφέρῃς τὸ δῶρόν σου ἐπὶ τὸ θυσιαστήριον* (Mat. 5:23), are two things which seem to indicate a religious practice characteristic of Judaism, hence a link with the old piety. That is, the link of *προσφέρῃς* (verb *προσφέρω*) with *δῶρόν* and *θυσιαστήριον* conjures up images of the sacrificial systems often elaborated on in the Old Testament. The implied sacrificial system envisages a priest who accepts the *δῶρόν* on behalf of the person making sacrifice. Hence sacrificial expiation is being implied (Emerton, Cranfield & Stanton 1988:517). b. The admonition of Jesus regarding the vexing question of the Temple Tax in Matthew 17:24-27 gives some indication of the legal links with the old order. c. Such texts as Mat. 10:17, Mat. 5:17-19, give an indication of how the new order was expected to submit to the judgement of the Old Testament law (Küng 1968:108)

early Christians as of cardinal importance to their self-consciousness, at least at the earlier stages of its development. On the contrary, fellowship became a distinctive mark as the Scriptures tell us, so that if there is any kind of institution that arises from this scenario, it is a result of the interpersonal relationships enjoyed in the fellowship of believers. For Küng, faith in the mystery of Christ had, in the case of the early Church, given rise to a *koinonia*. The institutional elements which existed at this early stage were the result of the vitality of the Church's inner organic life and helped to serve the idea of fellowship. The link between the old and the new people of God is aptly described in Küng's discussion regarding the relationship between the Jews and the Church in the twentieth century when he observes that after the death of Christ, Israel did not 'lose its special position as the people of God' (Küng1968:141).

Secondly, Küng underscores the intrinsic link between the Jews and the new people of God because he wants to draw our attention to another important aspect of his theology. That is, to regard the Church as the new community of faith, the new people of God so to speak, presages that it 'must seek in every way to enter into sympathetic dialogue with the ancient people of God.' (Küng 1968). We will deal with this in some detail in the following section of this chapter. (See section 3.5.1.2)

However, in spite of the fact that the new sect had some links with Judaism, socially, liturgically, a phenomenon well attested to in the Scriptures (Küng 1968: 108), there is according to Küng, evidence that right from its origins, the peculiar nature of the community of salvation was slowly being determined by their faith in Christ. Küng clearly attests to this intrinsic link between the nature of the new community's faith and their growing new self-consciousness when he notes that,

... it took time and various historical experiences before
the disciples saw themselves clearly as not only the true,
but the *new* Israel. The foundations for this view had already
been laid: the faith, rooted in their personal encounter with the

risen Christ, that with the death and resurrection of Jesus the crucial and decisive eschatological saving event had occurred.

In contrast to other “parties” the fellowship of those who believed in Christ could look back to this decisive event; for them the Old Testament promises had been fulfilled, the eschatological spirit had been bestowed on them, they had been given hope, based on the fact that the Messiah had really come, of the coming consummation of the reign of God.

(Küng 1968:108)

But the self identification of the new community as the true Israel could also be claimed by other sects within Judaism such as the Pharisees, Sadducees and Zealots. However the nature of the new community’s faith meant that they began to understand themselves not only as the true, but also as the new Israel. This suggests that their faith in Christ determined the early community’s identity on two fronts. While maintaining points of affinity with the old Israel, there is also evidence that in the early stages of the development of this primitive ecclesia, their self understanding gradually went beyond the limits of the self-consciousness of the old people of God in some respects. This community, in complete contradistinction to orthodox Judaism of the time, was founded on the Christ event. This event was decisive in shaping the general consciousness of the early community. Furthermore, for them, the awaited Messiah had already come; and as a matter of consequence, those who belonged to the ‘way’ all based their faith primarily on their personal encounter with the risen Lord. To this extent, they were radically different from others in the sense that as a result of their faith in Christ, they had already received the eschatological gift of the Spirit. According to Küng (1968: 115), there were also some external features in the liturgical and social life of the early community which pointed the way to a distinctive development. They were:-

(a) A distinctive baptism which served as an initiation rite into the new eschatological community (Küng 1968:109)

(b) A communal service of prayer marked with such liturgical acts as the recitation of

the *Paternoster*, the interpretation of the sacred text, as well as the recalling of the life of Jesus, (i.e. a kind of *anamnesis*), by studying his words and his life in the light of Scripture (Küng 1968:109)

c) Another aspect of this *anamnesis* consisted in the communal eschatological meal associated with the service of prayer, celebrated in remembrance of the meals the disciples shared with Jesus the Messiah (Küng 1968: 109-110)

(d) The new community also had its distinctive leadership (Küng 1968: 110)

(e) This community was also characterised by fellowship and for this reason it was not necessarily an impersonal institution of salvation. As a result it did not remain a Jewish sect for too long (Küng 1968: 110)

What does this lead to with regard to the inquiry at hand? Küng is indirectly pointing out that the very fact that the early *ecclesia*, (in all its affinities with the old Israel), displayed some distinctive features peculiar to itself at its incipient stages, is a clear indicator that the nature of the new sect pointed beyond Judaism. Hence the Christocentric and eschatological character of the Church and its faith. (See sections 2.2.1 and 2.2.3 of this thesis respectively) It is as if, the said community, influenced and informed by its faith in Jesus as Lord and the dynamic life of the Spirit, never remained static. It had a dynamism of its own which when viewed from the perspective of faith, always remain an intrinsic part of the Church's structural reality.

3.5.1.2 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE JEWS AND THE CHURCH.

The observation that for Küng there is an intrinsic link between the community's faith and a desire for Jewish - Christian dialogue is not an accidental association evident only in his early ecclesiology. On the contrary it is a subject that continues to occupy his theology well into the decade of the nineties. For an example, the introduction to his voluminous book on *Judaism* indicates that for Küng, such a desire belongs to the very nature of religious faith, and as such, should determine how the faithful understand the structure of the Church as basically a 'people of God' in a way that does not lend

support to anti-Semitic feelings, which have characterised the Church and civil society for centuries.

I am convinced that loyalty to one's own religious faith (an internal perspective) and openness to other religious traditions (an external perspective) are not mutually exclusive for either Jews or Christians or Muslims. On the contrary, this is the only way in which it is possible to arrive at what we need: information about one another, reciprocal discussion and finally transformation on all sides. The final goal for our efforts cannot be a uniform religion; it must be real peace among the religions. (Küng 1992:xxii)

At this stage, one comes face to face with an aspect in Küng's theology, which while admittedly still at its nascent stages in the period under investigation, (See section 3.5.1.1 above), eventually reaches a level of development and sophistication in later Küng that it may be legitimately understood to be occupying centre stage in his subsequent theological endeavours. That is, the relationship of Christianity to other faiths, more particularly, the Jewish faith.⁴ For this reason, Küng as a result of the nature of his approach to ecclesiology, sees a dialectic operating between the ancient people of God and the new. The Jews within the context of such a theological hermeneutics can no longer be regarded as a *quantité négligeable* in ecclesiastical talk. Küng's use of faith as an overriding principle in this regard tends to raise another very important issue incumbent on the task of theologising in our day and age. How does his theology render itself a responsible theology after such horrendous expressions of anti-Semitism as Auschwitz etc.? The fact that, such incidents were by and large informed by a particular theology held in vogue by the advocates of anti-Semitism, presages that such actions and attitudes can be challenged strictly from the point of view of the

⁴ See Küng 1992. *Judaism: The religious situation of our time*. London: SCM.

community's faith, which is not construed by Küng as sectarian and exclusivist. In point of fact, for Kung, the indispensable and intrinsic interrelatedness between the old and the new Israel (i.e. the Church), becomes clearer if the witness of Scripture is taken seriously.

... exegetical investigation shows two things. The name Israel still applies to the ancient people of God, even after Christ, and cannot be taken away from it and simply transferred to the New Testament ekklesia. On the one hand, the New Testament ekklesia clearly remains, outwardly and historically as well as inwardly and actually, linked to Israel, the ancient people of God. The transference of the name "Israel" to the Church can therefore never be exclusive in character, but at best an extended application according to Paul's parable of the olive tree.

(Küng 1968:115)

The new people of God came into existence as a result of the preaching of the apostles about Jesus Christ. The latter, in this *kerygma* is presented as the fulfilment of the promises of the kingdom of God; and thus all who believe in him are taken to form the eschatological community of salvation; that is, the new Israel. For this reason, this new eschatological community is known by a number of names which seek to underscore the fact that it is the new community of salvation. It is the new Israel, the people of God, the true Israel etc.

3.5.2 THE COMMUNITY'S FAITH AND A *PNEUMATOLOGICAL* ECCLESIOLOGY.

Küng also conceives of the reality called Church in *pneumatological* terms. For him (Küng 1968: 150), the Church is a creation of the Spirit. The message of salvation in Christ accepted by faith, is experienced by the recipient of the *kerygma* as freedom.

But, what does this freedom mean, and what is its relevance for a theory of the Church which privileges the community's faith as an overriding rationale in theologising?

According to Küng, faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ brings freedom for the believer in three distinct yet not mutually exclusive ways. That is, freedom from sin (Küng 1968: 152); freedom from the law (Küng 1968: 153); freedom from death (Küng 1968: 157). This means that freedom procured by Christ and appropriated by a believer's faith is not only a freedom from something, but it is also a freedom for something. It is a freedom which ushers in righteousness and brings about new life of community lived by faith. This freedom has a source outside its recipient, the human subject. It is a freedom and a community given by the life of the Spirit lived by the Church. That is, the life of community and fellowship can be regarded as a gift received by faith and forms the intrinsic nature of the Church. But how does Küng account for the *pneumatological* nature of this freedom?

On the one hand, it comes with the call of the gospel. It is the work of the Holy Spirit who according to Küng (1968: 162), takes possession of the believer in the preaching of the Word and the celebration of the sacrament, thus awakening in that believer this sense of freedom. In this way the threefold freedom from sin, law and death is appropriated by the Spirit of God. This suggests on the other hand, that the Church as a community of believers lives a *pneumatic* life; a life initiated and animated by the spirit in the believer and in the community through which it is given. For this reason the Church is truly a creation of the Spirit. What then is the nature of this *pneumatic* life which according to Küng determines the fundamental nature and structure of the Church?

3.5.2.1 THE HOLY SPIRIT IS A GIFT TO THE CHURCH RECEIVED BY FAITH.

According to the Scriptures, when the expected Messianic time of salvation is finally ushered in, it will be accompanied by the giving of the eschatological gift of the Spirit to

all people (Küng 1968: 163). The coming of the Spirit to the early Church therefore was understood as the fulfilment of the said expectation. This suggests that the Spirit was seen as God already establishing God's reign over the lives of believers, and by so doing ushering in the life of the Spirit in the Church

For Küng, Luke and Paul bring about two aspects of the nature of this *pneumatic* life. On the one hand, Luke, governed by his interest in the work of mission, primarily thinks of the Holy Spirit as the one who bestows power for some external action by the Church (Küng 1968: 164). Whereas, for Paul, on the other hand, the Holy Spirit is clearly linked to the work of salvation in the sense that, it is the same *Paraclete* who acts in and through Christ in his decisive saving event.

By contrast with the Acts of the Apostles, Paul makes it clear that the Spirit is not just a special gift for a special external *action*, *but that he determines fundamentally the existence* of the believer. In Acts the Spirit is given to the faithful; in Paul's writings prayer itself is an act of the Spirit; for Paul there can be no new eschatological existence at all without the Spirit. If there is no Spirit, it does not mean that the community lacks its missionary commission, but that there is no community at all.

(Küng 1968: 165)

The Spirit of the Lord is in this sense, linked with the saving action. For Küng therefore, it is the same Holy Spirit who opens the way for the salvation of the individual by simply creating possibilities for her/him to respond with a conscious and responsible affirmation to the saving event. For this reason after the resurrection, the mission of the Spirit and the risen *Kyrios* are sometimes put at the same level, so that the encounter between the believer and "*Theos*", "*Kyrios*" and "*Pneuma*" happens simultaneously (Küng 1968: 168).

The above quotation further indicates that the Spirit does not only summon people to faith in the risen *Kyrios*. S/he also unites those S/he calls to a unity of the body of Christ. In this way the Spirit is not only the power that creates faith to those S/he leads to faith in Christ, but at the same time S/he also makes known the norm according to which the Church is called upon to live by.

3.5.1.3 THE CHURCH AS THE TEMPLE OF THE SPIRIT.

The Church is often described in the Scriptures as the building, hence the temple of the Holy Spirit. The Scriptures according to Küng (1968:169), identify three aspects of this image of the Church. First the temple can refer to an individual community with all its unsaintly behaviour. The Corinthian Church is a case in point. Secondly, it can also refer to the universal Church as a building of the Spirit. Thirdly, it can also be used to refer to individual Christians who are built and themselves build the Church, the building of the Spirit.

Küng further emphasizes that the Spirit and the Church while closely related, are distinct. This distinction is primarily occasioned by the very divine nature of the Holy Spirit, and more particularly the freedom that accompanies such a nature. There are four important aspects that explain this distinction. Firstly, the Church is not synonymous with the Spirit. While the Spirit dwells in the Church which is Her temple, S/he cannot be identified with it. The Spirit is God, while the Church is a creature.

The Spirit *is not* the Church. It would be dangerous to try and identify the Church and the Holy Spirit; for the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, not of the Church; hence the fundamental *freedom* of the Holy Spirit. Just as the Holy Spirit, although he dwells in a Christian, is not identical with the Christian spirit, so the Spirit is not the Spirit of the Church but of God.

(Küng 1968: 173)

Secondly, the Holy Spirit is God and for this reason, S/he is the dynamic power which originates the Church. Thirdly, the Spirit cannot be coerced to action by any person for S/he blows wherever S/he wills. S/he is God and has freedom intrinsic to that divine nature. Fourthly, the Spirit works wherever S/he wills, yet because S/he is at the same time the Spirit of Christ S/he is the Spirit of order and not of arbitrariness. The freedom that the Spirit of Christ has as God, is not a chaotic phenomenon contradictory to freedom.

3.6 THE FAITH OF THE COMMUNITY AND THE BODY OF CHRIST MODEL.

Christian theology speaks of Christians as people who by faith and baptism are engrafted into the body of Christ. For Küng (1968: 203ff), the realisation of the unity of this body takes place primarily in the celebration of the two Sacraments of the Gospel, namely Baptism and the Eucharist. That is, in order to be a member of this body, one has to be baptised and must continue partaking of the eucharist. Why does Küng identify only the two Sacraments as indispensable for the life of the Church, and by implication for the Body of Christ model? I argue that there are two main reasons for this tendency. On the one hand, the importance of such an observation lies in that it highlights the strong ecumenical dimension already deeply embedded in Küng's ecclesiology of the sixties. The majority of Christian Churches accept the validity of these two Sacraments for ecclesial life. By emphasizing their importance, Küng is indirectly contending that the unity of the Church can be worked out and based on their respective recognition by a majority of Christians in various Churches. To this extent, he is creating an ecumenical context for his ecclesiology with the hope that by so doing, any given Church will begin to recognize itself in other ecclesial bodies and as a result strive for unity. As Jürgen Moltmann pointed out that:

In the ecumenical context Christianity loses its provincial character. The parochial barriers begin to crumble whenever a

Church recognizes itself as being a member of the one Church of Christ.

(Moltmann 1977: 11)

On the other hand, it can be argued that by emphasizing the priority of the two Sacraments, Küng is highlighting the significance of their respective institution by Christ. If they originate from the Lord Jesus Christ, then they have to be regarded as binding criteria for the unity of the Church.

Hans Küng is aware that the issue of the origins of the Sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist can be subjects of debate in theology. To this extent, he realizes that basing his argument of the unity of the Church on the origins of the said Sacraments will be inadequate if he does not substantiate his argument. He therefore acknowledges that apart from the three relevant texts in the New Testament (i.e. John 4:2, Mark 16:15f, John 3:5), there is no scriptural evidence in the apostolic period suggesting the dominical origin of the sacrament of baptism for an example (Küng 1968: 204). The matter is compounded by the fact that the authority for using the said texts as evidence for this view, is weakened by the results of exegesis, which add doubt to their validity as scriptural references originating from Christ. However, for Küng, the argument that there is no authentic scriptural evidence for linking baptism with the command of the Lord, cannot refute historical evidence (Küng 1968: 204). He argues for instance, that when Paul speaks of Christian baptism in 1 Corinthians 12:13 (i.e. about A D 55), biographically he is taking us back to somewhere around the year A D 33, that is immediately after the death and resurrection of the Lord. 'For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body - Jews or Greeks, slaves or free - and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.' This historical evidence suggests that baptism was linked to the Easter *kerygma* of the Church right from its inception. Those who accepted the Good News with repentance and faith received baptism as a sign for their incorporation into the body of the faithful, as Küng notes that 'Baptism and *metanoia*, baptism and faith go together.' (Küng 1968: 207).

By the same token, the eucharist can also be dated as far back in antiquity as the time of Christ itself. Küng points out that the oldest direct saying of the Lord that speaks about the celebration of the eucharist is 1 Corinthians 11:23-25. It can be dated somewhere between 54 and 56 AD.

For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to
you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was
betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given
thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body which
is for you. Do this in remembrance of me..."

Paul clearly states that with regard to this narrative, he is only handing over tradition. This acknowledgment presupposes that the practice had been going on for some time before he wrote the epistle. Its origins therefore date much earlier than Paul. To this extent Küng is persuaded that both Baptism and the Eucharist have their respective origins very early in the history of the Church, and are therefore binding for its unity.

3.7 THE CHURCH AS SERVANT.

The Enlightenment is sometimes considered as a time in history when the world came of age. It gradually weaned itself from living under Church tutelage. This was largely due to the development of the various disciplines and sciences which began to describe and relate to the world around them in accordance with their respective inner logic, without any recourse to Church authority. We argued in the first chapter of this thesis that one of the factors responsible for the complex nature of the Church are the various contexts within which the Community of the faithful finds itself. The ecclesiology that came out of this situation therefore had to be different as it sought to respond to the challenges facing the Church. The Church, in the aftermath of the *Aufklärung*, faced a situation where it had to assume the role of a servant to the world around. The Church had to take the world as its focus and as a result it had to read the signs of the times in order to engage in meaningful and relevant service. (Dulles 1987: 92)

Dulles points out that since Vatican II, Roman Catholic ecclesiology for instance has tended to embrace this view of Church as servant, in complete contradistinction to an earlier attitude prior to the Council (Dulles 1987: 91f). By the same token, Küng picks up this theme of a Servant Church in his ecclesiology of the 1960's. This becomes clear, once again, when he looks at the nature of ecclesiastical office.

3.8 THE PRIORITY OF THE COMMUNITY'S FAITH IN THE FORMATION OF ECCLESIASTICAL OFFICE.

A discussion of the structure of the Church inevitably leads to the question of ecclesiastical office. Is there any relevance of office in the Church? If there is, what should be its nature? What kind of relationship should exist between the office bearers and ordinary membership in the Church? How does a particular structure relate to the issue of authority that goes with almost every office? What is the criteria for curbing the misuse of power with regard to those who, by virtue of office, wield some authority in the Church?

This thesis argues that Küng operates from a premise which takes the faith of the Christian community as an overriding principle in his ecclesiology. The question that is worth raising therefore is, how does a person who wants to understand issues surrounding ministry and office in the Church from the perspective of the community's faith respond to these questions?

According to Hans Küng, 'The presupposition for ministry is the complete surrender of the individual to Christ in faith and Baptism.' (Küng 1964:174). This indicates that for him, faith acts as a criteria for everyone who takes office in the Church. This arises out of the fact that the faith which leads the believer to baptism, is in itself a criterion which guarantees membership to the fellowship of the members of the Body of Christ. If faith and the subsequent initiation rite leads to office, what then is the nature of ecclesiastical office? Küng's theology, as a result of his characteristic perspective, perceives ecclesiastical office in one of the most radical ways. The poignance of this radicalism

becomes even more conspicuous if one takes particular cognisance of the High Church ecclesiastical tradition he hails from as a Roman Catholic theologian. Ecclesiastical office does not, in Küng's egalitarian scheme of things, precede the community. Faith in Christ and the establishment of the community by that faith comes first. Office therefore is a subsequent step necessitated by the existence of a believing community. For this reason, both the holder of spiritual office and the entire community are subjected to a higher authority, which is Christ. In this sense, the idea of spiritual office is clearly explained from the perspective of the fellowship of the faithful, hence the prominence of the concept of the priesthood of all believers as a basis within whose ambience the idea of ecclesiastical office takes its relevance.

In the fellowship of the faithful there is more than one way of leading people to office. Küng points out that in the New Testament the commissioning of people to ecclesiastical office took place through those who were themselves previously called to ministry by a special vocation (Acts 14:13, Titus 1:5, 1 Timothy 5:22). However, there were also instances in the early Church where commissioning happened through other Christians who, except their respective baptism, had never received any special ecclesiastical commissioning. The case in point here is the commissioning of Paul and Barnabas in Acts 13. These two ways of leading people to office indicate for Küng that, in the final analysis, the commissioning has to take place with the consent of the community of the faithful.

One might very well presuppose that the commission through office holders was accomplished with the co-operation (or at least with the agreement) of the community and the commission through the communities or members of the community with the co-operation (or at least the recognition) of the office-holders (if they were present).

(Küng 1964:173)

If faith in Christ is not taken as a norm for an understanding of ecclesiastical office, Küng argues that, the inevitable corollary would be the turning of most ecclesiologies into hierachologies, where *ecclesia* is understood as synonymous with *hierachia*. Office bearers in the Church as a result, become dignitaries and the idea of a Church understood primarily as a fellowship of believers gets stifled and obscured. The fact that ecclesiastical office is primarily understood as taking its shape from faith in Christ, implies that the nature of spiritual office should out of necessity derive from the same Christ who epitomises it. For this reason, Küng observes that it is the Christ event which in essence, changes the concepts and realities often attached to such notions as the idea of priesthood, mediation and office in general. To this extent, he accordingly notes that the word priest is never used in the New Testament fellowship of believers for someone holding ecclesiastical office of any kind. By the same token, the preaching of Christ, the ultimate event accounting for the origins of the Church, does not use imagery from the Jewish cult, and as a result, takes no cue from the priestly images.

The remarkable fact is that the word “priest” is not used once anywhere in the New Testament for someone who holds office in the Church; this applies not only to the word ἱερεύς, but also to ἀρχιερεύς, ἱεράτευμα, ἱερωσύνη, ἱεραεὺς. “Priest” (“high priest”) is a title given to Old Testament Judaic dignitaries Mk. 1:44 par. ; 2:26 par.; 14:53, etc Lk 1:5; 19:31; Jn. 1:19; Acts 4:1 and 6) or those of the Gentiles (Acts 14:13). It is remarkable, too, that in his preaching Jesus does not use the image of the priest and the cult; his preaching, even if it is not explicitly and fundamentally critical of the cult (but cf. Mt. 12:3-8 par.; Mt. 26:61 par.), lies more in the tradition of prophecy.

(Küng 1968:364)

It is for this reason, that even the subsequent interpretation of Christ as priest by believers, is not representing a static view of priesthood practised within the sanctuary. On the contrary, priesthood is explicated in a sacrificial way, wherein the high priest

who offers sacrifice, is simultaneously the offering being offered. All these things, according to Küng (1968: 366), point us to the fact that, Christ as high priest, has eventually replaced all human priesthood. This then suggests that his priesthood cannot be replaced by another.⁵

The fact that, spiritual office is based on Christ by Küng, also leads him to explain the idea of mediation within the purview of the same mystery. Christ is the Mediator, whether the word is used with Hellenistic or Jewish meanings. Apparently, this mediatorial role represent a new covenant based on the fulfillment of the old promises. It is in the light of such an observation therefore that Küng offers a pertinent caveat. That is, if Christ is the only mediator *par excellence* for the fellowship of believers, there is therefore real danger in the Church to turn its organs into mediators. Of course the will of God can be revealed through many means, but this does not necessarily mean that these means can be turned into mediators. At best, such human mediators, that is apostles and others, are ambassadors of Christ the true mediator (Küng1968:363-369).

Priest and mediators are often understood as people who offer sacrifices. How does Küng's approach to the idea of spiritual office resonate with this conviction? The offering of sacrifice in this new order of things according to Küng, cannot be done by humankind's strength. All that humanity can do here is to offer a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving through Christ, to God who has reconciled humanity to Godself.

Since Christ is the unique high priest and mediator between God and all men, all men who believe in him have immediate access to God through him. "Through him" (13:15) the faithful are to offer sacrifices. But the whole idea of sacrifice has undergone a radical change: no longer are sacrifices made by men from their own strength, but through the mediation of Christ; they are no

⁵ The Letter to the Hebrews presents Christ as the priest of the new covenant and as a result his priesthood can never be repeated. Küng takes advantage of this interpretation of the notion of New Testament priesthood and in order to bolster his views on the subject, cites such texts in the said letter as 13:8; 5:4-6; 7:1-28; 2:17f. ; 5:1-3; 7:11, 19; 9:9; 10:2f.; 7:26; 4:15; 5:7-9; 2:18; 5:1; 8:3; 10:11; 9:6f.; 10:1f.; 7:27; 9:24-28; 10:19 (Küng1968:366)

longer sacrifices of atonement (nothing can be added to the atoning sacrifice of Christ), but sacrifices of thanks and praise for what Christ has perfected; not sacrifices of external gifts, but the offering of oneself.

(Küng1968:369)

For this reason therefore, the nature of the sacrifices offered by the community of believers, presupposes faith in Christ; and the fact that this sacrifice cannot only be offered by a particular caste within the Church, leads to the notion of the priesthood of all believers as a starting point on the thinking about office. As the above quote indicates Küng is of the opinion that all those who are Christians are priests who, as a result of their faith in Christ, offer sacrifices of thanks and praise to God.

The pervasive influence of the concept of the priesthood of all believers for Hans Küng is unavoidable if one considers the fundamental nature of the Church from the perspective of the community's faith. All are made members of this Church by virtue of their faith in Christ and the subsequent rite of initiation. For this reason, all believers compose without distinction, people of God, body of Christ and a Spiritual building founded on faith. But what does it mean according to Küng to understand the Church basically as a royal priesthood?

Firstly, it means that all who believe have a direct access to God. The sacrifice of Christ has for them made the way to God accessible through faith. For this reason, no mediators are required. However, incumbent upon this new priesthood are certain tasks that must be fulfilled by believers. By virtue of their faith believers have been redeemed and also set apart by that redemption for the mission which God has set them aside for. It is for this reason therefore that the priesthood of all believers suggests that all, just because they are priests by virtue of their faith and baptism, can and must offer spiritual sacrifices to God. They can offer such sacrifice because they are a spiritual house brought about by the action of the Spirit. By the same token, their priesthood further

suggests that all who believe, as priests, must share in announcing the Gospel in as much as they all must participate in the administration of the eucharist, while by the witness of their lives they also have to play a mediatorial role in the world (Küng1968:369f.).

3.8.1 FAITH, *DIAKONIA* AND ECCLESIASTICAL OFFICE.

Approaching ecclesiology from the vantage point of the community's faith, inevitably leads Küng to see the notion of service as a decisive factor in any given ecclesiastical office. For this reason, it is of dire necessity for him that the terms that we use to refer to ecclesiastical office, must underscore the notion of *diakonia* for, 'It is not law or power, knowledge or dignity *but service* which is the basis of discipleship.' (Küng1968:392). Consequently, the attempt to underscore the notion of service in the terminology used to describe the nature of ecclesiastical office helps theology to avoid a rather, hypertrophied conception thereof. For Küng, it is important that the New Testament witness on this subject for instance, tends to avoid using secular terms for naming an ecclesiastical office. But why is this important for Hans Küng's ecclesiology? It seems that this observation is also a direct result of Küng's particular approach to theologising. The secular world uses terms in its structures which are by and large informed by the distinction between the ruled and their rulers (Küng1968:389). The relationship implicit in those terms is clearly concerned with how those who are governed relate to their lords. For this reason, the term *διακονία* seems to have won favour from the New Testament writers (cf. Küng 1968: 390, Küng 1964: 95 - 336). In a sense, a word which emphasizes the service dimension of the spiritual office was preferred to that which speaks of the distinctions amongst the fellowship of the faithful. Küng asserts that the usefulness of this Greek notion of *διακονία* lies in the fact that the propensity towards interpreting it in terms heavily laden with prestige and honor, (words like, *ἀρχή, τιμή, τέλος*), characteristic of political and priestly services, is virtually obviated (Küng 1968:388)

But now a legitimate question can be raised. In what way are the notions of faith, ministry and ecclesiastical office connected in K  ng's ecclesiology? We have pointed out in the second chapter of this thesis that there exists a *perichoretical* relationship between the persons of the divine triad. We have also asserted that through baptism, people of faith share in the life of the Trinity. This suggests in my view that each member of the community of the faithful does not have to understand herself/himself independently of others in the same community. It is for this reason that faith in Christ therefore brings about a *koinonia* among believers. I want to argue therefore that this fellowship which takes place in the community of faith, must be regarded as an extension of the *perichoretical* relationship characteristic of the Trinity in whose life the baptised share by faith. This finds echoes in K  ng's theology of the Church. For him, faith in Christ brings about a fellowship, a community and not *hierachia*. To this extent the Church is primarily a fellowship of believers. For this reason, according to K  ng, all those who hold office in the Church are primarily members of this fellowship by faith (K  ng1968:363). In this sense, every person who holds office in the Church is first and foremost a person of faith and a legitimate member of the Church. What does this mean? This suggests that the office that a person holds in the Church is a direct corollary of one's fellowship in the community of the faithful. K  ng puts it bluntly when he observes that, '... The believer who holds no office is a Christian and member of the Church of Christ; a man who holds office without faith is no Christian and not a member of the Church. The Church must be seen first and foremost as a fellowship of faith, and only in this light can ecclesiastical office be properly understood.' (K  ng1968:363) Consequently, it is as a result of this understanding of the Church governed by faith as an interpretative standard that K  ng eventually speaks of ecclesiastical office as something that needs to be subjected under the authority of the faith of the community, and for this reason, community for him precedes office because it is community and not the office bearer which has higher authority.

The office-holders also had of course to be believers
and, as such, *members* of the congregation with the

rest of the other Christians in order to hold office. They too must *before* any teaching, be hearers in faith of the word of the Gospel, in which the Holy Spirit of Jesus Christ effects the work of salvation and creates Church as the new people of God. They too before any official administration of the Sacraments must be *baptized* in faith and be reborn in the visible sign of grace and have been accepted into the people of God. No office-holder, therefore, can be a *dispenser* of the Gospel or of the Sacraments without previously having been a *receiver* of them.

(Küng1964:195)

3.9 THE FAITH OF THE CHURCH VIS-A-VIS THE *NOTAE ECCLESiarum*.

Another aspect of the Church which has to receive attention from a theologian, is how s/he accounts for what has become customary known as the marks, the notes of the Church as proclaimed in the creed. One cannot go into details here describing what these phenomena generally refer to in the nature of the Church.⁶ Suffice it to say that these marks refer to the defining characteristics of the Church as stated in the Creeds of Christendom. That is, the affirmation of belief in the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. The question therefore that needs to be addressed at this stage is, if such marks of the Church belong to the fundamental nature of the Church, to what extent can they be explicated by a hermeneutics that takes faith as its overriding concern?

To begin with Küng regards these marks of the Church as something already given by God and appropriated by faith. The fact that they are given to the Church indicates that they are gifts and the community has to exercise its freedom in accepting them. However, in as much as they are gifts bequeathed by God's grace to the Church, they

⁶ For a slightly elaborate treatment of the marks of the Church see the following works:- Braaten, C E & Jenson, R W (eds) 1984. *Christian Dogmatics*, 2 Vols. Philadelphia: Fortress Press. Richardson, A & Bowden, J (eds) 1983. *A New Dictionary Of Christian Theology*. London: SCM.

are at the same time tasks that need to be fulfilled by the same fellowship of believers in its eschatological orientation (Kung 1964: 27). The fact that the said marks are not understood and explicated in Küng in static terms presages that they contain an inner dynamic. For that reason, a community of faith in its pilgrimage is constantly realising what has already been given to it namely, the unity, holiness, apostolicity and catholicity of the Church. This means that the nature of the Church as one, holy, catholic and apostolic, is a nature which must be constantly realized anew in the life of the Church as people decide for God in faith. (Küng1968: 263). Put differently, by coming to faith in Christ, one begins a journey which is constantly involved in realising the nature of the Church as one, holy, catholic and apostolic in the arena of history. Küng puts it aptly when he says:-

The nature given to the Church through God's eschatological saving act in Christ was given as a responsibility. This nature must be constantly realized anew and given new form in history by our personal decision of faith. The historical Church cannot do without this constant renewal of its form. Renewal of form implies change of form by means of human decision and responsibility. God does not present us with the nature of the Church as an objective fact, nor does he overwhelm it with mystic inevitability, nor work in it by organic development; he calls us constantly to new decisions of faith, to a free responsibility, to loving service.

(Küng 1968:263)

If the nature of the Church espoused in the traditional marks is also a continuing responsibility, the Church in its mission will constantly seek to realize them in her life.

3.10 CONCLUSION.

In this chapter, the relationship between the faith of the community and ecclesiastical structure has been explored. The first task therefore was to briefly account for the

priority of God's call in the Church and as a result concluded that the redemptive community is composed of people who have responded to the call of God in Jesus Christ. With this conviction we related the call to the mission that the Church has in the world. This led us to consider some of the factors contributing to the complex nature of the Church. Operating from the premise that the Church is a multifaceted reality, we concluded that models of the Church therefore, act as an aid to study the nature of the Redemptive Community. Realising that Küng's hermeneutics has a characteristic bias towards what has been referred to as mystical models, we therefore proceeded to analyse how his understanding of the fundamental structure of the Church is constantly shaped by his particular overriding principle. In the context of this analysis we realised that Küng's explanation of such themes as the distinctive nature of the early Church with regard to Judaism, as well as the description of the nature of the relationship existing between the two, can be legitimately approached and understood if one operates from the faith of the community as a decisive factor in one's hermeneutics. From here the analysis proceeded to underscore the value of faith as an interpretative principle in Küng's pneumatologically oriented ecclesiology as well as his notion of the Church as the body of Christ. We then turned our attention to the value of a hermeneutics of faith in linking one's understanding of the Church to the idea of *diakonia*. It was in the context of this analysis where we realised that Küng, as a result of his hermeneutics, understands and explains such things as ecclesiastical office in one of the most radical terms. Subsequent to this, the analysis revealed that for Küng, the marks of the Church are understood in dynamic terms in the sense that they are considered as gifts that God has already given to the Church. In this way, what is left for the fellowship of believers is to realise them in their respective mission and witness in the world.

Having gone thus far in our analysis, one can now conclude that in Küng's ecclesiology, the faith of the community as an overriding hermeneutical principle plays a decisive role, and is responsible for the particular shape his understanding of the fundamental structure of the Church takes. If the secondary task of this thesis is to attempt to identify specific fundamental paradigmatic examples for a contemporary redemptive

community, it will be necessary that some space be provided for an abridged evaluation of the theologian's ecclesiology. This will be the focus of the subsequent chapter of this thesis.

CHAPTER 4

AN EVALUATION OF HANS KÜNG'S ECCLESIOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, we will engage in a slightly abridged evaluation of Hans Küng's ecclesiology of 1960 - 1970. Küng's theology shows a strong reliance on Scripture. For this reason our evaluation will begin by focusing on how he understands and use this particular source for theologising. Secondly, the chapter will briefly consider how such themes as ecumenism and mission feature in Küng's ecclesiology. The penultimate section will be a critique of Küng, and lastly I will make some conclusions to end the chapter.

4.2 HOW DOES KÜNG UNDERSTAND HOLY SCRIPTURE?

While it is true that Küng is primarily a systematic theologian, and in as far as I am aware, has never written a treatise on Biblical hermeneutics, it is also equally true that he has a way of using Scripture in his theology which does not show any lack of a scholarly aplomb in that field. He has a particular view of what holy scripture is all about. For this reason, it is possible to extrapolate and to infer his conception of this source and its relevance for theology in his works.

4.2.1 SCRIPTURE IS THE ORIGINAL TESTIMONY OF FAITH.

The Church owes its ultimate beginnings to the saving work of the Lord Jesus Christ; an event which is according to Küng, valid for all times including the present. This salvific message was preached to the ancient people and as they listened to the *kerygma* and put their faith in Christ, a hermeneutic ensued. That is, as a result of the ancient peoples' encounter with Christ by faith, they were led to witness to his saving activity. This process arose out of the Church's obedience in professing the word which was preached to them as *kerygma*. On the one hand, the first Christians' faith in Christ led them to write and collect the New Testament writings and began to relate Jesus to the

Old Testament. It is important for Kung, that the community's faith operative in this process of canon formulation, effectively obviated fanciful speculations and other superfluous exaggerations. The result of this process according to Küng (1968: 15), was the coming to existence of the New Testament *canon*; which as the name suggests, becomes a norm, a kind of standard or boundary which helps the Church on its pilgrimage as it reflects on its nature as a redemptive community.

According to Küng, what theology is faced with in the pages of Scripture, more particularly in the New Testament canon, is the original testimony regarding salvation. The fact that it is original testimony implies that it is unique to all subsequent testimony. It is, not only incomparable, but it is also unrepeatable. For this reason, it is obligatory, binding and normative for the Church at all times.

All commentaries and interpretations, all explanations and applications must always be measured against and legitimized by the message contained in Holy Scripture with its original force, concentrated actuality, and supreme relevance. Sacred Scripture is thus the *norma normans* of the Church's tradition, and tradition must be seen as the *norma normata*.

(Küng 1968: 16)

However, the fact that Scriptures are the original testimony of salvation in Christ, does not necessarily lead Küng to conclude that holy scripture therefore is composed of supra-temporal divine manuscripts, which must elicit an uncritical assent from believers. For Küng, they are documents which arose in history and for that reason are historically contingent. Küng therefore sees the value of historical criticism when one uses this original testimony. Secondly, the fact that he operates from the community's faith does not also lead him to see the authors of the books of the Bible to have been ecstatic individuals who were filled with divine madness so that all individuality was eventually removed from them.

Even the original testimonies, however, did not simply fall from heaven, are not simply supra-temporal divine documents. Nor are they - as was the hellenistic Jewish view - the writings of ecstasies filled with a divine madness which excludes all individuality and eccentricity, nor yet - as in the view of early Christian theologians - the writings of instruments, who simply transcribed, like secretaries, at the dictation of the Spirit.

(Küng 1968:16)

On the contrary, he asserts that the authors of the books and letters of Scripture were ordinary people who like all other human beings were subject to error and were not simply passive instruments under the direction of the Holy Spirit. For this reason, their testimony contains the errors of being human, yet they bear testimony to God's word in a language that has its own limitation as human language. All human language has a hesitancy about it, more especially when it seeks to express divine truth. The same therefore could be expected with the words of Scripture according to Küng.

Küng's conviction therefore is that the Scriptures are documents which issue out of the faith of the community, and as such can be made sense of by the same faith. This for him is corroborated by the fact that in the formation of the New Testament for instance, the living faith of the believing community was called into action as it discerned the nature of the writings eventually included in the canon (Küng 1968: 15). For Küng, Scripture is an indispensable source for authentic theologising. To this extent it needs to be reflected upon in one's attempts to carve out a relevant ecclesiology.

4.2.2 SCRIPTURE AS A SOURCE FOR THEOLOGISING.

Scripture plays an important role for the ecclesiology of Hans Küng. He has an ecumenical approach to holy scripture and to this extent relies on both Catholic and Protestant Biblical scholars as he seeks biblical justification for his views. The importance of Scripture as a vital source for theologising is demonstrated in a number of ways in Küng's ecclesiology.

4.2.2.1 SCRIPTURE AND THEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY.

Hans Küng argues that our attempts to study the Church, should not begin with an abstract idea of the Church existing somewhere in the realm of theological theory. On the contrary, one should begin with the Church as it exists in history. He observes that if the historical contingency that characterises the reality called Church is neglected in our approaches, in favour of an ahistorical analysis, one runs the risk of becoming a prisoner of an image of the Church only relevant in a bygone age. For Küng even the New Testament itself,

... does not begin by laying down a doctrine of the Church which has to be worked out in practice; it starts with the Church as *reality*, and reflection upon it comes later. The real Church is first and foremost a happening, a fact, an historical event.

(Küng 1968: 5)

The idea explicitly propounded here is that of the Church as an event that takes place in the arena of history. The relevance of the Scriptures in this regard lies in the fact that in spite of their characteristic reticence in endeavoring to develop a comprehensive theory of the Church, they in their tentative treatment of the theme still do not begin with an erudite reflection about the phenomenon, and then only as a second step, seek to relate an already carved out ecclesiological theory to the contemporary historical Church as it is experienced. The approach shown by Scripture in this task of theologising about the nature of the Church is historical; and can only lead to reflection as a second step. Therefore, the fact that the Scriptures begin with the historical Church as it is known in space and time, presupposes that it approaches the ecclesiological task from below.¹ For this reason, the danger of obscuring its nature and sinfulness is lessened.

It can be argued that there is a sense in which Küng's use of the Scriptures takes its cue from the methodological recommendations of Vatican II. The said council recommends

¹ Cf. The Book Of Acts for example begins with the historical Church as was known and experienced at the time of the apostles in its accounts.

extensive use of Scripture in the systematic presentations of dogma. For this reason, an attempt at carving out a legitimate ecclesiology in the theology of the Roman Catholic Church depicts a return to the Scriptures in the post conciliar era.² In almost all the writings of this Council, Scripture takes a remarkable precedence in the systematic presentation of theological dogma. This, among other things, is patently demonstrated in the structuring of the numerous prologues and introductions with which most of these writings are prefixed.³ Of course, not withstanding the fact that there can be some introductory prefixes to the writings of the Council which may prove the contrary to this rule, although they may at closer scrutiny, be minimal, to say the least.⁴

² Marie-Joseph le Guillou in an article he contributed to the *Encyclopaedia of Theology*, notes two impulses which have virtually shaped Roman Catholic Ecclesiology. That is the guidance of the magisterium and the teaching of Vatican II (le Guillou 1975: 209). These factors have made Catholic theology to make extensive use of such sources as Scripture, the patristics, liturgy etc.

³ Numerous examples can be cited in the actual writings of Vatican II. While the following are not intended to be exhaustive, they, (even at the risk of sounding a little soporific), can still corroborate our arguments in this matter. (i) The document *Lumen Gentium* is introduced with a reference to Mark 16: 15. (ii) In the Decree on Ecumenism, *Unitatis Redintegratio*, Scripture is implied in admonishing against divisions in the Church. In point of fact, 1 Corinthians 1:13 is cited as a footnote in this regard. (iii) The basic tenor of the very first paragraph of the introduction to the Decree *Christus Dominus* presupposes such Scriptures as Matthew 1: 21 and John 20: 21; while part of Ephesians 4: 12, is directly quoted as the foundation of the ecclesiastical office of the episcopate. (iv) The Decree *Perfectae Caritatus*, while not having a formal prologue *per se*, nonetheless acknowledges its indebtedness to Scripture by referring to the Decree *Lumen Gentium*; and further makes direct references to such texts as 2 Timothy 3: 17; Ephesians 4: 12; Apocalypse 21: 2, right from the beginning. (v) The footnote of the introduction to the Decree *Optatum Totius*, the subject of which is, the training of priests in the Church, enlists the evidence of the Scriptures as it seeks to advocate the relevance of the priestly office and its divine origins. (vi) In the actual preface to the *Gravissimum Educationis*, there is no direct quotation or even a reference to holy writ. However, the mission of the Church as it is expressed in Catechesis, is explicated as owing its provenance from the mandate of its divine founder. The so called Great Commission of Matthew 28: 16ff comes to mind as the kind of *ius divinum* implicitly providing theological justification for this conciliar declaration. (vii) The second paragraph of the *Nostra Aetate* cites at least six Scripture references as it seeks to justify its theological claims regarding the relationship of the Christian faith to other world religions. (viii) The first paragraph of the introduction to the Decree, *Apostolicum Actuositatem* identifies Acts 11: 19-21; 18: 26; Romans 16: 1-16 and Philippians 4:3, as Scriptures which attest to, and by implication, advocate a spontaneous fruitful ministry of lay people in the early Church. (ix) In its attempts to advocate a spirit of religious freedom, the Decree *Dignitatis Humanae*, quotes directly Matthew 8: 19-20 to highlight the significance of traditional Catholic teaching on the moral obligation of all people to seek 'true' religion. The Decree *Ad Gentus Divinitus*, in its introduction, is replete with Scripture references. It has three direct references, namely, Matthew 16: 15; 5: 13-14 and Ecclesiastes 36: 19; as well as one direct quotation from 2 Timothy 3: 1 (cf. Flannery, A (ed) 1975. *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*. Dublin: Dominican.

⁴ The introduction to the Conciliar Decree, *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, in my view, can be regarded to some extent, as an exception to the rule; yet the very fact that if one compares it to the introduction to *Gaudium et Spes*, the characteristic feature of which is the profound dearth of both direct quotations and references to Scripture, one may be led to concede that the former is deeply etched to the said tradition.

It is in the light of the above observations that I want to argue that there are clear influences from Vatican II in the methodology that Küng follows in his ecclesiology. On the one hand, his theology is saturated with Scriptural references and direct quotations. A case in point in this regard would be the preface to the English edition of his work titled, *The Church* (1968). In this four-page preface alone, Scripture has been quoted directly three times. To begin with, Paul's letter to the Romans Chapter 12: 2, has been used as a critique against an unqualified quest for modernising the Church so that it resonates with modern contemporary experience in the world.

Is it enough to answer that the Church is in the right path so long as it adapts itself to the present? Evidently not, for that could mean adapting itself to the evil, the anti-God elements, the indifferentism in the world. What St Paul says in Romans 12: 2 still applies: "Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable (to God) and perfect."

(Küng 1968: x)

On the other hand, both Mark 7: 6f. and 7: 9,13, have also been cited and used as a critic for an unbridled tenacious clinging to the past, at the expense of the need to adapt to the new experience in the world with its changing culture.⁵

Or can one say that the Church is on the right path so long as it holds fast to the past? Again, evidently not, for that could mean ignoring what is good and acceptable and perfect, holding to what has gone simply because to do so is convenient, less

⁵ There is a sense in which theology plays a mediatorial role between a given cultural status quo on the one hand, and religion on the other. In a sense, theology is about hermeneutics, for when faith meets culture a kind of interpretation ensues. There are examples of this phenomenon among some theologians. The Jesuit theologian, Bernard Lonergan, for an example asserts that the way in which culture is conceived directly impacts on the way theology is done. That is, whether culture is conceived of in static classicist terms, or understood in empirical terms as a set of meanings and values that inform a given people's way of life, is of enormous relevance in the task of theologising. (Lonergan 1972: xi)

disruptive. Clinging tenaciously to the past in this way is no less dangerous than a misdirected adaptation to the present. It is even possible that abiding by something good could be wrong, for instance when man's concerns are given priority over God's, when human tradition is preferred to God's word. Aware of man's reluctance to forgo his own tradition and that this is deaf to the freshness and perpetually recurring demands of God's will, Christ quoted Isaiah's warning: "This people honours me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the precepts of men" (Mark 7:6f). And Christ adds: "You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God, in order to keep your tradition which you hand on" (7: 9; 13).

(Küng 1968: x).

By the same token, Scripture is sometimes implied by Küng in this preface, without being quoted directly nor directly referenced. For an example, in Küng (1968: xi), holy scripture is implied as the light that guides the pilgrim community in its journey just as the people of God had a pillar of fire as their sure guide in the desert of the exodus. Consequently, Küng assents to the fact that the Church has an intrinsic propensity towards sin and error as a pilgrim community, and as a matter of fact, has to constantly orientate itself as it seeks a new path in the darkness of the wilderness of its pilgrimage.

There is however, one guiding light it is never without, just as God's people in the desert always have a guide: God's word is always there to lead the Church. Through Jesus, the Christ, it has been definitively revealed to us. The word of Jesus Christ, as testified by the apostles, is the Church's guide. It is the word to which the Church appeals and according to which it must examine its activities in the confusion of this world.

(Küng 1968: xi)

Interestingly, implicit in this quotation of Küng's are two important conclusions regarding the nature of the word of God in relation to the Scriptures. On the one hand, there is a sense in which an observation is made that only Christ is the Word of God *par excellence*. On the other hand, Scripture is the word of God in a secondary sense. That is, in so far as it resonates with the teaching of the Word of God, Jesus Christ.

Consequently, if the extensive use of Scripture is so evident in the preface of such a magisterial work on the subject of ecclesiology (i.e. *The Church*), one can expect that it will play an extremely decisive role in Küng's theology, and that among the sources he identifies as a result of his particular approach, it is going to rank higher than others. This, as alluded to earlier on, is the result of his methodology, and the priority it gives to the faith of the community as an overriding methodological principle.

The paradigmatic relevance of Vatican II in the use of Scripture cannot only be limited and deduced exclusively from the extensive use of the Bible in the conciliar documents. There is at the same time, a direct injunction to this effect in Vatican II pronouncements. Küng makes a reference to this characteristic development and accordingly appropriates its concerns in his methodological reflections. To begin with, Küng, as noted earlier, seems to advocate a particular bias to the ecclesiastical models taken from Scripture in his theology. We have already pointed out in the preceding section that such a selective approach must not be construed as arbitrary or even accidental in Küng. It is a result of the methodology he follows. In his foreword to his publication, *The Church*, Küng comments accordingly as follows.

What is the justification of dealing with the subject in this way rather than in any other? I have tried to allow the original message to dictate the themes, perspectives and balance of the book, so that the original Church may light the way once more for the Church of today. Taking this starting - point has certain consequences, the justification for which can only be found in the origins of the Church. Those who have doubts about this method

may care to recall that it is the one which is expected of post-conciliar theology: "Dogmatic theology should be so arranged that the biblical themes are presented first"; from this starting point it should pass to historical research, and thence to a systematic presentation of the mysteries of salvation. (Decree on Priestly Formation, art. 16).

(Küng 1968: xiii).

Asserted here, is the conviction that Scripture should, out of methodological necessity, take priority in dogmatic theology. However, it appears as if Küng is aware that such a methodological stance is likely to put him on a collision course with mainstream Roman Catholic theology prior to Vatican II. A comment that Küng makes in a work he published in 1963, as his reflection on the progress that had been made in the first session of Vatican II, makes some allusions to this state of affairs and corroborates the claim one is making here. He observes that,

There was a time when Catholic theology, under various kinds of pressure from scripturally based Protestant theology, had the idea that there were important points on which it needed to withdraw behind the ramparts of ecclesiastical tradition. That time is past. Not only because Catholic theology is making itself at home once more in Scripture (with dogmatic rather slow and hesitant and keeping its distance, but still following along resolutely in the more daring footsteps - more daring over all difficulties, external and internal - of exegesis), so that today it often represents Protestant requirements as emphatically as does Protestant theology.

(Küng 1963a: 233)

Küng seeks to justify his position by pointing out that he is taking counsel from the admonition of Vatican II in his choice of methodology in this regard (Küng 1968: 1968: xiii). According to this conciliar document titled, *Decree on Training of Priests*,

promulgated on the 28th of October 1965, there is a particular order that should be followed in both the teaching of dogma and the explication thereof in the Roman Catholic Church, in the aftermath of Vatican II. The order which is clearly echoed in Küng's quotation above, is accounted for as follows in the said conciliar decree:-

The following order should be observed in the treatment of dogmatic theology: biblical themes should have first place; then students should be shown what the Fathers of the Church, both East and West, have contributed towards the faithful transmission and elucidation of each of the revealed truths; then the later history of dogma, including its relation to the general history of the Church; lastly, in order to throw as full a light as possible on the mysteries of salvation, the students should learn to examine more deeply, with the help of speculation and with St. Thomas as teacher, all aspects of these mysteries, and to perceive their interconnections...

(*Optatan Totius* 16)

4.3 THE ECUMENICAL CHARACTER OF KÜNG'S ECCLESIOLOGY.

In John 17, Jesus Christ prays for his Church to be one. Küng notes that this unity of the Church is not only a gift already given to the Church, but as the prayer implicitly suggests, it remains a function for the community of the faithful. The history of the ecumenical movement itself is a clear indicator of how the various Churches have wrestled with the task of working for unity. There is also a sense in which Vatican II can be regarded as yet another watershed in the history of ecumenical relations. The need to work for unity in the Church forms an important concern for the said council as chapter two of the *Decree on Ecumenism* clearly states,

The concern for restoring unity involves the whole Church, faithful and clergy alike. It extends to everyone, according to the talent of each, whether it be exercised in daily Christian living or

in theological and historical studies. This concern itself already reveals to some extent the bond of brotherhood existing among all Christians, and it leads toward a full and perfect unity, in accordance with what God in his kindness wills.

(Unitatis Redintegratio 5)

According to Jürgen Moltmann (1977: 11), a relevant ecclesiology for our time should have a strong ecumenical dimension. The ecumenical context within which ecclesiology is done will enable Christianity to jettison its provincial character. Sound ecumenical relations in ecclesiology will enable a given Church to begin to see itself in other ecclesial communities instead of exaggerating differences.

Taking the faith of the community as the overriding methodological principle for his theology, inevitably leads Küng to have a strong desire for Church unity. For this reason, ecclesiology will seek to dialogue with other religions while Christian Churches, on the other front begin to act together in their witness to the faith. Whatever differences there may be between the ecclesial communities, they are not to be considered as means for excommunication. On the contrary, they could be used to build up community and to foster bonds of unity among the faithful.

4.4 THE MISSIONARY DIMENSION IN KÜNG'S ECCLESIOLOGY.

Küng's ecclesiology is also characterized by strong missionary overtones. The conception of the Church in mystical terms for instance, presupposes that it conceives of itself as primarily a fellowship of believers. According to Küng (1968: 30) what the Church believes about itself, it also wants to hope and believe for the world too. This spurs the fellowship of faith to mission.

4.5 A CRITIQUE OF KÜNG'S ECCLESIOLOGY.

4.5.1 SOME WEAKNESSES IN THE ECCLESIOLOGY OF KÜNG

While the whole of this thesis attempts to critically analyze Küng's ecclesiology, it is obvious that the previous chapters have focused exclusively on the positive aspects of that criticism with the aim of identifying some fundamental examples for emulation. I argue that every balanced critique of a theological standpoint must at least have two aspects. On the one hand, it must seek to highlight the strengths of the position as the previous chapters have sought to do. However, if such a criticism does not go beyond the said positive appraisal, it will irresponsibly hero-worship the theologian and by so doing treat his or her contribution as the final word on the subject. This needs to be avoided in the task of theologising.

On the other hand, if a critical analysis of any work also endeavors to identify what it regards as some weaknesses, it indirectly affirms the notion that every theological endeavor is simply a contribution, which while it may illumine our understanding of the subject concerned and effectively spur the discussion on, it nevertheless does not have to be regarded as a theological summing up on the issue. In his book, *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God*, the Tübingen scholar, Jürgen Moltmann speaks of the value of understanding one's theological formulations as mere contributions and thus underscores the relative nature of all truth.

By using the word 'contributions', the writer recognize the limitations of his own position, and the relativity of his own particular environment. He makes no claim to say everything, or to cover the whole of theology. He rather understands his own 'whole' as part of a whole that is much greater. He cannot therefore aim to say what is valid for everyone, at all times and in all places. But he will set himself, with his own time and his own place, within the greater community of theology. For him this means a critical dissolution of naive, self-centred thinking.

The willingness to emulate some paradigms from a given theologian must not be based on a naive and biased criticism of the scholar's work. At the same time, an attempt to point out a few weaknesses in the theology of Hans Küng must not be regarded as watering down his paradigmatic relevance for a contemporary Church.

4.5.2 THE CHURCH EXISTS BEYOND THE FIRST CENTURY.

In section 3.5 of this thesis we have observed that Küng tends to give preference to those models of the Church taken from the Scriptures. While, as we have argued earlier on, this stance has its own merits in theologising, it is also true that there is a sense in which it opens the door for criticism for his ecclesiology.

I want to argue that implicit in Küng's preference of the 'Scriptural' models of the Church is the desire to use Scripture's authority to bolster his particular approach to ecclesiology. As a result of his starting point, his sources for theologising are manoeuvred in such a way that Scripture has a privileged position vis-a-vis other theological sources. This in itself is commendable more particularly if one takes particular cognisance of the milieu of the sixties within which Küng did his theology. However, a preferential option for models of the Church extracted from Scripture offers an occasion to indict Küng. In the analysis of his hermeneutics in the second chapter of this thesis, we pointed out that history plays a role in his theology as an interpretative tool. However, in this particular instance, Küng is not consistent and lacks respect for history. His preference tends to give an impression that a return to the Bible alone is the only option available for a theologian operating from the premise of the community's faith as a methodological starting point. For this reason, the position tends to ignore the fact that the Church has continued to exist even beyond the first century, and as a result there is need to be innovative in terms of attempting to carve out relevant models of the Church which can illumine our understanding of the redemptive community better than those uncritically assimilated from the pages of Scripture. The challenge that faces

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In section 3.5 of this thesis we have observed that Küng tends to give preference to those models of the Church taken from the Scriptures. While, as we have argued earlier on, this stance has its own merits in theologising, it is also true that there is a sense in which it opens the door for criticism for his ecclesiology.

I want to argue that implicit in Küng's preference of the 'Scriptural' models of the Church is the desire to use Scripture's authority to bolster his particular approach to ecclesiology. As a result of his starting point, his sources for theologising are manoeuvred in such a way that Scripture has a privileged position vis-a-vis other theological sources. This in itself is commendable more particularly if one takes particular cognisance of the milieu of the sixties within which Küng did his theology. However, a preferential option for models of the Church extracted from Scripture offers an occasion to indict Küng. In the analysis of his hermeneutics in the second chapter of this thesis, we pointed out that history plays a role in his theology as an interpretative tool. However, in this particular instance, Küng is not consistent and lacks respect for history. His preference tends to give an impression that a return to the Bible alone is the only option available for a theologian operating from the premise of the community's faith as a methodological starting point. For this reason, the position tends to ignore the fact that the Church has continued to exist even beyond the first century, and as a result there is need to be innovative in terms of attempting to carve out relevant models of the Church which can illumine our understanding of the redemptive community better than those uncritically assimilated from the pages of Scripture. The challenge that faces

theology in our day and age is to find models and images which resonate with the experience of the faithful in their varied existence. This does not in any way possible suggest that Biblical witness on the matter should be jettisoned. Dulles captures the crises of our time with regard to images aptly when he observes that,

Many traditional images lose their former hold on people, while the new images have not yet had time to gain their full power. The contemporary crises of faith is, I believe, in very large part a crises of images. City dwellers in a twentieth-century democracy feel ill at ease with many of the biblical images, since these are drawn from the life of a pastoral and patriarchal people of the ancient Near East. Many of us know very little from direct experience about lambs, wolves, sheep, vines, and grapes, or even about kings and patriarchs as they were in biblical times. There is need therefore to supplement these images with others that speak more directly to our contemporaries. The manufacturing of supplementary images goes on wherever the faith is vital.

(Dulles 1987: 21)

To insist on using Biblical images for studying the reality called Church can therefore undermine the explanatory and heuristic significance that a particular model is intended to have, simply because it suggests a world which does not relate directly to the people it is intended to educate. For this reason, Küng's use of Biblical models stands a chance of not making much sense to some contemporary people who may not be familiar with the actual *sitz im leben* implied by the Biblical images.

4.5.3 A PROPENSITY TOWARDS AN ECLECTIC USE OF SCRIPTURE.

There is a sense in which Küng's ecclesiology evinces a particular bias towards Pauline evidence. Paul is preferred by Küng primarily because of the way he understood the

authority he had as an apostle of Christ as well as for his particular emphasis on the charismatic nature of the Church.

The oldest New Testament document - earlier even than Mark or Matthew - is, along with the two letters to the Thessalonians, the first letter to the Corinthians. No other New Testament writing gives such original and detailed information about the external and internal ordering of a Church. This first letter to the Corinthians, which like all uncontested Pauline letters speaks neither of “elders” or “bishops” (with the sole late exception of the reference to “bishops and deacons”, Phil. 1:1), nor of ordination or the laying on of hands, repeatedly refers to the “charismata” or “pneumatika” which, according to Paul, are bestowed on each Christian according to the measure of his faith; the latter also contains long chapters about the charismatic structure of the Church, which is a presupposition of Paul’s other letters and occasionally may be glimpsed in them. By contrast, in the pastoral letters, which are among the latest New Testament writings, the Pauline view that each Christian has received the Spirit and his gifts is overlaid by a strongly emphasized theology of Church office.

(Küng 1968: 179)

However, while such a bias is understandable, it also creates an opportunity to challenge the Tübingen don. What actually creates an occasion for indictment against Küng in this instance is the fact that his preferential option for Pauline evidence in his ecclesiology has an intrinsic propensity towards an eclectic usage of Scripture in theologising. If, as we have argued earlier on, Scripture serves as an original witness of faith (see section 4.2.1 above), an obvious bias towards a particular New Testament writer in the process of one’s theologising militates against the claims that a particular theology makes.

4.5.4 THE SHORTCOMINGS OF MYSTICAL MODELS OF THE CHURCH.

It has been pointed out in the earlier sections of this thesis that Hans Küng also prefers what may be regarded as the mystical models of the Church over against institutionalised understandings of the community of the faithful. The positive aspects of these types of models have been explored in some detail in the previous assessments of Küng's ecclesiology. However, like all models of the Church, mystical models have their characteristic weaknesses which cannot be easily ignored.(Dulles 1987: 59).

4.5.4.1 THE OBSCURITY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SPIRITUAL AND THE VISIBLE.

Küng's preference of mystical models of the Church seeks to emphasize, among other things, the communal aspects of the Church. Like all models of the Church, mystical models seek to focus and emphasize a particular dimension of the Church, and as such even communal models are not exhaustive. The first weakness therefore that can be leveled against Küng's choice of mystical ecclesiological models is the fact that there seems to be a lack of clarity regarding the relationship existing between the spiritual and the visible external dimensions of the Church in these models. Our experience of the Church proves that Church is not only community and fellowship, but there is also an inevitable institutional, organizational and hierarchical dimension to ecclesial life which every responsible theologising cannot dare treat as trivial and superfluous. For this reason, the institutional dimension legitimately belongs to the very fundamental nature of the Church and cannot be simply wished away as irrelevant. To be sure, Küng's ecclesiology under consideration has some incipient attempts at accounting for the said relationships between the two dimensions of ecclesial life. His particular insistence for an example, on the fact that faith is a prerequisite for any holder of ecclesiastical office demonstrate an awareness of the problem. Implicit in this observation is a desire to relate the inner life of the Church to its external visible structure. However, the fact that there seems to be no concerted effort on the part of the theologian to work out a slightly elaborate and comprehensive account of this vexing question in his magisterial works of

the period on ecclesiology, presages that while he is aware of the tension implicit, it nonetheless occupies as it were a second fiddle in his theologising.

A community of fellowship convened and animated by the Spirit, yet existing without an organizational structure of sorts, in my view, smacks of naive reductionist sentimentalism which cannot benefit the Church in the long run. In point of fact, biblical evidence speaks of attempts by the early ecclesia to organize and give some external shape to its life long before the advent of the charismatic Paul in the ecclesiastical scene. The appointment of the seven deacons in the book of Acts is a case in point. In this scenario, it is the actual internal life of fellowship and mutual caring evident in the believing community in Jerusalem which necessitated the creation of the order of deacons in the Church. For this reason it can be argued that the actual organic life of the Church creates the need for an ecclesiastical office and in that sense one can identify a close link between the external structure and the internal charismatic life of the believing community.

4.5.4.2 THE DANGER OF DEIFYING THE CHURCH.

We have argued earlier on in this thesis that by faith and the subsequent baptism, members of the Church are made by grace to share in the life of the Trinity. We observed that central to the relationships of the Trinity is the concept of *perichoresis*. We asserted that this kind of relationship is emulated in the communal life of the Church. The fellowship and love in this community is a direct result of the life of God in the Church.

By the same token, I also want to argue that there is a sense in which *perichoretical* relationships can be observed in the way different themes of the theological compendium are related to one another. For an example, an attempt to account for the person and work of Christ is not exclusively a Christological problem, but it inevitably involves a consideration of the place of Christ in the Godhead and thus involves the doctrine of the Trinity as well. At the same time, an attempt to answer the question,

‘Who is Jesus Christ?’, leads the inquirer to begin to think about the community which comes about as a result of faith in the same Christ. To this extent, the discussion becomes an ecclesiological issue. What I find intriguing in this scenario is the sense in which a given Christian mystery becomes intrinsically implied and interpreted in the light of other themes in the compendium. I want to argue therefore that this interconnectedness of mysteries of the faith is, in my view, reminiscent, if not an extension of the *perichoretical* relationships characteristic of the divine Triad.

Of what relevance is all this to the discussion at hand? It seems to me that there is a kind of interconnectedness existing between ecclesiology and the doctrine of creation. To be sure, the Church is not only the creation of the Spirit, but mystical models of the Church also affirm that the Church ‘is a reality imbued with the hidden presence of God.’ (Dulles 1987: 18). To claim this mysterious presence of God in the life of the Church can easily lead to an unnecessary deification of the Church as though it were not a creature. This in my view is even made more likely by the fact that the creed itself proclaims a belief in the Church as an article of faith. Such a high view of the Church therefore can easily be misused and lead to pantheistic tendencies.

The attempt to avoid the said deification of created phenomena is not unique to ecclesiology. The Christian doctrine of creation among other things seeks to account for the divine origins of the created order. This doctrine equally affirms that the same creator God is present in creation. This double affirmation can easily lead to a failure to separate God from creation and thus lead to an unnecessary deification of the latter.

4.5.5 THE POSSIBILITY OF OVEREMPHASIZING A HERMENEUTICAL POSITION.

Hermeneutics happens in a situation where one encounters a given meaning which is not easily understandable and requires some effort if it is to be comprehended. The hermeneutics of faith is, but a position among many taken in order to seek to understand the reality called Church. To advocate a hermeneutics of faith as though it were the

most important and the only intelligible approach in the study of the Church, can sometimes be regarded as an overemphasis of the position. The Church is an event which takes place in the arena of history and thus presents herself as an object of study and critical analysis to inquirers approaching it from a variety of perspectives. For this reason, the Church is not only open to be studied and analysed by people of faith. A sociologist, economist and even a politician all have the right to look at the reality called Church and formulate their particular opinions about her. To advocate faith therefore as the perspective *par excellence* from which the community of the faithful can be legitimately approached can easily suggest that the redemptive community as an object of interpretation, cannot be assimilated into the horizons of other hermeneutical positions and still yield useful meaning.

I want to argue therefore that Küng's insistence of the priority of the community's faith in an effort to understand the Church does not effectively deal with the relevance of other hermeneutical positions as though they do not exist and command the allegiance of a sizeable contingent of twentieth century thinking.

4.5.6 AN IMPLICIT MIXTURE OF OBDURACY AND FAITH?

A careful student who follows Küng's history of intellectual development and theological battles, cannot easily fail to realise that he often comes across to his theological adversaries as a 'dig in your heels type of person.' For this reason, it is difficult not to indict Küng with some pertinacious tendencies in his theology. While tinges of this are evident in his ecclesiology, more particularly the polemical tone of his theological formulations, it is also noticeable in the correspondences which took place between the theologian and the Congregation For The Doctrine Of The Faith taking place in the aftermath of his publication of *The Church* and other subsequent controversial works. If this observation is anything to go by, an important question therefore can be raised. Is it not possible that a hermeneutics of faith in Küng is sometimes hijacked by an implicit predilection to obstinacy? If this is the case,

however, it does not suggest that the hermeneutical position from which he operates and the authenticity of the results of his endeavours are jeopardised.

4. 6 CONCLUSION.

The present chapter began with a slightly extended evaluation of how Küng use Scripture as an important source for theologising. We realised that for him Scripture is the unique original testimony of faith which is neither comparable nor repeatable. However, inspite of such a high view of Scripture we observed that Küng does not regard the Bible as containing supra-temporal divine manuscripts which command only an uncritical assent from the believer. We also noted the seminal influence of Vatican II in Küng's use of Scripture both in terms of a methodology that privileges the Biblical text among other sources of theologising, but also in terms of referencing his work with Scripture. The survey also identified strong ecumenical and missionary dimensions in Küng's ecclesiology and further proceeded to highlight some of the criticism that can be leveled against an overemphasized hermeneutics of faith as the approach *par excellence* for studying the Church. To this extent we argued that Küng's choice of Biblical models ignores the fact that the Church has existed beyond the first century. For this reason Biblical models can sometimes be rendered less effective to the twentieth century minds far removed from the *sitz im leben* implied in the terminology used. The chapter has further argued that mystical models are not very clear about the relationship that exists between the spiritual and the visible aspects of the Church, with the result that the latter is underplayed. We also noted the potential danger of deifying the Church implicit in mystical models, while the subsequent section of the chapter critically considered some of the shaking ground on which the hermeneutics of faith can be based. That is, the tendency to neglect the relevance of other hermeneutical positions as well as Küng's implicit obstinance and propensity towards anarchy noticeable in his work.

The evaluation therefore, leads us to conclude that there are both strengths and weaknesses characteristic of the hermeneutical position towards which Küng displays a bias. The next chapter will seek to identify paradigmatic examples in the ecclesiology

of Hans Küng which can be emulated by a contemporary redemptive community, more particularly the CPSA.

CHAPTER 5

PARADIGMATIC EXAMPLES FOR THE CHURCH OF THE PROVINCE OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

5.1 INTRODUCTION

We have noted in the first chapter of this thesis that there are two tasks one has set oneself to achieve in this work. That is, the thesis is intended to analyze Küng's ecclesiology with the aim of identifying paradigmatic examples for a contemporary redemptive community¹, more particularly the CPSA. The present chapter therefore will focus on the lessons that the said Church can, in my view, learn from the way Küng explains the nature of the Church. The first task therefore will be to seek to define a paradigm and the way in which this concept relates to a hermeneutics of faith. Subsequent to this, I will briefly describe the CPSA which is regarded as a contemporary expression of a redemptive community in the South African context, and to which paradigmatic examples yielded by our analysis of Küng's ecclesiology are related. Thereafter, I will identify actual paradigmatic themes Küng offers the contemporary Church for emulation. They are, the value of Scripture for both piety and theologising, the prophetic ministry of the Church in a new dispensation in South Africa, the use of relevant and appropriate tools of social analysis. Furthermore, I will also identify specific examples in the life of the CPSA and demonstrate how they can be related to Küng's fundamental paradigmatic examples. Lastly, I will make some conclusions based on the evidence of the present chapter.

5.2 WHAT IS A PARADIGM?

The word paradigm has over some time acquired a variety of meanings. For this reason, its use in any given context carries with it a fair amount of ambiguity. For Hans Küng a

¹ God in his grace has called men and women in his Son Jesus Christ to share in God's divine life by faith. Those who have come to participate in the life of God by believing in Christ are formed into a community that witnesses to God's salvific action by word of mouth and deed. The Spirit of God sanctifies them and leads them to take part in the mission of God in the world. To this extent they can be regarded as a community of redemption.

paradigm is a model of understanding (Küng & Tracy 1991:5). He observes that it is the common feature of every science to have its own horizon of understanding which enables it to approach effectively the problem of growth in knowledge peculiar to that science. He also refers to this horizon as a hermeneutical dimension of a science. Küng concedes that in his use and understanding of the concept paradigm, he is to a large extent taking his cue from the physicist-cum-philosopher of science Thomas Kühn who describes paradigm as essentially consisting of a collection of beliefs shared by scientists and used as a norm to advance knowledge in a particular scientific discipline.²

...it was this theory that enabled me to understand
more deeply and comprehensively the problems
of growth in knowledge, of development, of progress,
of the emergence of a new approach and thus,
in particular, the present controversies, also with reference
to theology.

(Küng & Tracy 1991: 7)

From this it is clear that Küng uses the concept within the context of the theory of the development of knowledge. In this thesis however, the word paradigm will be approached from a particular bias. We are not intending it to be understood as referring to ‘an entire constellation of beliefs, values, techniques and so on shared by the members of a given community.’ (Kühn 1970:175). On the contrary, in this thesis it retains its original meaning of an example intended for others to follow. That is, the thesis will seek to identify and extract some patterns in Küng’s theology of the Church which can be emulated by the contemporary community of faith both in terms of its self understanding and its mission, hence the use of the phrase paradigmatic examples or themes.

² For an elaborate description of the concept of paradigms and their epistemological relevance in the development of science, see Kühn T S 1970. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Second Edition, Enlarged. Chicago University Press.

5.2.1 THE HERMENEUTICS OF FAITH AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO PARADIGMS.

The present work argues for a hermeneutics of faith as the position from which Küng approaches his theory of the Church. Is there a way in which such a hermeneutics relates to the concept of paradigms? There are, of course, a number of examples that can be quoted in the history of the evolution of the discipline called theology, where certain paradigms or examples informed and shaped a given theology. For this reason to link Küng's hermeneutics with the concept is in itself not a crazy and artificial association as it might seem at first value. Two examples will suffice for this purpose.

I want to argue that faith's ability to identify paradigms is clearly demonstrated in the composite theory of salvation. If as Küng observes, the Church owes its origin from the Christ event, we should be able to identify instances in the interpretation of revelation of God in Christ where the hermeneutics of faith identified paradigms in the salvific event. I argue that this can be observed in what has been described as the exemplarist conception of the soteriological significance of the death of Christ. According to this interpretation of the atonement, the love of God displayed by Christ on the cross, is on the one hand, a demonstration of the extent to which God has loved us. As St John puts it . 'We know love by this, that he laid down his life for us - and we ought to lay down our lives for another.' (1 John 3:16).

However, on the other hand such an action on God's part further illuminates the world and excites it to redemptive action for one's fellow neighbour so that the whole of the Church's mission can be regarded as prompted by the love of God demonstrated on the cross for us as an example to be followed. The apostle Peter alludes to this exemplary nature of the passion in his first epistle.

But if you endure when you do right and suffer for it, you have God's approval. For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving an example, so that you should follow in his footsteps.

The history of theology itself is replete with theologians and theological traditions who in their endeavors seek to emulate a paradigm bequeathed by some important teacher. The paradigmatic relevance of St Augustine for western theology more particularly, his influence on both medieval scholasticism and sixteenth century Protestant theology are good examples of what one is alluding at in this instance.

If there is a sense therefore in which the hermeneutics of faith relates to the notion of paradigms in theology the question then arises, what aspects of Küng's ecclesiology are of exemplary relevance to the life of the CPSA as a contemporary expression of a redemptive community? In a sense we will now have to consider the type of patterns, of examples that can be extracted from Küng's theology under consideration. I will seek to achieve this in two ways. The first task will be an attempt to highlight the paradigmatic significance of the hermeneutics of faith (according to the argument advocated in this thesis, Küng's hermeneutical bias) vis-a-vis the Church Of The Province Of Southern Africa. To this extent I will argue that such a hermeneutics will inevitably privilege Scripture as an important source for theologising and spirituality in the CPSA. The second theme in this regard will itself be two-pronged. Operating from Küng's premise that the Church owes its origin from faith in the Christ event, I will then argue that there are implicit missionary overtones in such a conviction. On the other hand, I will continue to relate the faith of the community to the CPSA's prophetic ministry in the new dispensation. Here I will contend that an approach to the reality called Church which takes seriously the community's faith as its starting point, has something to offer for the mission of the CPSA in this day and age. I will argue that the faith of the community will enable the Church to perceive what God has accomplished and is still doing in the present political status quo, and in that sense, identify the signs of the breaking in of the already and not yet kingdom in our situation. Any other ideological starting point other than the faith of the community in its relationship to the kingdom of God ushered in the mystery of Christ, will not be useful for the CPSA in the present situation. The second

task in this section of the thesis will be to identify certain aspects of the CPSA's ecclesial life and relating them to specific paradigmatic examples extracted from Küng's ecclesiology. However, before we could attend to the aforesaid tasks a brief explanation of the CPSA is in order.

5.3 WHAT IS THE CPSA?

While the Church of the Province of Southern Africa is an inheritor of the 2000 years of apostolic tradition, it is nonetheless rooted in the Church of England. Anglican missionary work in South Africa started as an initiative of the Anglican Christians from Britain and the CPSA began its formal life in 1870 under its first Bishop, Robert Gray.

For the last 132 years of its life, the Church of the Province of Southern Africa has grown to become an autonomous province of the worldwide Anglican Communion covering a vast geographical area of the Southern part of Africa.³ There are twenty-two dioceses that form the said province and its Archbishop in Cape Town has the pastoral oversight of the entire province. In what way therefore can Küng's theology provide fundamental paradigmatic examples for this community?

5.4 THE VALUE OF THE SCRIPTURES FOR ANGLICAN PIETY AND THEOLOGISING.

In Küng's theologising, one realises that the faith of the community is made to dialogue with both the context in which a given community exists on the one front, (See section 5.6.2 of this thesis), while on the other it engages effectively with the witness of the Scriptures. To this extent Küng relies a great deal on the expertise of Biblical scholars to inform him on how the interpretation of certain Biblical texts can impact and illumine the way in which one understands the nature of Church. I therefore want to argue that this two-pronged dialogue with Scripture and context is of great paradigmatic relevance to the CPSA as a contemporary expression of a redemptive community. A question now

³ It comprises of South Africa, Lesotho, Swaziland, Namibia, Mozambique, and lately Angola

needs to be raised as to what do we make of K  ng's attempt to let the faith of the community dialogue with the Scriptures in authentic theologising

The CPSA claims Scriptures as an indispensable standard of faith and by implication, one of its paramount sources of theologising. The Declaration of Fundamental Principles by the First Provincial Synod of the CPSA in 1870 attests to this conviction.

We, being by presentation the Church of the Province of South Africa, do declare that we receive and maintain the Faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, as taught in the Holy Scriptures, held by the Primitive Church, summed up in the Creeds, and affirmed by the undisputed General Councils.

(Constitutions And Canons of the CPSA 2001: 13)

It seems to me however, that to a large extent there has been over the years of the CPSA's existence, a lack of enthusiasm to familiarize lay people with the Bible beyond the ordinary reading of the Scriptures in public worship. Surely, if the Scriptures are important for Anglican Spirituality, it is imperative that ordinary lay people be exposed to ways on how to read them for themselves and by implication for the enrichment of the Church's organic life. For most Anglican lay Christians, the Bible is unfortunately a closed book, but thanks to the advent of such movements as the Charismatic Renewal in the mainline Churches during the seventies and eighties when some interest was generated among lay people to read the Scriptures. This was more prevalent in the house Church movement which was a brain child of the said renewal in the Churches.

The situation in the CPSA is such that more training in such things as the interpretation of the Scriptures remains, by and large the preserve of the clergy. I argue that there is a need to expose ordinary parish membership to relevant hermeneutical methods and techniques with regard to the use of Scripture. This will enhance and enrich their attempts as they make sense of their faith in a given situation, and at the same time it will underscore the relevance of the Scriptures for devotional use. I want to contend that one

aspect of Anglican life and spirituality which will receive enormous gains from the training of lay people in the reading and use of the Scriptures is once again in the area of inculturation. There is evidence that lay people, in most cases without any guidance and help received from the clergy, are engaging creatively with the autochthonous culture in an attempt to make sense of their faith within a given cultural situation.

In a modest unpublished article based on a research conducted in the Northern regions of KwaZulu-Natal, regarding a well known obsequial Zulu custom of *Umkhuphulo*, and the challenge it poses for ministry in a multi-congregational parochial Anglican setting, the author describes an interesting liturgy of inculturation carved out by lay Anglicans in the area. The Zulu word *Umkhuphulo* when literally translated means, to draw out, to lift or raise something up from the depths. In the context of the culture of the Zulu, it refers to a Zulu Custom commonly practised in the Northern Areas of KwaZulu-Natal, aimed at 'bringing back' home to the coterie of family ancestors, a deceased person's spirit; so that when ancestors are consulted, as it normally happens in the life of a Zulu, this deceased person's counsel and protection may be invoked as well. In fact, central to the self consciousness of the Zulu is the conviction about the reality of life after death and the concomitant pivotal position played by the ancestor in that particular world view. While it is true that the culture of the Zulu is undergoing drastic changes in our day and age, there is clear evidence that vestiges of this traditional heritage remain extant in the contemporary experience, even among the most sophisticated elite. In the areas where the celebration of this custom is prevalent, Christians have made an attempt to 'christianise' the ritual of *Umkhuphulo*. Here the African genius for creativity is interestingly demonstrated. It is fair to point out that Zionist's Christians have in a number of ways pioneered the way in this regard. Anglicans and other 'mainline' denominations have followed suit and in the process added some interesting nuances typical of their ecclesiastical traditions.

One of the most exciting features of the said liturgy is the way in which an attempt is made by Anglican lay Christians to find a theological, if Biblical justification for some of

the liturgical actions and rituals performed. Among the important findings made by the said research was that when Scriptures are used for this justification, lay Christians rely more on the literal and allegorical methods of Scripture interpretation. While one cannot attempt a comprehensive commentary on the said liturgy, a closer look at how the following Biblical text is used in it will illustrate what one is alluding at.

5.4.1 1 KINGS 19: 4-8 AND THE IDEA OF “UMKHUPHULO”⁴

The Biblical text which has endeared itself to the hearts of these lay Christians as part of the theological justification for performing the ritual in its inculturated version is 1 Kings 19: 4-8.

But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a solitary broom tree. He asked that he might die: "It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life, for I am no better than my ancestors. Then he lay down under the broom tree and fell asleep. Suddenly an angel touched him and said to him, "Get up and eat." He looked, and there at his head was a cake baked on hot stones, and a jar of water. He ate and drank, and lay down again. The angel of the Lord came a second time, touched him, and said, "Get up and eat, otherwise the journey will be too much for you." He got up, and ate and drank; then he went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb the mount of God.

⁴ Job 42: 11, is another Biblical text used in the performance of this ritual. This text initiates and also gives justification to the practice of giving gifts to the bereaved. In this instance, the generosity that characterises African hospitality is clearly demonstrated. In one particular service of *Umkhuphulo* attended by the author during research, the following items were included among the many gifts handed to the widow of the deceased:-

- Ironing board
- Washing basins
- Brooms
- Dust Pans
- Blankets
- Mops
- Glasses
- Plates and Bowls
- Pinafores.

To emulate the example of the angel which brought food to Elijah before his long journey to Mount Horeb as narrated in the text, members of the family concerned are asked to bring to the makeshift altar, various foodstuffs to typify the '*cake baked on hot stones and a jar of water*'. The repertoire of homilies given by those present emphasize the fact that in as much as Elijah was given food by the angels as preparation for the long journey, so has the family provided the ancestor being 'lifted up' an abundance of food for his/her journey from the depths of the grave or from the veld where the spirit of an 'unlifted' ancestor wonders almost vacillating.

While there are undoubtedly naive assumptions made about the relevance of this text for the respective purpose in the liturgy, one often wonders what could have happened with these lay Christians' handling of the same text if they had been exposed to even minimal training on taking the original context of the text into consideration in their theologising.

5.5 THE CPSA AND ITS MISSION IN A POST APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA.

Implicit in the observation that the Church derives its existence from the mystery of God in Christ are in my view strong missionary overtones. God in Christ works out the mystery of the plan of salvation, and by implication, the same Christ who in the power of the Holy Spirit indwells the Church fulfills through the redemptive community the mission of God, aimed at the salvation of all. For this reason, it can be concluded that the idea of mission does not originate primarily from the so called great commission but from the very nature of the Church herself.

On the other hand, Hans Küng's observation that the marks of the Church, that is its unity, holiness, catholicity and apostolicity are both gifts of grace and a task for the Church has important missionary overtones as well. In a sense, the contemporary Church has to constantly work out the realisation of herself and her mission as the new circumstances emerge in its context. The Oxford scholar Alister McGrath, in his voluminous *Summae* type publication titled, '*Christian Theology: An introduction*',

regards the ability to adapt to changing situations as the hallmark of a relevant and authentic ecclesiology.

Ecclesiology is that area of theology which seeks to give theoretical justification to an institution which has undergone development and change down the centuries, set against an altering social and political context. To study Christian understandings of the church is to gain insights into the way in which institutions adapt in order to survive. The Reformation is a particularly important period, when a cluster of ecclesiologies developed, each responding to different needs, perceptions, and opportunities.

(McGrath1994: 405)

It is for this reason therefore that I want to argue that the situation of the CPSA will also define the agenda for its mission, more particularly in a post apartheid setting in South Africa. While it may not be easy to sum up in a nutshell the varied approaches of the CPSA to the subject of mission, one can observe that generally speaking, CPSA theology seeks to approach the task from the point of view of the incarnation. The Church in CPSA thinking exists so that it shares Christ's life with others. This life is carried into society by all Christian people, as individuals, and as congregations. The sharing of Christ's life is made concrete in the sacraments of the Church and also in the socio-political arena as prophetic witness to the love of God which leads us to reconciliation with God and with one another.

5.5.1 THE FAITH OF THE COMMUNITY AND THE CPSA'S PROPHETIC MINISTRY IN SOUTH AFRICA.

Even the best civilizations, ideologies, ecclesiastical polities and systems can never be equated with the eschatological kingdom of God. The danger inherent in seeking to

identify the signs of the kingdom with the present lies in the fact that it is very easy for the kingdom of God to be hijacked by a particular ideology, or even an ecclesiastical model which will simply arrogate to itself the name and status of God's kingdom on earth. This is where the faith of the community can become a useful tool in helping the Church avoid an uncritical solidarity with the religious, or even the socio-political status quos within which Church exists. While it is important to begin one's theology by identifying positive expressions of the signs of the advent of the kingdom in a given situation, a theologian should always remain cautious as well that the fellowship of the faithful still have no abiding city in the present systems and ideologies of both Church and civil government.

It is in the light of such reflections that I want to argue that the eschatological dimension deeply embedded in the nature of faith, as well as the transcendent nature of the Church's nature have an enormous role to play in the prophetic role that has to be played by the CPSA. The ushering in of a democratically elected government in South Africa in 1994, has dealt a death blow to statutory apartheid and the concomitant clinging to political power of the white minority. This is a cause for great jubilation not only for the majority of South Africans, but also for the peace and justice loving peoples of the globe.

The advent of a non-racial democratic era has brought with it some changes in the lives of the people, notwithstanding the enormous challenges which still face our young democracy. The Bishop of Natal, Rubin Phillip has aptly described the ambiguities of the South African scenario in a recent Diocesan Synod charge when he observed that,

The South Africa in which we live is a remarkable one.
On the one hand we continue to enjoy living in a free
country, one for which we have long prayed and worked.
We should therefore continue to give thanks to God
for it and pray for our leaders at local, regional
and national levels. Furthermore, we should work with
government where it is involved in building the nation,

reconciliation and the like. Government, to be sure, is not our enemy, as was the case under the old political dispensation. However, there is a shadow or dark side to our nation which is most disturbing. I have in mind such things as unemployment and poverty, HIV/AIDS, violence against women, immoral leadership, corruption, sexual abuse of children, the manufacture and distribution of arms, crime, the list goes on. These are not minor issues but major ones with no signs of leaving us.

(Phillip: 2000)

On the other hand, the aforesaid changes in South Africa after 1994 have had an impact on the way theology is to be done. The question as to whether those theologies which derived their characteristic cutting edge from the situation of struggle still remain relevant and effective in our day and age, or whether they have become an unnecessary ballast burdening the ship of theological progress, has been raised quite constantly over time. There is admittedly an ongoing debate with regard to this issue in the South African theological scene, a debate we cannot go into here.⁵

Consequently, the advent of the new dispensation in the political scene of our country has raised some questions for the prophetic ministry of the Anglican Church (CPSA) in South Africa. I want to argue that in this regard, Hans Küng in his ecclesiology offers an important methodological paradigm for emulation. One such example in my view relates

⁵ The theologian Charles Villa-Vicencio, in his book, *A Theology of Reconstruction. Nation-building and Human Rights*. Cape Town: David Phillip (1992), argues for what he calls a “theology of reconstruction” as a viable option for third world theologising necessitated by the changes in both South Africa and Eastern Europe. The Anglican Archbishop Emeritus, Desmond Tutu, in his work, *No Future Without Forgiveness* (1999), argues for the value of forgiveness and the relevance of the TRC process in effecting such a forgiveness. Professor Tinyiko Maluleke, another South African theologian, is critical of some of the assumptions of these ‘new’ theologies. (cf. Maluleke, Tinyiko S. “Truth, National Unity and Reconciliation in South Africa: Aspects of the Emerging Theological Agenda.” *Missionalia* 25:1 (April 1997), 59-87; Maluleke, Tinyiko Sam, “Proposal for a Theology of Reconstruction: A Critical Appraisal.” *Missionalia* 22:3 (August 1994), 245-258). The theologian Gerloff Roswith, responding to Maluleke’s observations, contrasts the TRC to such processes as the Nüremberg Trials, the Stuttgart and Darmstadt Declarations, and thus evinces some resonances and differences with Maluleke’s assessment of the TRC. (cf. Gerloff, Roswith. “Truth A New Society and Reconciliation: The Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa from a German Perspective”. *Missionalia* 26:1 (April 1998), 17-53.)

to the fact that the CPSA, as part of the contemporary redemptive community in South Africa, has to continuously operate in its prophetic ministry from the vantage point of the community's faith as its overriding rationale and starting point. For this reason, the CPSA has to pursue its prophetic ministry within the context of what has been sometimes referred to as a position of critical solidarity with the democratically elected government of the day.

A political theology which neglects the faith of the community as an overriding principle will in my view make the CPSA to pose and go about in its prophetic task as though it were nothing more than another official opposition to the government of the day. In its critical endeavors, such a Church will offer nothing more than what other political parties in the opposition are offering to a democratic dispensation. This means that her chief task will primarily consist of a point scoring campaign in order to outsmart the 'opposition', and by so doing the Church is no longer advancing the course of the *Missio Dei*. On the contrary, it will be engaged in a self aggrandising campaign and the advancement of its prestige. The Church operating with such an attitude about herself is not serving the purposes of the kingdom, but it is only perpetuating herself as the fulfilment of the eschatological reign of God. Küng accordingly warns us against this possibility and its consequences when he writes,

To apply to the Church what is said in the New Testament about the reign of God will inevitably lead to an intolerable glorification of the Church, the presentation of an *ecclesiological gloriae* with the Church as its end. This is to forget that the power and glory of the reign of God are still to come, that the promises made through and in the Church have not yet been fulfilled, that the Church is called to a pilgrimage, not rest. It is to forget that the Church is composed of men, sinful men at that; it is to forget that the Church's preaching, its baptism and its Lord's Supper are announcing something that has not yet been fulfilled.

The danger in such a self-glorification of the Church is even more compounded by the fact that it is easily transferred to the political party whose ideology accords with that of the Church, (at least in some respects). In this sense, the political party concerned also becomes as it were, the political embodiment of the eschatological kingdom of God in the present. Its ideology receives official religious sanction and as a result political or ideological dissent and challenge to the status quo (which are in fact hallmarks of a democracy), are interpreted as an affront, not only to the party concerned but also to the Church. This happens in the name of ideological commitment. For this reason, such dissent and challenge receives rejection and sometimes even punishment not only from the government of the day but also from the Church. Here in fact lies the perennial danger that faces erastian tendencies in ecclesiology. They implicitly suggest that there is no need to look to the future for the actual consummation of the kingdom of *shalom*, justice and righteousness. Secondly, erastian tendencies militate against the eschatological nature of faith by presenting both the ecclesiastical and the socio-political status quos as an end in themselves. A further difficulty with erastian tendencies in the Church lies in the fact that the eschatological community of salvation uncritically capitulates into ideological propaganda of the powers that be, as a result of which faith and theology in general reach a kind of intellectual cul-de-sac and stagnation. The Church and theology existing in such a situation eventually forgets that for a people of faith, there is no abiding city here. Reflecting on the task of theology in the aftermath of 1994 in South Africa, the theologian John de Gruchy perceptively noted that,

The Church has to keep on reminding the state of its
responsibility towards the poor and other social victims.

This theology has to grapple more positively with the
problems of the responsible use of power, but always
in awareness that change of power does not mean
that power loses its ability to corrupt.

(de Gruchy 1986:450)

On the other hand, the difficulty that arises in a situation where the Church, which as a result of jettisoning the faith of the community as a starting point for her political theology, poses in the social arena as yet another political party, lies not only in the fact that it tends to legitimize a particular ideology uncritically. The message such a Church preaches discloses nothing more than what is already contained in all political party rhetoric. The Church in such a situation runs the risk of misleading her children into believing that in practice there is nothing distinctive about being a Christian in the socio-political arena, save the use of a kind of 'religious' language often employed to say what can be said even more effectively and eloquently by other disciplines and political ideologies.

5.5.2 THE CPSA'S USE OF THE TOOLS OF SOCIAL ANALYSIS

Accessing the prophetic role of a given Christian community in the post apartheid South African situation will be in my view, grossly inadequate if it does not attempt in the context of that discussion to make some allusions to the relationship existing between that community's faith on the one hand, and the relevant tools used for social analysis on the other. In the above analysis we have endeavored to refute any attempt that seeks to do theology taking as its starting point and overriding concern a particular political ideology. We have argued that such an approach to theologising militates against the dynamism of the faith of the Church and its potential for offering a corrective critic to the status quo. However, if such an argument is meant to advocate an equally erroneous anti-ideological and anti-philosophical stance in the task of theologising, (that is, a point of view holding that theology should dissociate itself from a philosophy or ideology of whatever kind), we would be offering an extremely misleading and naive assessment of this vexing problem.

In fact it can be legitimately argued that one of the reasons why the Church sometimes fails to produce a coherent political theology in her mission, is due to a profound lack of analytical tools on the part of the community of redemption and her theologians. The analysis of social reality within which the Church and her theologians do political

theology is an indispensable aspect of responsible theologising⁶ It is in this area of analyzing social reality that ideology in relation to the Christian community becomes useful. As an analytical tool aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of faith's engagements with the social reality being analyzed, ideologies and their respective philosophies are indispensable. For an example, experience in the situation of oppression and class struggle has taught us that Marxism is a useful tool which can be utilized to understand the plight of the marginalized and the poor of society. However, it is also true that to put Marxism as a methodological starting point and overriding principle for a theology which takes the community's faith seriously, would be grossly inadequate and misleading for the Church. For such a theology, Marxism as well as other ideologies and concomitant philosophies are tools that theology uses in its endeavors. Good theology is always *fides quaerens intellectum*, and for this reason, Marxism as an ideology becomes yet another extremely useful tool in the hands of the Church and her theologians, enabling them to understand the implications of their faith within a given socio-political and economic situation.

The American Presbyterian theologian, Robert McAfee Brown, in his book primarily intended to be an apology for Liberation Theologies, interestingly punctuates his discussion of this important subject with some anecdotal comments. One such anecdote relates to a meeting he once attended as a theologian. This is how he narrates what happened in that conference.

At a recent conference composed of churchpersons from
both North and South America, I was asked to prepare a

⁶ The political theologian Johan Baptist Metz is of the opinion that to carve out a legitimate political theology in this day and age, it is imperative to do an in depth analysis of the situation for which theology is done. As a result of such an observation, Metz (1980:3f), identifies two special features for such an analysis. He argues that a theologian who wants to do a fundamental practical theology must first take cognisance of two important facts about his/her situation. That is, on the one hand, the social analysis that needs to be done must be engaged in at a global level because there is a great deal of interdependence nowadays in the world's socio-political and economic relations. On the other hand, the world the theologian sets herself/himself out to analyse is in reality a meta-world. That is, it is a world we can only know and experience through the systems and theories that are intended to explain it and make accessible to us.(Metz1980:4). By the same token, the *Kairos* Theologians, in their document call for a rigorous reading of what they call the 'signs of the times' (Kairos1987:17 and 20f). Such an analysis for the *Kairos* theologians is an indispensable aspect for a relevant prophetic theology.

short statement about some of the things we North Americans had learnt. I responded in part that we now realize that we had to take both Marx and the Bible more seriously than we had before. An exiled Chilean Jesuit, who had been very active in a group known as Christians for Socialism, responded: "Why do you put Marx and the Bible right up there together? We don't equate them that way. For us, the Bible provides us with our overall approach to life, while Marx is simply a useful analytical tool within that Biblical framework. It's all right to talk about Marx if you want to, but put him in the second paragraph"

(McAfee Brown 1978:67)

The community's faith and the relevant tools for social analysis cannot be put on a par. We have in fact witnessed a somewhat similar methodological rationale in Hans Küng's ecclesiology. While there is admittedly an interaction between faith and history in his theology, it is the community's faith and not history which forms the starting point of his theology. For this reason, I want to argue that for the CPSA to do an effective political theology in her mission in the post apartheid situation, the tools that her theology must use for analysis of social reality must be subjected to the faith of the community and not vice versa. I argue therefore that it is only when theology and the Church take seriously its particular starting point, the faith of the community, that it will be able to offer a meaningful political theology worthy of the name.

But now a question needs to be raised. Why is such a subordination important? Are we again advocating for the CPSA a pusillanimous faith which when faced with the option for solidarity with other activists in a given political situation, contents itself with a naive 'defense' of Christian identity at the expense of transformative and redemptive praxis?⁷ I

⁷ The political theologian, Jürgen Moltmann, clearly informed by the assumptions of a *kenotic* theology of the cross, questions such a quest for identity and describes it as a kind of facade, a smokescreen hiding the real issues behind it. He duly observes that such a quest is at best '... much more the question of a man's own identity and integrity, for every self-emptying in historical action is a venture, and a way into non-identity. A

argue that this is not the case. It seems to me that the subordination of ideology and all other tools of analysing social reality to the faith of the community is important because, among other things it gives the community's faith an opportunity to evaluate the assumptions made by the said ideology or philosophy. Such an approach to the usefulness of ideology and other relevant social analysis tools will enable the Church 'to keep ideology human and thus prevent it from being demonic.' (de Gruchy 1986:213). For an example, ideology becomes demonic if it seeks to serve the interests of the powerful at the expense of the poor and marginalised. Ideology becomes demonic if it, as a result of deeply entrenched patriarchal tendencies in a given culture, seeks to grant men privilege at the expense of women and children. Ideology becomes demonic if it puts profit above the welfare of both human beings and the environment in a given situation. Ideology is demonic if by a change in political power, instills the fear and hopelessness in the lives of the citizens of a given country to such an extent that instead of using their skills and resources to entrench and strengthen democracy, emigration is considered the best option, simply because it affords the opportunity to cling tenaciously to privilege and status that comes with the colour of one's skin and social class.

5.6 SPECIFIC EXAMPLES IN THE CPSA'S ECCLESIOLOGY AS RELATED TO KÜNG'S PARADIGMATIC EXAMPLES.

Having critically analyzed and evaluated Küng's theology of the Church, one can now conclude that there are specific aspects of the CPSA'S ecclesiology which can benefit from the wide array of paradigms which can be deduced from the theologian. In order to relate such aspects we will first identify these fundamental paradigmatic themes we will use for this comparison.

The first example relates to the way Küng's ecclesiology accounts for the importance of the laity in the Church. We have noted for example in section 3.8 of this thesis that for Küng all who believe are without distinction people of God who among other things have a share in God's mission in the world. We will then argue that the egalitarian

man abandons himself as he was as he knew himself to be, by emptying himself, finds a new self.' (Moltmann 1974:15)

orientations in his ecclesiology offers a paradigm for the CPSA. Küng's theology has an honest dialogue with the context within which he theologises. This, among other things is patently demonstrated by his strong sense of ecumenism as well as a willingness to address problems of Antisemitism in his ecclesiology. Thirdly, we will also draw some paradigms from the use of mystical models in Küng's ecclesiology. Of particular interest to us will be the characteristic emphasis of the role of the Spirit in the life of the Church as well as the mystical models ability to enable the local congregation face the contextual realities effectively. These too will be related to some aspects of the life of the CPSA.

5.6.1 KÜNG'S ECCLESIOLOGY AND THE REDISCOVERY OF THE LAITY IN THE CPSA.

There is a challenge which faces the understanding of Church that emphasizes a sharp distinction between office bearers and ordinary lay people. The challenge lies in that this distinction has a propensity to be overemphasized. Such an overstatement of the said distinction has serious consequences for the fellowship of the faithful. Lay people will be made powerless because the term laity will often be construed as synonymous with ignorance. Ultimately the exaggeration results in the laity becoming passively subordinated under the authority of the clergy. The CPSA as an inheritor of the High Church tradition with all its concomitant emphasis on a clerical hierarchy and the aforesaid distinction between lay and cleric, needs to be constantly aware of this danger.

Küng's assertion therefore that one's baptism in the community of the faithful is a clear presupposition for ministry has important consequences for a Church which wants to re-discover the place and value of the laity in her ministry. The emphasis on the notion of the priesthood of all believers will enable the CPSA not only to discover the value of the local congregation as an important and effective ecclesial unit, but it will at the same time help in discovering and appreciating the importance of the laity in advancing the *Missio Dei*. The discrimination between clerics and laity has over the years tended to underestimate the laity and in the process rendered them inactive and disempowered. This in my view is clearly demonstrated by the fact that effective training for ministry

was only the preserve of the clergy as though only the ordained were legitimate ministers of the gospel. The emphasis on the priesthood of all believers in the context of the Anglican tradition bequeathed to the CPSA will remind the Church of the need to equip all God's people, that is clergy and laity alike, for the work of ministry. Both clerics and lay membership are the *laos* of God by their respective baptisms and as such both have a role to play in advancing the mission of God in the world.

5.6.2 AN ECCLESIOLOGY IN DIALOGUE WITH THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN CONTEXT OF THE CPSA.

In Küng's theory of the Church, one notices that the context of the theologian impacts on the ecclesiology he comes up with. The rationale behind this is that it is in the nature of faith to seek to dialogue with its context as it seeks to understand itself anew in a given social reality, hence the dynamic nature of the community's faith. (See section 2.2.5 of this thesis). Küng as a Swiss scholar doing theology in a German context cannot avoid addressing the relationship the Church has with the Jews. The fact that he regards Jews as the integral part of the people of God, the very title the community of faith applies to itself in the Bible, suggests for Küng that dialogue with the Jews is inevitable. This he proposes in complete contradistinction to anti-Semitic tendencies epitomized and displayed by the experiences of Auschwitz about two decades earlier. There are in my view a number of contextual realities in the Southern African situation which must be allowed to inform and shape Anglican ecclesiology of the twenty first century in the CPSA. They include the following.

5.6.2.1 AFRICAN CULTURE AND ANGLICAN ECCLESIOLOGY.

It is customary for Anglican theology to pride itself about the fact that it stands on four pillars of faith, reason, tradition and the Bible. However, I want to argue that the implications of faith's dialogue with the Southern African context have never been explored to their fullest. One such area where there is a profound lack of attempts to enable the faith of the community to dialogue adequately with its context in the CPSA, is in the area of faith's relationship to African culture. To be precise, Anglican

ecclesiology still needs to take cognisance of the impact African culture should have in shaping its self-consciousness. I want to argue that there are untapped riches in this area for an ecclesiology which takes its context seriously. The following are only examples of what one is referring to in this regard:-

- (a) African culture is known for its emphasis on community and fellowship. To what extent therefore can these aspects of the said culture be allowed to impact on the understanding of Church in the CPSA?
- (b) given the pivotal position the ancestor occupies in an African world view, to what extent can belief in these “living dead” enrich our ecclesiology in the CPSA?
- c) how can the obsequial customs characteristic of Zulu culture be interpreted from the premise of the community’s faith as an overriding principle, so that they begin to illumine and enrich our understanding of Church in the CPSA?

The culture of the indigenous peoples of the Southern African region can in fact provide Anglican ecclesiology with enormous riches. However, I want to argue that there are some dangers if this is not done by taking seriously the faith of the community as an overriding methodological rationale in such theologising. It needs to be reiterated that the Church, as Küng warns us, has been founded on faith in the mystery of Christ and not on African cultural imperatives, in as much as they are important for our theologising about the nature of the Church. It seems to me that this is a methodological premise which cannot be neglected without peril in the life of the Christian community. The faith of the community will offer theology in this regard a tool for criticism of the cultural status quo which receives the gospel. By suggesting that the CPSA should enter into some honest dialogue with the culture of its interlocutors in the region, one is not advocating an uncritical assimilation of African culture in the formation of a relevant ecclesiology. On the contrary one is suggesting that by dialoguing with its African context the faith of the community will inevitably release pearls of subjugated wisdom in the autochthonous culture which can make an enormous contribution to our understanding of Church.

5.6.2.2 THE NEED FOR DIALOGUE WITH AFRICAN INDIGENOUS CHURCHES.

One of the lessons we learn from K  ng's mystical models of the Church relates to the question of ecumenical dialogue. In fact for K  ng such dialogue goes beyond the limits of the Christian community and engages with the Jews as the ancient people of God. To be sure, the CPSA has been for some time involved in dialogue with the Churches which are often identified in Anglican ecclesiology as the covenanting Churches of the Church Unity Commission (i.e. the CUC). Churches which belong to the CUC are Anglicans, Methodists, Presbyterians and Congregationalists. There is clear evidence that the CPSA is committed to working on its relationship with the said churches. The tangible evidence of this enthusiasm is not only the existence of United Churches where fellow Christians from the covenanting Churches worship together, but also the resolutions of Synods aimed at forging unity with these Churches. This is in itself commendable as a meaningful contribution to sound ecumenical relations and a witness to the desire for unity with all christians. However, the Southern African context is replete with African Initiated Churches. The issue here is that one does not realise the same enthusiasm in the CPSA with regard to its relationship to these indigenous Churches in the region. While one does not wish to trivialize the efforts which have been made in the CUC family, one still needs to note that the fact that all the CUC churches have their origin in England gives the impression that, perhaps here is yet another demonstration of how blood can be thicker than water even in ecclesiological matters of great importance to the life of the Christian community.

5.6.3 MYSTICAL MODELS OF THE CHURCH AND THE RE-APPRAISAL OF THE CHARISMATIC RENEWAL IN THE CPSA.

K  ng's insistence on the pneumatic life of the Church as something which belongs to its fundamental structure has important implications for the life of the CPSA. The planting of the Anglican Church in the sub-continent took place in the 1830's. This was a milieu during which the Oxford Movement was attempting to restore the High Church ideals of the 17th century. For this reason, it is possible to infer that the Anglican Church in South

Africa in particular, owes its provenance to a very High Church tradition characteristic of the said movement in the Church of England. In fact, the Anglican Ecclesiastical historian Peter Hinchliff describes one of the Chaplains of the early period of Anglicanism in South Africa, a Reverend George Hough, as an old fashioned churchman who was both high and dry and as such lacked the enthusiasm that “turns the world upside down” (Hofmeyr & Pillay 1994:80). One of the strong features of the High Church tradition is its high view of the divine basis of authority in the life of the Church. To this extent it enhances the institutional understanding of the nature of the redemptive community. Perhaps one of the weaknesses in such a situation is that, more often than not, such an emphasis on authority can easily lead to a neglect of the inner organic life of the Church, and as a result, a stifling of community and fellowship in favour of an institution.

It seems to me that, among the positive things that can be said about the Charismatic Renewal, is that it brought about a renewed interest in the pneumatic life of the Church and the dynamics of fellowship. It needs to be admitted that perhaps prior to the said renewal in the CPSA, nothing much was taught and said about the role of the Spirit beyond the rites of initiation and the pneumatological references evident in the *anaphora*. The recognition of the mystical models of the Church with their characteristic emphasis on the pneumatic dimension in the Church will in my view bring about a re-appraisal of the charismatic renewal as yet another movement which, in spite of its abuses and distortions, nevertheless sought to remind the Church that the Spirit was not only to be recognised in the said liturgical rites, but S/he is a norm according to which the Church is expected to live.

5.6.4 THE CHURCH AND THE HIV/AIDS PANDEMIC.

The Southern African context provides the CPSA with many challenges in the twenty-first century. One such challenge is the HIV/AIDS pandemic, which in South Africa alone has reduced the average life expectancy from 62 years to 40 (Ndungane 2000:1). The enormity of the challenge posed by the disease is such that it requires an extensive

networking to combat it effectively. Archbishop Ndungane speaking at the World Aids Day Summit at the White House on the 1st of November 2000 notes that, “The recent e-Praxis Inter-Religious e-mail Conference recognise that HIV/AIDS is now too pervasive and too deeply embedded in society to be “managed” through top-down public health approaches alone” (Ndungane 2000:3)

I want to argue that this same comment Ndungane makes with regard to top-down approaches in public health policies used to fight HIV/AIDS, can also be used to indict ecclesiologies which use a top down approach in their attempts to fight the pandemic. That is, in order for the Church to participate meaningfully in this campaign it is imperative that the local congregation be spurred to action. In fact, it is the faith of the local community which must engage meaningfully with its context and begin to devise ways and means of combating the scourge of HIV/AIDS. This is where mystical models of the Church with their emphasis on the local congregation and fellowship will come in handy for the CPSA. In fact it is quite possible that while in the ecclesiastical hierarchy one hears excellent prophetic statements on the problem of AIDS, quite the opposite may be taking place in the local situation where real human pain and suffering as a result of the disease is being experienced in all its horror. It is quite possible that in the local situation where the war needs to be waged with all earnestness, the enormity of the challenge creates helplessness and fear with the result that people become both numb and indifferent about the pandemic.

In what ways can an emphasis on mystical models of the Church help the CPSA respond effectively to the challenge of the disease? In the mystical models of the Church there is an insistence on the mystical presence of God with which the Church is imbued. In this sense the innermost nature of the Church consists of the divine self gift. This same mystery of God indwelling the Church does not only sustain the community of faith, but it also works through it as it carries out its mission in the world. In this sense, every congregation and not only the “Province” or “Diocese” is a meaningful expression of God’s Church which in the power of the Spirit engages in the *Missio Dei* in its particular

context. I want to argue therefore that it is the rediscovery of the value of the local congregation as an important ecclesial unit which will enable the CPSA among other things to respond and network effectively with other role players in the fight against AIDS.⁸

5.7 CONCLUSION.

The present chapter has revealed a few things in relation to this study. We started with a general description of the concept ‘paradigm’ and eventually conceded that in this study it is used as synonymous with example. We proceeded and attempted to relate the concept to the hermeneutics of faith and realised that such a relationship can be discerned right from the doctrine of atonement to which the Church’s existence owes her origin through to the unfolding history of theology as a discipline. We argued for an example that the exemplarist understanding of the atonement is a classical example of how the notion of paradigms illumines our understanding of salvation.

Having described briefly the nature of the CPSA as a contemporary example of a redemptive community, we continued to identify paradigmatic examples in Küng’s ecclesiology and related them to certain aspects of this Church. We concluded that the bias of faith as a hermeneutical starting point theology will privilege the Scriptures as the main source for theologising. By seeking to emulate Küng’s example we realized that the CPSA has to develop an understanding of its context and in so doing, seek to account in its ecclesiology for the interface that traditional Anglican piety creates with African culture. In the context of such a realisation, we also identified how the Scriptures can enrich contemporary endeavors in both inculturation and piety. For this reason we concluded that training in exegesis should not be considered a preserve of the clergy. We also raised the question of faith vis-a-vis the Church’s prophetic ministry in South Africa

⁸ The most recent Provincial Synod of the CPSA (September 2002), has approved a budget of 22,5 million rand allocated for its mission against AIDS. Provincial Synod itself has not stated how the money is to be allocated and used. However, it will be inadequate if there is no substantial amount of money which is directly given to the parishes or congregations already involved at the grass root level in the fight against AIDS. The possibility that this money is so distributed that it services the structures at a higher level without any impact on the local congregation will need to be avoided.

post 1994. In this instance we concluded that mystical models of the Church will enable the Church to deal effectively with such challenges as the HIV/AIDS pandemic, and also help the Church to discover its prophetic role in a post-apartheid South Africa.

The foregoing analysis therefore leads one to conclude that K  ng's ecclesiology offers the CPSA clear and useful paradigmatic examples for emulation. The following chapter therefore will be a comprehensive general conclusion of the entire thesis, and will at the same time, identify areas for further work.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY AND PROSPECTS FOR FURTHER WORK.

6.1 INTRODUCTION.

The present inquiry has unveiled a number of issues regarding the ecclesiology of Hans Küng. This chapter in particular will seek to present a summary of what has happened thus far in the course of our analysis. Concurrent with this task of summarizing the findings, the chapter will also identify issues for further work. That is, one will attempt to raise some themes in the context of this study which may require further research. Lastly, I will also make some conclusions.

6.2 IN RETROSPECT.

Subsequent to the introductory chapter, the second section of the thesis sought to analyse Hans Küng's use of faith as an overriding methodological rationale for his theology. To demonstrate this the chapter began by introducing the concept itself, delineating it by describing its fundamental nature and distinguishing features. The explanation of the concept did not only help one to avoid speaking about a central principle in the abstract, but it further demonstrated the actual perspective from which it is used in the thesis. This was considered necessary because, among other things, the description of the concept would ultimately enable one to substantiate claims that the theologian under consideration offers some patterns for a contemporary redemptive community, which was the main concern of the previous chapter of the thesis.

It would be inadequate to simply ascribe the hermeneutics of faith as an interpretative standard in Küng's theology without looking briefly at history, identifying some examples yielded by the development of theology as a discipline. One discovered that even in those epochs where faith as an interpretative principle did not occupy centre stage, it was not totally supplanted by other hermeneutic tools. When we eventually came to the question of how Küng uses faith as a hermeneutical principle in his

ecclesiology, we highlighted two fundamental issues. On the one hand, we observed that Küng as a result of the nature of his hermeneutics deliberately links the ultimate origins of the Church with the Christ event, an event whose efficacy and relevance is made accessible by the faith of the believing community. On the other hand we noted that Küng regards the Church as an object of faith because it is a reality which is constantly acted upon by the Spirit of God who sustains her and creates fellowship among the faithful. However, the fact that faith is used by Küng in conjunction with another subordinated interpretative tool of historical criticism as well as with other theological sources, avoids the possibility of his theology being turned into a Fideism.

The third chapter of the thesis attended to the question of how the faith of the community acts as an overriding principle in Hans Küng's ecclesiology and as a result shapes his understanding of the fundamental structure of the Church. In this chapter therefore, we underscored the value of responding to God's call in Christ for the formation of the Church. After considering some of the factors which contribute to the complex nature of the reality called Church, we came into a conclusion that models of the Church can be very useful tools for studying Church. In the course of this analysis we insisted that models are not exhaustive but only lay bare to the inquirer particular aspects of the redemptive community. To this extent we observed that not even Biblically excogitated models can claim being comprehensive in their presentation of the Church. For this reason they, like all ecclesiological models, are open-ended. We then turned our attention to an analysis of the actual mystical models that Küng uses to describe the nature of the Church. Taking particular cognisance of the overriding theological rationale in his ecclesiology, we highlighted in the context of this analysis how the faith of the community, shapes his understanding of the Church as, the Body of Christ, People of God and Temple of the Spirit and also how the notion of *diakonia* pervades Küng's understanding of the nature of ecclesiastical office. Subsequent to this, we noted how Küng's overriding theological principle influences his particular understanding of the marks of the Church.

The next chapter was a careful evaluation of some aspects of Küng's theology. We realised that there are both strengths and weaknesses with the hermeneutical position Küng operates from. To arrive at this conviction, we first highlighted the way in which Scripture is understood and used as a theological source by the theologian. The influence of Vatican II both in terms of methodology and use of this theological source was also noted in the chapter. Another important observation made in the course of this evaluation was the presence of strong ecumenical and missionary overtones in Küng's ecclesiology. The last section of the chapter focused on the weaknesses identified in Küng's theology. The rationale for doing such a critique was that we wanted to avoid claiming that Küng has the last word on the subject, in as much as he has some paradigms worth emulating in the present Church. To this extent we realized that fundamental paradigmatic examples cannot be obtained through a naive uncritical evaluation of a theological position. We noted that an overemphasized hermeneutics of faith has the tendency to ignore that the Church, as an event taking place in history, is open to be studied and criticized by others operating from a completely different hermeneutical position. We also concluded that in as much as Küng's theology uses Scripture quite extensively in its formulations, he seems to have a special preference for Paul. For this reason he can be challenged that there is a sense in which his use of this theological source is eclectic. An observation was also made regarding Küng's choice of Biblical models. To this extent we concluded that they sometimes have the tendency to speak about a world not familiar to twentieth century minds, and for this reason their heuristic function is undermined. We noted that mystical models in particular are not very clear about the relationship existing between the spiritual and the visible aspects of the Church. We also noted the inherent danger of deifying the Church whenever they are used. As a critique of the scholar, we also raised an issue about the possibility of the hermeneutics of faith getting hijacked by the personality of the theologian.

The penultimate section of our analysis, (chapter 5) attended to the second primary task of this thesis by attempting to identify the actual paradigms yielded by our inquiry into the nature of Küng's ecclesiology, while not withstanding the alleged weaknesses

inherent in Küng's hermeneutical position. The first set of examples were clearly concerned with the paradigmatic nature of the hermeneutics of faith as an overriding principle in authentic and responsible theologising. The chapter noted the fact that a theology operating from a hermeneutics of faith will inevitably privilege Scripture as an important source for theologising about the Church. We also noted how the CPSA learns from Küng to engage with its context responsibly, and in so doing seek to account for the interface African culture creates with Anglican Spirituality and theologising. We have also noted a number of other contextual realities where the CPSA will be able to engage effectively if it takes its cue from the way Küng does his theology. To this extent we observed how the CPSA can learn from Küng's theology about such things as its prophetic ministry in a post-apartheid era in South Africa, the discovery of the role of lay people in the Church, the ability of the Church to face the AIDS pandemic etc.

6.3 CONCLUSIONS.

There are some important conclusions therefore that one can make based on the foregoing analysis of Küng's theology of the 1960's. The first conclusion concerns the nature of his hermeneutics. Küng takes the faith of the community as an overriding interpretative principle for his ecclesiology. While history undoubtedly has a role in his hermeneutics, it is nonetheless subordinated under this principle and as such it is improper to speak of Küng's hermeneutics as a hermeneutics of faith and history. We can conclude that the use of faith as an interpretative standard is also supported by the history of the discipline called theology, which offers an inquirer a number of examples of theologians and theological traditions where faith was given a privileged position as an interpretative principle.

Secondly, the analysis undertaken in this thesis gives credence to a second conclusion with regard to Küng's theology. That is, the hermeneutics of faith as an overriding interpretative principle has a decisive and conspicuous role that it plays in shaping Hans Küng's ecclesiology under consideration. The faith of the community shapes his actual

understanding and explication thereof of the fundamental structure of the Church as a fellowship of believers.

Thirdly, there are undoubtedly important and specific paradigmatic themes that the theology of Hans Küng offers for a contemporary redemptive community, more particularly, the Church of the Province of Southern Africa. The hermeneutics of faith as an interpretative overriding principle has the ability to enhance not only the Church's self understanding, but also the ability of the contemporary Church to engage effectively with the issues characteristic to its context. There are also specific aspects of the CPSA's ecclesiology which can benefit enormously from certain paradigms offered by the theology of Hans Küng of the 1960's.

Fourthly, it needs to be noted however, that in as much as the hermeneutics of faith has a paradigmatic relevance for a contemporary redemptive community, it has its own strength and weaknesses. To this extent it cannot be advocated as a hermeneutical stance *par excellence*. There are other positions from which the Church can be analysed and criticised which may not necessarily take the bias of faith as a deciding factor. An overstatement of the hermeneutics of faith as the only decisive stance in studying the Church may sometimes turn out to be a reductionist overstatement, which neglects the relative nature of the phenomenon of truth.

6.4 AREAS FOR FURTHER STUDY AND RESEARCH.

The present study has also raised some interesting issues which may need further research and study. The said themes can be summarized as follows.:-

Every theologian does his/her theology within a particular context. We have seen in the earliest stages of our inquiry (chapter 1) the nature of Küng's early upbringing, more particularly, the democratic ideal within which he was brought up. This raises an important question. That is, to what extent can one's upbringing determine the choice of a methodological rationale for his/her theology? What aspects of Küng's early

upbringing can be said to have shaped his theological methodology, more particularly, the use of the faith of the community as an interpretative methodological principle?

The other theme which may need attention from students of theology is to seek to identify the kind of seminal influence Küng has on others as a theologian. For instance, it may be that the Latin American Liberation theology, with its characteristic emphasis on the local congregation, will at closer scrutiny, depict some influence from the Swiss scholar. It remains therefore a subject of research to account for such a link if there is any.

For this reason it can be concluded that while the present inquiry into the nature of Hans Küng's ecclesiology of the 1960's yields some important lessons for our contemporary theologising about the Church in the South African context, his theology also offers us challenges for further work in the area of ecclesiology in our own situation.

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