

**Identification of Problems and Possible Solutions in Communicating the
Gospel to the Saramaccan Maroons of the Upper Suriname River**

By

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*The opinions expressed in this thesis do not necessary reflect the views of the
South African Theological Seminary.*

DECLARATION

I hereby acknowledge that the work contained in this thesis is my own original work and has not previously in its entirety or in part been submitted to any other academic institution for degree purposes.

Major Kervin C. Harry

February 15, 2013

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Kervin C. Harry

ABSTRACT

The Republic of Suriname is one of the most culturally diverse countries on the continent of South America, situated on the North Eastern coast of South America. It possesses culturally rich districts and is a country that is very proud country of its heritage. There are nine Maroon tribes, who are descendants of African slaves who ran away from the plantations after being taken away from Africa during the slave-trading era. The Maroons have preserved their traditional way of life, and are fully engaged in the socio-economic development of the Republic of Suriname; in particular, it's interior. The Saramaccan Maroons are at a spiritual crossroads. This thesis looks at "The Problems and Possible Solutions in Communicating the Gospel to the Saramaccan People of the Upper Suriname River." This thesis will discuss the problems faced by missionaries. Among other things, this thesis will research some of the practices used by missionaries, in view of the beliefs and cultural practices of the Maroons' society. It will suggest ways in which the gospel can be communicated effectively to the Saramaccan Maroons. The thesis looks at the local Churches and their role in working amongst the Saramaccan Maroons and considers the role of Christian workers amongst Maroons. The thesis considers the place of a theology of mission in the modern approach to communicating the gospel to the Saramaccan Maroons. The thesis addresses the issues of adequate spiritual, linguistic, and cultural preparation for missionaries, and argues that, with appropriate strategies, foreign missionaries can indeed play a part, alongside local missionaries in the task of gospel proclamation.

Kervin C. Harry

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION.....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iii
ABSTRACT	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS	v
TABLE OF CHARTS AND DIAGRAMS	v
CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 THE ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED	1
1.2 THE SPIRITUAL CHALLENGE	1
1.3 PERSONAL REASONS FOR UNDERTAKING THIS STUDY.....	2
1.3.1 A Call to Suriname	2
1.3.2 Becoming involved with the Saramaccan Maroons.....	2
1.4 A BRIEF HISTORY OF SURINAME	2
1.5 SURINAME: A MULTI-RELIGIOUS NATION	3
1.6 A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO SARAMACCAN MAROONS.....	6
1.6.1 Introduction	6
1.6.2 Religious Beliefs of the Saramaccan Maroons.....	7
1.6.3 Religious Practitioners.	8
1.6.4 Saramaccan Village Composition.....	8
1.6.5 Polygamy, Marriage and Divorce among the Saramaccan	9
1.6.6 Brief History of Religious work by Missionaries	11
1.7 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY	13
1.7.1 Objectives.....	13
1.7.2 Methodology.....	13

1.8 SUMMARY OF PURPOSE STATEMENT	14
CHAPTER 2. A BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION OF MISSION WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO CONTINUITY AND DISCONTINUITY.....	13
2.1 MISSIOLOGY AS THEOLOGICAL DISCIPLINE	13
2.1.1 The Theological nature of missiology.....	13
2.1.2. The place of missiology within theology	14
2.2 Missiology and Missio Dei	16
2.2.1 Analysis of the Great Commission	19
2.2.2. Missiological Conclusions	20
2.2.3 Trinitarian understanding of the Missio Dei	23
2.4 THEOLOGY OF MISSION AND THE TASK OF CONTEXTUALIZING ..	25
2.4.1 Contextualization.....	29
2.4.2 The Relevance of Paul's Method	31
2.5 A BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION OF MISSION	33
2.6 THE OLD TESTAMENT AS THE BASIS FOR MISSION	37
2.7 THE NEW TESTAMENT IS BASIC FOR MISSION.....	40
2.8 CONTINUITY AND DISCONTINUITY	42
2.8.1 Continuity of aspects of African Traditional Beliefs in Christianity	42
2.8.2 Definition of Syncretism	46
2.8.3 Discontinuity of the Mission of God in African Traditional Beliefs.....	47
2.8.4. Continuity and Discontinuity seen through the Great Commission .	48
2.8.5 Consequences of Continuity and Discontinuity	49
2.9 CONCEPT OF CULTURE	51
2.9.1 The Gospel and the Cultures	52
2.9.2 The Cultural Motive	53
2.10 CONCLUSION.....	56

CHAPTER 3: THE CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS PROBLEMS FACING MISSION WORK AMONG THE MAROON OF THE UPPER SURINAME RIVER	58
3.1 A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE MAROONS OF THE UPPER SURINAME RIVER	58
3.1.1 The Upper Suriname River	58
3.1.2. Saramaccan Social Setting	61
3.1.3 Political Organization and Social Control	63
3.1.4 Livelihood Strategies	63
3.2. AN OVERVIEW OF AFRICAN TRADITIONAL RELIGION.	64
3.2.1 Primary Beliefs	64
3.2.2. The personal Creator –God	65
3.2.3 Spirits and Ghosts	66
3.2.4 Ancestor Worship	66
3.2.5 What is Winti?	72
3.3. EMPIRICAL RESEARCH: INTERVIEWEES	75
3.3.1 Empirical Research: The interview	76
3.3.2 Questions	76
Interviewee	79
3.4 INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	82
3.5 THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHRISTIANITY IN THE UPPER SURINAME RIVER AREA	88
3.5.1 The Moravian Mission to the Saramaccans	88
3.5.2 The Roman Catholic Mission to the Saramaccans	91
3.5.3. Evangelical (Full Gospel) Churches Missions to the Saramaccans	92
3.5.4 The Outcome of Missions among the Saramaccan Maroons	93
3.5.5 Conclusion	96

CHAPTER 4: TRANSFER OF EVANGELICAL TRUTHS VIA CORRECT CULTURAL INTERPRETATIONS.....	97
4.1 INTRODUCTION	98
4.2. THE ROLE OF FOREIGN AND LOCAL MISSIONARIES	98
4.3. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GOD AND CULTURE	101
4.3.1 Paul's Theology of Mission	102
4.3.2 God the Originator of Culture?	105
4.3.3 God Against Culture Position	106
4.3.4. God Above Culture Position	108
4.3.5 Christ transform culture.....	109
4.3.6. Brief Definition of Culture	111
4.4 ETHNOCENTRIC AND CULTURAL RELATIVISM	113
4.5 THE MISSIONARY ATTITUDE TO NON-CHRISTIAN RELIGIONS.....	116
4.5.1 Bridging the Gap between the Gospel Message and Cultural Settings	117
4.5.2. Bible Translation an Integral part of Communicating the Gospel to the Maroons' culture.	118
4.6 THE MISSIONARY ADJUSTING TO CULTURAL DIFFERENCES.....	119
4.6.1 The meaning of World-View.....	120
4.6.2. The Missionary Contextualization and Acculturation Process.....	121
4.7 COMMUNICATING THE GOSPEL OF JESUS TO AFRICAN TRADITIONAL BELIEF SYSTEMS	127
4.7.1 Communicating The Gospel to Saramaccan Maroons.....	129
4.7.2. Biblical Perspective on Saramaccan African Traditional Beliefs and Practices	134
4.7.3. Primary Objectives in Communicating the Gospel to Maroons	135
4.8 CONCLUSION.....	137
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	139

5.1 SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS	139
5.2. RECOMMENDATIONS	141
APPENDIX A: Research Questionnaire.....	146
APPENDIX B: MAP OF THE REPUBLIC OF SURINAME	147
Bibliography	148

TABLE OF CHARTS AND DIAGRAMS

Table 1 Religion in Suriname	4
Table 2 Population of District Sipaliwini	4
Table 3 Population of District Brokopondo	5
Table 4 Villages visited with Churches and without Churches	77
Table 5 Chart of Attitude towards attending church in selected villages	78
Table 6 Preferred denomination in villages visited	79

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 THE ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED

A particular issue I will be addressing in this thesis is: In what way can the Christian message be conveyed to the Saramaccan Maroons, who are characterized by ancestral beliefs, practices, and closed cultural relationships?

What sort of methodology is suitable for the transferring of theological concepts to cultural aspects, which in turn influence Saramaccan the religious issues?

Do the Roman Catholic and Moravian Churches use an acceptable approach that can be adapted and used by other Churches?

1.2 THE SPIRITUAL CHALLENGE

The responsibility of proclaiming the gospel to the Saramaccan Maroons lies primarily with the Surinamese Church. However, unlike the Roman Catholic and Moravian Churches, other Christian movements such as the Full Gospel and Pentecostals who have shown disrespect for their cultural way of living by utterly condemning them. The Saramaccan Maroons, in response to them, resisted many attempts to be converted to Christianity. The local Church must respect and value the culture of the Saramaccan Maroons. The Roman Catholic and Moravian Churches found common ground where they could contextualise and communicate the gospel effectively to Saramaccan in villages along the banks of the upper Suriname River. This will be expanded on in more depth in Chapter 3 of this thesis. Such a study is of relevance not only to foreign missionaries who are called to go to Suriname, but is also relevant for those in Suriname who are called to communicate the gospel to the Saramaccan Maroons.

1.3 PERSONAL REASONS FOR UNDERTAKING THIS STUDY

1.3.1 A Call to Suriname

I have strong personal reasons for my choice of this topic. I was called to serve in Paramaribo Suriname some fourteen years ago, and having served as the country's overseer for my Church, The Salvation Army, the Saramaccan Maroons have become the people of my heart. During the years of 1992-2008, my wife and I supervised work, which included a community in Paramaribo called "Pontbuiten". This is a community with a large population of Saramaccans who have left their village in the interior and relocated to Paramaribo. We began to study their culture and understood that our approach must be relevant in order to communicate the gospel to them effectively.

1.3.2 Becoming involved with the Saramaccan Maroons

In 2006, I visited several Saramaccan villages along the upper Suriname River area and there I witnessed some of their religious and cultural practices and communal way of life. I revisited some of those villages during the summer of 2008. I am of the opinion that there needs to be an acceptable way of communicating the gospel to a people whose belief systems incorporate many pantheons of African origin. With the encouragement of my wife, I determined to write this thesis with one aim and purpose. The thesis is aimed primarily at the academic community, but also at missionaries in order to help them identify problems and find possible solutions in communicating the gospel to the Saramaccan Maroons of the upper Suriname River area.

1.4 A BRIEF HISTORY OF SURINAME

Troon (2008), in his historical account of Suriname, describes it as a small country located on the north-eastern coast of South America which lies between the former British colony of Guyana on the west and French Guyana located on the eastern side of Suriname. Suriname has an area of 63,039 sq. miles. Paramaribo, the capital city, is located on the northern coastal plains of the country. According to the Suriname census office, the total population of

Suriname is 492,829 as recorded in the census of 2004 from the government office of Statistics.

Troon (2008) recorded that long before the arrival of Christopher Columbus in 1498, the Arawak and Carib Natives inhabited the region. Spain officially claimed the area in 1593, but Portuguese and Spanish explorers of the time gave the area little attention. Dutch settlement began in 1616 at the mouths of several rivers between present-day Georgetown, Guyana, and Cayenne, French Guiana.

Suriname became a Dutch colony in 1667. The new colony, Dutch Guiana, struggled in its early development. Several reasons were given for this; one of which was Holland's preoccupation with its more profitable East Indian territories. Violent conflict between whites and native tribes, and frequent uprisings by the imported slave population, who was often treated with extraordinary cruelty, were some of the reasons that made it very difficult for the then colony to develop. Many slaves fled to the interior, where they maintained a West African culture and established the five major Maroon Negro tribes in existence today: the *Ndjuka*, *Saramaccaner*, *Matuwari*, *Paramaccaner*, and *Kwinti*. Early settlers such as the Portuguese and Spanish explorers were not at all interested in the development of Suriname; they paid very little attention to it to the country.

1.5 SURINAME: A MULTI-RELIGIOUS NATION

Suriname is, without question, the largest multi-religious nation in the Caribbean community. Suriname is home to diverse religious and ethnic groups. The recent census data, taken from the Suriname Statistic Bureau website illustrates that Christianity is the majority religion in Suriname.

Table 1 Religion in Suriname

Christianity	40.7%
Hindu	19.9%
Islam	13.5%
Traditional Religion	5.8%
No Religion	4.4%
Unknown	15.7%

Table 2 Population of District Sipaliwini

Men 00-14	7040
Men 15-59	7264
Men 60+	1119
Age unknown	708
Total Men	16131
Women 00-14	6875
Women 15-59	8815
Women 60+	1741
Age Unknown	550
Total Women	17981
Total Population in District	34112
Unknown Sex	24

Table 3 Population of District Brokopondo

Men 00-14	2650
Men 15-59	4297
Men 60+	318
Men – Age Unknown	306
Total Men	7571
Women 00-14	2619
Women 15-59	3441
Women 60+	437
Women – Age Unknown	125
Total Women	6622
Total Population in District	14192
Unknown Sex	22

General Office for Statistics Suriname 2004

Figures in tables two and three are based on the census taken during 2004 in Suriname. They show the population of the two main Saramaccan districts located in the upper Suriname River area. There are also Ndyukas, one of the Maroon groups, living in both districts, so these figures may include Ndyukas as well. The total population in the two districts is 48,304. The Saramaccan make up approximately 47% per cent of the population between the two districts.

Mandryk (2010:791) reported that nearly half the population has little understanding of their faith and that Christianity and Spiritism are often mixed. This means that there is a high degree of traditionalism and syncretism being practised by most Saramaccan Maroons.

Van Velzen and Van Wetering (2004:13) made reference to the Saramaccans' cultural practices by suggesting that their belief systems embrace many ideologies, some of which are merely added as another pantheon. It is felt that Christianity almost never entirely replaces the native polytheism.

For example, Winti (“wind”) is a popular traditional indigenous religion practised by the Saramaccan Maroons of Suriname. It is a belief in a multitude of gods and spirits, who can be broadly classified into *Kromanti* (fierce healing spirits), *apuku* (malevolent forest spirits), *aisa* (earth spirits), *vodu* (boa constrictor spirits), and *aboma* (anaconda spirits), among others. The belief in snake-gods and serpents is a recurring religious theme in Winti. It is believed that these spirits possess the *bonuman* or *lukuman* (witchdoctors or spirit mediums, who may be men or women) and speak through them. The Saramaccan Maroons believe that these spirits are in consistent interaction with this world and actively intervene in the lives of the Saramaccan Maroons. The Maroons believe that these spirits require constant propitiation in the form of sacrifices and rituals, which include drumming, dances, and songs unique to each spirit.

Superstitious beliefs are widely prevalent in the Maroons’ culture. For example, one should not sit at the doorposts of a house at night since the spirits will not be able to enter the house. Another belief states that enormous strength is obtained by bathing in water containing a black thunderstone. It is believed that the darker the stone, the greater its potency. If the stone is sufficiently dark, the bather can become strong enough to kill another man with a single blow.

1.6 A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO SARAMACCAN MAROONS

The Saramaccan Maroons are descendants of African slaves brought to Suriname as plantation labourers from Africa. They ran away from the plantations and settled in forests of the interior in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. They developed special societies reflecting a blending of and adaptation to local conditions of various African sociocultural patterns, including strong native Amerindian influences in their culture (Price 1976:2-3).

1.6.1 Introduction

The Saramaccan community consists of twelve tribes. Jabini (n.d:62-63) maintains that they ran away from plantations shortly after their arrival in Suriname. The Matjau tribe was the first. They belonged to either the group of Captain Marshall (1630) or Immanuel Machado (1690). Price (1976: 35-36) says that there are six Maroon tribes existing in Suriname. He divides them into

two main groups based on their cultural and linguistic differences, as well as location: (1) the Eastern Tribes, consisting of the Djuka (Aucaner, Awka), the Aluku (Aluku Nenge, Boni), and the Paramaka (Paramacca); and (2) the Central Tribes, consisting of the Saramaccan, the Matawai, and the Kwinti.

The leader of the Saramaccans' community is the paramount chief, called *Gaanman*. During the early years, the Maroons survived by raiding plantations to find goods that they needed and women. The government tried to destroy them, but was unsuccessful. In order to prevent slaves from running away, the government instituted capital punishment for it in 1721. This, however, did not prevent other slaves from joining the Maroons. Today, there are 58 primary Saramaccan villages in Suriname (Jabini n.d:62-63).

1.6.2 Religious Beliefs of the Saramaccan Maroons.

Pansa (1993:23-28) discussed some of the religious beliefs and practices of the Saramaccan Maroons. The Maroons' world is filled with many superstitious beliefs, which have their roots in Africa. It is dominated by a wide range of supernatural beings, from localized forest spirits and gods that reside in the bodies of snakes, vultures, jaguars, and other animals to ancestors, river gods, and warrior spirits. Within these categories, each supernatural being is given a name, individualized, and given specific relationships to living people. They are intimately involved in the on-going events of daily living. These beings communicate with humans mainly through divination and spirit possession. *Kúnus* are the avenging spirits of people or gods who were offended and wronged during their lifetime and who pledged themselves to eternally torment the matrilineal descendants and close matrilineal relatives of their offender. Much of the Maroons' ritual life is devoted to their appeasement. The Saramaccan Maroons believe that all evil originates in human action: not only does each misfortune, illness, or death stem from a specific past misdeed, but every offence, whether against people or gods, ultimately have consequences. In addition, persons in enmity with each other, usually cast spells against each other. The ignoble acts of the dead intrude daily on the lives of the living; any illness or misfortune calls for divination, which quickly reveals the specific past

act that caused it. Rituals are performed in which the ancestors dance, the gods speak, and the world is '*once again made right*'.

1.6.3 Religious Practitioners.

During my visit to their communities, I observed that in the major villages, the clan-owned shrines serve large numbers of clients. The various categories of 'possession' gods and versions of minor divination are the preserve of individual specialists, who supervise rites and pass on their knowledge before death. Many Saramaccan Maroons have some kind of specialised ritual expertise, which they occasionally exercise, and for which they receive payment in cloth or rum. I have come to realize that these individual specialists are the driving force behind the Maroons' ideological progression, and therefore play an important role in preserving their culture.

Stephen (1998:55-56) explains the necessity of having such an important person officiating over the cultural religious functions of the Saramaccan Maroons. He believes that every religion should have a priest of some kind; his reasons are that it is important for reuniting man's relationship with nature, for herbal medical healing and for officiating as the spiritual leader of the community. I will say much more about the Saramaccan Maroons' spiritual leaders later in the thesis.

1.6.4 Saramaccan Village Composition

Price (1974:75) described the composition and residential structure of Saramaccans in their villages. I shall limit my discussion to village composition. Each Saramaccan is given the right to live permanently in a village. The village is considered his or her home, although he or she may not spend the majority of their time in that village. There are situations where women who married men from other villages may keep a home in their original village but spend most of their time living with their husband. They are permitted to return to their own village to remain for as long as they desire; for example in case of a divorce. Many Saramaccan Maroons received permanent residential status in villages because of their matrilineal descendants. There are situations where their ancestors owned many lands or the village itself and so they as descendants

own the right to these lands. There are several ways in which Maroons” may be associated to their villages. Besides those who are permanently affiliated with the village, there are those who are non-lineal residents and whose children can live permanently with them. This is often possible if they are related through a male ancestor who was or is the owner of the village (Price 1974:76).

Price (1974:79) expressed that this openness towards freedom and movement within a village is primarily because they believe that people should have freedom to choose where they want to live among the villages even though their ancestors may have come from a different village. A Saramaccan Maroon may dwell in any village he deems appropriate for him. However, the concern shared by many villagers is that such freedom of movement means some villages are not able to compete with others in terms of religious practices and enhanced political development because of the frequent moves by villagers to other areas. I will argue that while this sort of system encourages openness and expansion of the Saramaccans’ way of life, it also limits cohesiveness and close family relationship. Although a Saramaccan may have ties to a village, distant ties do not usually support access or influence on the part of a villager who seeks residence elsewhere. He or she has very little support and would always come against those who will seek to manipulate the system for their own advantage.

1.6.5 Polygamy, Marriage and Divorce among the Saramaccan

Price (1974:94-103) discussed the significance of marriage, polygamy and the causes of divorce in Saramaccan culture. The Saramaccan Maroons see polygamy as a form of marriage where one man is permitted to have two or more wives simultaneously. In a non-Christian Saramaccan community, polygamy is seen to be something of a privilege, with the man enjoying prestige in comparison with those living in monogamy. There are intra-village marriages within the culture; it is highly regarded as something, which provides an advantage for women who have to compete against co-wives from another village. The only main pitfall is that it becomes very complicated in providing genealogical statistics.

Polygamy is widespread in Saramaccan culture. Demographic factors such as birth rate, male-female ratio, age at marriage and residence have all contributed

to the spreading of polygamy. The popular belief is that there are more women than men, which makes polygamy unavoidable. Added to this, men spend long periods away from home, which is another reason for the high rate of polygamy.

Men are willing to accept the risks of long betrothal in order to marry a desirable wife. For example, when a mother of a specially favoured family is pregnant, someone is delegated to make a proposal on behalf of the desired family. Rituals are observed such as putting the hands on the belly of a pregnant woman and making promises such as, "if you are a girl, you will become the wife of my son", or, "if you are a boy, I will take you as a friend". Many rituals precede this initial act leading up to eventual marriage when the girl reaches puberty. The Saramaccan Maroons leaves no stone unturned in pursuing their desired goal.

Divorce occurs quite frequently. Many Saramaccan Maroons divorce and remarry several times. Polygamy is the primary cause of divorce. Price (1974:102) has calculated the mean length of marriages to be only four years and nine months and median lengths between four and five years. Therefore, for some men over sixty years old, Price has calculated the mean number of wives to be seven and for women by the age of fifty, the mean number of husbands would be four. It is not always easy to tell if a man has taken a new wife or is having an affair. There are frequent divorces and /or separations. There are also many life-long marriages. However, when we study Price's calculation and even if he were to reduce the number to half, the statistics would still be alarming. Interestingly, Saramaccan Maroons' culture has distinguished two distinct kind of divorce: one that is initiated by a man putting away a woman because of adultery and the other by mutual agreement. Price (1974:102) gives a general view of what occurs in their villages if there is infidelity in a marriage. There are two types of divorce and each requires a different response. For example, if a woman were caught in adultery, she would have breached customary laws. Such would call for a complex series of public reparations, while divorce by mutual agreement remains largely a private affair. In case of the latter, the wife who committed the adultery would be held responsible for the wrong against her husband. It also means that she could be subjected to a beating by his relatives or the paying of a fine. Humiliation is of a

lesser degree for the man who commits adultery. A woman is subjected to a greater humiliation than a man. A man committing adultery is seen to be committing a natural act. However, he may be subjected to beating and the paying of a fine. The implication is not the same as that of a woman who must bear the humiliation for committing such an act. The implication for missionary workers is that they must thoroughly research the social structure of the Saramaccan Maroons before attempting to communicate the gospel. Their social life in their villages is complicated and at the same time must be respected.

1.6.6 Brief History of Religious work by Missionaries

The quest to convert Saramaccan Maroons to Christianity and to denominational ideals was not void of confrontation between two main rivals, the Roman Catholic and the Moravian brothers. Vernooij (1996:167) explained that the first missionary movement to begin work amongst the Maroons were the Moravian brothers who arrived in Suriname in 1735, but started their work among the Saramaccan Maroons in 1765. The Roman Catholic missionaries were not the first to start work amongst the Maroons. Vernooij (1996:167-168) maintained that the two main Christian denominations working among the Maroons confronted each other, and competed against each other by forcing their own values and norms on the Maroons as standards by which they expected the Maroons to live. Their actions confused the Maroons, who found themselves confused because of the behaviour of the two mission institutions. Postma (1997:313) recorded some important roles the Moravian missionaries played in converting Suriname's slaves and their descendants. The missionaries were very few in numbers causing their activities to be concentrated mainly in Paramaribo and in missions among free Maroons and indigenous Indian communities. The Moravian brothers gained the support of government authorities to proselytize among the slaves on several plantations. Their primary roles were to provide pastoral care, teaching, and some aspects of health care. The mission among the Maroons was not without confrontation with the Roman Catholic missionaries.

The Moravians insisted that the Saramaccan Maroons should live according to a stricter moral code of behaviour in a marital and sexual relationship after they received salvation from God. In addition to their strict code of conduct, the Moravians were less tolerant than their Catholic counterpart. Postma (1997:313-314), reported the Moravians were not without blame regarding racial matters. They were also infected with cultural biases and had very little regard for non-European Surinamese. They viewed them as inferior although they did so with pity and valued them as human beings. Vernooij (1996:168-169) also argued that the Roman Catholic missionaries had belittled the intelligence of the Maroons. They said that the Saramaccan Maroons were not capable of receiving the gospel because they were too rebellious in attitude and deviant in their norms. Another problem affecting the integral relationship between priests and Maroons was that the priests were monastic people; they had isolated themselves in a monasteries living separately from the rest of the community. The Roman Catholic and Moravian Churches were engulfed in a competitive rivalry. According to Vernooij (1996:168-169) the two churches were very competitive in trying to find members. The Roman Catholics built a mission station at Albina in 1895. The first priest, Father F. Lemmens, travelled back and forth along the river and visited the Paramaccan Negroes and the Ndyuka. Vernooij (1996:169) gives evidence of the fact that the Moravian missionaries were also making progress amongst the Paramaccans. The *Graanman*¹ of the Paramaccan Maroons was converted and baptized by the Moravians. The Roman Catholic Church only settled among the Saramaccans in the early 1920's. From the account of Vernooij, it is evident that the two main Christian Churches with years of missionary work among the Maroons, created division and confusion because they introduced rivalry between the two denominations. They presented the gospel according to their denominational standards and norms. This presented further problems in bringing the gospel to the Saramaccan Maroons. The division between the two denominations has caused

¹ A Graanman is the paramount chief of a Maroon tribe.

a split in the interior and has opened the door for the introduction of smaller and unconventional Christian denominations that not only rival the two main Christian Churches, but has also created confusion among the Saramaccan Maroons. I shall be discussing this problem in depth in my third chapter.

1.7 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

1.7.1 Objectives

The first objective is to identify the physical environments of the Saramaccan Maroons, for example in their homes and places of work, and their social context in order to understand their customs and manners. The second objective is to identify the problems in communicating the gospel and recommending the best ways to evangelise the Saramaccan Maroons without disrespecting them as a people. Simply put, the dilemma is; how can a group of biblical believers grow and witness for Jesus, yet remain authentic, active members of their overtly non-Christian culture?

1.7.2 Methodology

In order to achieve the objective, extensive research will be done, using books, articles, and face-to-face interviews, emails, and my own personal experience in Suriname. A questionnaire will be used to gather information from students of the University of Suriname, scholars, and pastors from various Moravian Churches. Data will be collected from the Roman Catholic Library. The questionnaire to be distributed to Christians and non-Christians will be designed to solicit information about the problems affecting the evangelization of Saramaccan Maroons in upper Suriname River. The thrust of the questionnaire is, "How best can the gospel be conveyed to the Saramaccan Maroons, taking into consideration their cultural practices?" I will be sending out twenty questionnaires to twenty persons, both male and female, from a variety of age groups in Suriname. In writing the thesis, my academic interpretation of the data will respect the cultural and the contextual practices of the Saramaccan Maroons.

1.8 SUMMARY OF PURPOSE STATEMENT

Communicating the gospel to the Saramaccan Maroons is faced with many challenges; so much so, that efforts by Christian missionaries have been of limited success. Missionaries have fallen prey to miscommunication and to misunderstanding of the Maroons. Despite attempts to break through those barriers by offering social services, the Saramaccan Maroons are as forbidding today as they have been in the past. Missionaries often openly disrespect their religious practices instead of gently seeking ways to understand the Maroons' social structure and cultural behaviour. The hypothesis I hope to test in the thesis is: *It is anticipated that the outcome of the study will reveal that cultural and religious practices of the Maroons must be studied and respected in order to determine effective communication methods to evangelize them, without syncretism or watering down the gospel.*

CHAPTER 2. A BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION OF MISSION WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO CONTINUITY AND DISCONTINUITY.

2.1 MISSIOLOGY AS THEOLOGICAL DISCIPLINE

2.1.1 The Theological nature of missiology

This chapter will focus on the discipline of missiology and its relationship to the salvation mission and theological education. It is my conviction that the Holy Bible is a book about theology. It reveals God in action on behalf of a person's redemption. God's intention is to save sinners from sin and its consequence. Hence, the use of missionary terms must be explained. I will be reviewing various categories of literature in order to explain the various terminologies associated to the *Missio Dei*. Jesus Christ is the centre and starting point of mission. The view taken in this thesis is that mission must be interpreted Christocentrically. This chapter will discuss missiology as a discipline and the different uses of the term missiology. It will explain the Mission of God, *Missio Dei*, as the means by which the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are being glorified.

Missiology as a discipline is primarily concerned with communicating the gospel and advancing God's mission on earth. It is a study of the interplay between mission and Christian theology (Escobar 2001:54). The missiological task usually places emphasis on two areas, "the concrete situation of life" and "the communication of the gospel." These two contexts weight heavily on the challenge of contextualization (Bevan 1992:11; Bosch 1991:425).

Terry, Smith and Anderson (1998:1) confirmed that until recently many classical theologians considered missiology to be a second-class study. They further concluded that with the exception of experts in missions themselves, few had considered missions study as a necessary part of the theological encyclopaedia.

Verkuyl (1978:5) says "missiology is the study of the salvation activities of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit throughout the world geared toward bringing the

kingdom of God into existence," and "missiology's task in every age is to investigate scientifically and critically, the presuppositions, motives, structures, methods, patterns of cooperation, and leadership which the churches bring to their mandate." As I review Verkuyl's definition of missiology, I believe that missiology causes members of the body of Christ to ask several questions relating to their role and purpose as part of the body of Christ. Christians should ask ourselves the following questions: "What is the chief end of mankind?" "What is our purpose?" "Does being a Christian alone fulfil the biblical mandate?"

Verkuyl (1978:5) will help us to understand and talk about what God is like. He refers to our understanding of God as discovered in our cultures and across cultures through our worship of God, our reading of the Scriptures and our engagement in mission. The Trinitarian God acts in concert with man to bring about a new creation in all cultures of the world. The unconditional love of God, revealed through the person of Jesus Christ is still evident today convicting sinners to repentance.

2.1.2. The place of missiology within theology

Missiology is theology thinking about the purpose of the Church. Missiology starts with thinking theologically about the mission of God and the purpose of the Church outside of itself. As such, it is part of theology and a dimension of ecclesiology. Since Christian mission is directed towards the world, missiology is also concerned with culture and with people of other faiths. Roxborough (2010:1) quoted Andrew Walls who said, "missiology is theology that takes culture seriously." Worship is about acknowledging God and seeking his help and direction. We seek Jesus and ask him to teach us to pray. Worship inspires mission and engagement in mission drives us to prayer and worship

Van Rheeën (1996:137) wrote that "missiology is made up of three interdependent disciplines: theology, the social sciences, and strategy." Verkuyl and Van Rheeën's definition of missiology challenges us to think about the purpose of the Church. Missiology starts with thinking theologically about the mission of God and the purpose of the Church outside of itself. As such, it is part of theology and a dimension of ecclesiology. Missiology affects culture; that

is, it studies culture and considers culture. A person cannot exist without the supreme God. It is through Him that man exists and continues to live. Since Christian mission is directed towards the world, missiology is also concerned with culture. Gailey and Culbertson (2007:9) described missiology as a conscious reflection upon the practice of Christian mission, which draws on several academic disciplines. For example, missiology depends on materials from biblical studies, church history, theology and cultural anthropology. Ross (n.d.) defines missiology as the science of church missions. She described it as an area of practical theology that is concerned only with the work of spreading the gospel. Missiology can be interpreted as a discipline that constantly challenges the relationship of humanity with God, which seeks to explore new ways in practical terms to spread the gospel. Therefore, it is true to say that missiology challenges the practice of mission. Rogers (2003: 37-38) explained clearly when he presented Jesus as the central focus of missiology in thought and action. He stated:

As we focus on the Word, we focus specifically on Jesus as God the Word who became God the Son, presenting us with the most complete expression of God available to humankind. As we study the church, we focus on the body of Christ, and we focus on past missions efforts, reflecting on how to be more effective in the future. As we study the world, we seek to understand other peoples, learning how to communicate to them in ways that are culturally appropriate.

It is my opinion that missiology as a theological discipline is responsible for the proper use of methods in spreading the gospel to the unreached people in diverse parts of the world. Therefore, missiology has a missionary responsibility, which is to ensure that the mission of God is done.

Mission is what the church does in collaboration with God in accomplishing his mission in the world. Mission is the church's primary purpose, it is going into the world to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ. This is the central focus of the Church of God (Rogers 2003:18-19).

2.2 Missiology and Missio Dei

In *The Concise Dictionary of the Christian Mission*, Gerald Anderson defined theology of mission as, “concerned with the basic presuppositions and underlying principles which determine, from the standpoint of Christian faith, the motives, methods, strategy and goals of the Christian world mission” (Neil, Anderson and Goodwin, eds: 1971:594).

Van Engen (2004:45) argued that the theology of mission has to do with three areas, (A); the ministry and mission of the church (B); specific activities carried out in particular times and places (C). 2 reflection about God. Van Engen goes on to argue that theology of mission seeks to understand God’s mission, God’s intentions and purposes, God’s use of human instruments in God’s mission, and God’s working through God’s People in God’s world. Theology of mission deals with all the traditional theological themes of systematic theology — but it does so in a way that differs from how systematic theologians have worked down through the centuries. Missiology should constantly challenge theology to be real and lived. Missiology should constantly challenge theology to be real and lived.

Ross (2013) argues that as mission is ultimately about the relationship of God with humanity, missiology challenges theology to explore this in practical terms so that our theology becomes a theology of the road, not a theology of the balcony. Her arguments is inconsistent with Van Engen’s argument that Theology of mission is a response to God’s mission in the world. Van Engen believed that Christians ought to be doing mission as part of God’s plan to save mankind. Ross sees missiology supporting the mission by providing practical support effectively supporting the missionary in carrying out the mission task. In other words missiology demands a theology that is applied in our Christian journey and not just a theology that observes from above.

Ross (2013) suggests further that missiology will also challenge the theology of mission by examining its foundations, aims, attitudes, methods and models – not as an onlooker but as an insider.

Bosch (1991: 489-492) discussed this relationship further by suggesting that part of the problem with missiology and the reason for the lack of proactiveness

by the Church of God in carrying out his mission, was that only biblical studies and systematic theology does very little in fulfilling the purpose of God as this division does not include practical theology. Practical theology is rarely mentioned when the challenges connected with engaging culture and religion is discussed. Bosch felt that the demarcation of theology into discrete disciplines divorced these disciplines from missions. It failed to link subjects to the primary goal of missions. Bosch's view was that an absolute separation of theological disciplines from one another disconnected them from the life of the Church and purpose of God. Attempts at integration, which recognized the missionary dimension within all the theological disciplines, were theoretically promising, but in practice were frustrated by a lack of shared understanding about what such a goal required.

It is difficult to ignore the fact that there is a tension between missiology and mission. This will continue as long as missiologists continue to tell others what to do. This is not to say that there is not a place for missiology in fulfilling the mission of God. Missiology has some responsibility in engaging with religion and culture. Bosch (1991:492) says that missiology should be integrated with other theological disciplines because this model would take theology more seriously. However, he recognized that this idea could seriously affect the overall contribution of missiologists in fulfilling the mission of God. It is my opinion that missiology must find its place as an integrative element in the mission of God instead of attempting to a dominating force.

Bosch (1991:389) explains that there has been a shift towards a greater understanding of God and his purpose during the past half-century. During preceding centuries mission was understood in a variety of ways. The most common way in which the mission of God was explained was through soteriological terms (—) the doctrine of salvation, especially the Christian doctrines of salvation through Jesus Christ as the means by which individuals are saved from eternal damnation.

According to Verkuyl (1978:6-18) missiology may never become a substitute for action and participation. God calls for participants and volunteers in his mission. Missiology's goal is to provide support in each step of the way. If it sees its role

as doing anything other than participating, whether home or abroad, missiology has lost its purpose.

Terry, Smith and Anderson (1998:2) suggested that missiology connotes what happens when the mission of God comes into holy collision with the nature of a person; it describes the dynamic of man's nature. A changed person becomes the agent of God's mission when God's mission becomes the task of God's elected people. Therefore, a person's only purpose for being saved from sin is to fulfil God's mission. However, the Church continues to struggle with this concept of fulfilling God's mission. Bosch (1991:492) explained that the Church's understanding of mission is so distorted that it has been reduced to a mere task or branch of the church. Therefore, mission is not seen as the holistic goal of the Church, which is to save souls and to extend the kingdom of God. When this aspect is reduced, it is no longer seen as a discipline. Kaiser (2000:11-13) sees mission as an integral part of the Christian culture. He suggests that missiology relates to the Christian dimension and must be studied in that light. Bosch (1991:494) argues that there is a need for a missiological agenda for theology as opposed to a theological agenda for mission. He emphasized the fact that it is mission that must embrace theology, for mission must accompany theology; it is the only reason why it exists.

Verstraelen (1995:467) believes that missiology has the responsibility to lead. It must be the initiator and deciding factor as we deal with the challenges that face theology. He further contends that missiology will make sense as it faces the issues that affect every culture. Some of these issues are as follows:

1. Religious pluralism and religious fundamentalism
2. The issue of contextualization and global Christianity
3. The nature and purpose of the Church in representing God's kingdom spiritually
4. An eschatology of hope in the midst of a polarizing and decaying world.

It is my opinion that missiology seeks to help us to answer critical questions regarding human spirituality and how man should relate to it. In an age plagued with religious pluralism and paganism, missiology must seek to bring home the answers so that humankind can find direction to receiving the redeeming blood of Jesus Christ.

A great variety of names for the science of missions has been proposed and many of these names are in actual use. Ratzlaff (1991:211) wrote that the German missiologist Gustav Warneck (1834-1910) has been characterized as, “the founder not only of the German missiology but also of that of the Protestants.” As an educator of the Church on behalf of mission, he was praised for his “encyclopaedic knowledge of missions.” He became the “leader of the Germans’ mission life” and the “herald of a united, biblical mission”. Ratzlaff (1991:211) says that Warneck emphasized the need for the character of God to be the bed-rock of the Church’s mission. Missiology must be grounded on a sound interpretation of the Bible (—) both Old and New Testaments with an emphasis on the Church’s need for mission. The missions of the Church come only out of the mission of God.

Verkuyl (1978:1) comments that Abraham Kuyper suggested several names for missiology, which never caught on. Several terms were mentioned in Kuyper’s book that refer directly to missiology being the only way in which Christians are going to reach the unsaved people of this world. In his book *The Encyclopaedia of Sacred Theology*, Kuyper proposed the use of terms such as prosthetics, which means, “to add to the community”; auxanics, which means, “to multiply and spread out,” and halieutics, which means, “to fish for men.”

Verkuyl (1978:1) argues that use of the term prosthetics in its context, “to add to the community,” puts unjustifiable limits on the study of missiology. Missiology should not be limited to one method; instead, the discipline must continue to find ways for mission to be accomplished.

2.2.1 Analysis of the Great Commission

Bosch (1991:1-6) explains that as far back as in the 1950’s the word ‘mission’ has been used increasingly although it has very different meanings. Mission was being interpreted as missionaries being sent out to specific areas, persons in missionary work, what they did and organizations which send out missionaries to particular areas. Bosch seeks to clarify the meaning of mission as it relates to theology and the primary purpose of God, who is interested in saving lost souls from damnation. In a world that is becoming less interested in God, there is a greater need for mission to be understood and practised in the

right context. Burgess (2005:16-31) emphasized strongly that mission is not just to be seen or talked about.; it is making Christ known to unbelievers and it is the preparation of new converts to live out Christ's value according to the Scriptures. Converts are to evangelize and make disciples of Christ. The writer further suggests the missionary task must be combined with the Word of God and with theology and networking between churches and organizations for the effective communication of the gospel. However, God's work is not limited to the church or any particular person. Bosch (1991: 372-373) described mission as an activity in which the Church is immersed in the work of winning souls for God. The church can only be effective when it understands what mission is and how to express itself as the agent of mission. Being the agent of mission, the Church, as the agent of mission, must be able to relate to many cultures. God expects the church to spread the gospel to every culture of the world. God is in cooperation with man to fulfil the Great Commission. Missiology envisions man caught up in God's redemptive plan. Raiter (1998:11-24) says that the word "mission" is not to be found anywhere in the Bible. The word has been derived from a Latin word meaning to "send." However, the word "send" is commonly used in the New Testament directly linked to the missionary task. It expresses the reality of God in the Great Commission, to go and proclaim the gospel in the entire world. I concur that God has a divine purpose for all humankind, which he is carrying out through his redeemed people. God's purpose is to redeem the "whosoever will". To look further into the definition of missiology, I thought it might be beneficial to add my own definition before proceeding. When looking at the term "missiology", I see Missio Dei, the mission of God, incorporated into the biblical mandate, which is to evangelize every nation and culture. The entire body of Christ must completely express itself in mission.

2.2.2. Missiological Conclusions

Bosch (1991:9) described missiology as a branch of the discipline of Christian theology, which seeks to bring the gospel closer to the world. He wrote, "It seeks to look at the world from the perspective of commitment to the Christian faith."

Another interesting interpretation of the word missiology maintains that missiology is the conscious, intentional, on-going reflection on the doing of mission. Missiology mediates the relationship between mission and theology. Missiology is the theology of mission focusing on questions regarding Biblical foundation of mission, the systematic investigation of mission.

Bright (n.d.) in his article "What is the Great Commission?" explained that missiology is defined as the science of the cross-cultural communication of the Christian faith. The Lord Jesus gave a command, which is called the "Great Commission;" the command is to "Go into the entire world and preach the good news to all creation" (Mark 16:15). That command forms the root of missiology, and all missionary motifs. Missiology seeks to understand and explain biblical values for evangelism, and the role of the church in going and proclaiming the gospel to the world. Missiology can also be interpreted as going and doing. For example, the Bible contains what has come to be called the Great Commission: "Go you therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world" (Matt 28:19-20 KJB). Jesus gave this command to go and do. The Command by given by Jesus forms the cruz of missiology; as it seeks to understand and explain biblical values for evangelism. For example, the role of culture in giving the message of the gospel as it is spread throughout the world. In the study of missiology three direct disciplines are involved; Theology (mainly biblical), Anthropology which includes primitive religion, linguistic, cultural dynamics and changes. Missiology will support to the Great Commission by articulating the gospel and it powers to change lives in any culture. Missiology drives the Great Commission, it helps the Church to do mission better. Tippet (1987:13) shares the view that mission could be considered as how the Church of God should function as a vehicle of God's mission. In considering this, he feels that it is carrying out the mission of God. An analysis of Tippet's discussion shows that he regards human beings as the primary purpose for God's mission.

Tippet's view (1987:34, 46) is that for the continuation and success of the mission, a clear understanding of the church as the body of Christ doing its

work in the world is necessary. He sees the mission of the Church embedded in the five purposes for which God has sent Son Jesus Christ:

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of the sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour (Luke 4:18-19 ESV).”

Therefore, it is necessary that the Church of God have before it the ministry of Christ in the world: this was the ministry of service and the ministry of justification. Tippet (1987:34,46) argues that the Christian mission will be effective when the Church of God is guided by the indwelling Spirit of God, working in harmony to save lost souls.

Stott (1975:22-23) brings us closer home in understanding the Great Commission responsibilities. A closer examination of Jesus’ prayer in the upper room will help us to understand what was to be anticipated in carrying out the Great Commission. “As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world” (John 17:18 ESV). Jesus provided a pattern, which the Church could adapt and follow. Jesus knew the pain and hardship that missionaries will endure on the mission field. He knew that the disciples would be living in the world. As we consider Jesus’ command when he commissioned his disciples, it is important that we understand what he was commanding his Church to do. Jesus did not only command his Church to preach and to teach converts, but it is evident that the Great Commission included dealing with a broad spectrum of social matters, including social injustices, as well as having a sound understanding of evangelistic opposed to the will of God. Those seeking to fulfil God’s mission in such tension would be in need of God’s guidance. Rogers (2003:17) explains that the term *Missio Dei* refers to God’s mission in his world. God’s mission is his total involvement in all that man does in the world and his desire to accomplish his purpose of redeeming humanity. God’s total involvement in the world brings Christians into the realization of our function in mission. Every believer must participate in *Missio Dei* if the gospel is going to reach the entire world. The Church is called to bear witness to the kingdom of Christ, so it is necessary for us to ask ourselves; what is the

purpose of God? We function in a globalized, post-modern, multi-faith world where the concept of mission must be based on our understanding of *Missio Dei*. Tennent (2010:55-56) explained that the Church cannot be separated from the *Missio Dei*.

2.2.3 Trinitarian understanding of the *Missio Dei*

A fuller understanding of the term confirms that the Church cannot speak of itself as fulfilling the mission of the Church apart from its unity with God in his mission to the world. He emphasized that the Church is to reflect the trinity of God in its mission in the world. The Church is not in the world merely to identify gaps in the social and political arenas of the world, less can the mission of God be marginalised to only serving social needs. The *Missio Dei* becomes effective when the Church becomes world-focused, that is, seeing the world as God's parish and the need for the redemptive love of God to reach every culture. The International Missionary Council (IMC) conferences held during the three decades of the 1950s to 1970s birthed the *Missio Dei* concept. They were influenced by a Trinitarian understanding of mission, which was influenced by the biblical theology movement of the 1930s to 1940s. A Trinitarian foundation for mission theology began to take shape at the Willingen Conference of the IMC in 1952. Karl Hartenstein was instrumental in formulating a better understanding of the *Missio Dei*. This led to a greater use of the word (Blauw 1962:2). Kirk (1999:25) says that to assert that God has a mission is to assume that we are speaking about a personal God with particular characteristics. Mission becomes inappropriate if we presume that God is disconnected from man, making it impossible for man to speak about him. Therefore, God has revealed himself in such a way that man is able to connect to him and speak of him accurately. If this were not possible, what would be the purpose of the Great Commission? There cannot be any room for doubts regarding the mission purpose of God. *Missio Dei* confirms our mission and biblical mandate as an initiative that comes from God. Therefore, God in three persons is holistically involved in mission. Newbigin (1989:138) argued that the concept of *Missio Dei* has sometimes been interpreted to suggest that justice and peace can never mean total commitment to a particular project identified un-ambiguously as God's will. He further contends that actions for

justice and peace are part of the fulfilment of God's mission in the world and that *Missio Dei* deals not only with that aspect, but that it is integrated with other aspects of God's mission, such as saving souls and baptism into the Church of God. His argument concluded that if *Missio Dei* is to be understood as only fulfilling justice and peace then it brings into disrepute the totality of God's mission, thus marginalising church membership as being irrelevant. Verkuyl (1978: 6) makes one final point: He says, "Missiology may never become a substitute for action and participation." It is my opinion that God calls everyone to be involved in his mission. The issue is to determine whether the believer's response to this call is mandatory or optional. God never forces his will on a person, but it is a person's free will to accept or reject his redemptive love as revealed in salvation and forgiveness. In accepting salvation, a person agrees to live only to fulfil God's biblical mandate. Missiology will lose its humble calling when it is seen as an obligation opposed to doing God's will. Rogers (2003:18-19) points out that the Church in unity with God goes into the world as that is his primary purpose. Mission is telling the story of Jesus, reconciling man to God, thus providing hope for an eternal home in heaven; Peter (1972:11) and Van Engen (1996: 26-27) discussed this issue further. It is true that the term *Missio Dei* can become confusing because, as Van Engen says, "it is sometimes referred to as the mission of God and also the mission of the Church." God's mission means that the people of God would purposely and intentionally cross barriers to Church the unchurched, bring a message of hope to those without faith, and live exemplary lives as they proclaim by word and deed the coming of the kingdom of God in Jesus Christ. This task is achieved by means of the Church's participation in God's mission of reconciling people to God, to themselves, to each other and to the world, and gathering them into the church through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ by the work of the Holy Spirit with a view to the transformation of the world as a sign of the coming of the kingdom in Jesus Christ. Van Engen (1996:26-27) believes that the Church going into the world is God's chosen vessel specially mandated to accomplish the mission of God through proclamation and partnership with God as He seeks to reconcile the world to Himself. The Church cannot separate its mission from God. The mission of God is the only reason why the Church exists.

2.4 THEOLOGY OF MISSION AND THE TASK OF CONTEXTUALIZING

It is important to understand how mission is related to theology. A definition of theology is helpful to understanding the use of the word in this context. The Scriptures are given by the inspiration of God and that they only constitute the divine rule of Christian faith and practice. By assuming that the Scriptures are the divine revelation given to us by God, theology is the divine revelation given in our particular historical context (Ortiz and Baker 2002:87). Ortiz and Baker quoted Millard Erickson who points out that “theology is a second-level activity.” This suggest that there must a distinction between theology and revelation. It is important that the study of Scriptures are carefully done so as to avoid misinterpretations. Scriptures are to be studied carefully so that our theologies are biblically based. Missionaries by nature of their task are theologians. Mission is the mother of theology. Therefore, missiology can be considered doing theology in everyday life because it reflects on what the Word is saying to our world. The central focus on Theology of mission is What is God’s Word to mankind during their particular circumstances? Therefore, the primary purpose of mission theologians is to translate and communicate the gospel way to people and their culture, using the appropriate language they can relate to so that the gospel will transform their lives and culture (Ortiz and Baker 2002:93). Wendland (n.d) argues that “Contextualization” as applied to theology has been defined in various ways, depending upon the specialized theological inclinations of the missiologist as well as the aspect of the work he may wish to emphasize, for example, (culture, church structure, language, etc.). Wendland goes on to argue that the World of God is related to various cultures to which it is been communicated through the process of contextualization. Therefore, a reasonable definition according to Wendland is “Contextualization is the process whereby the message of the Word of God is related to the cultural context of the society to which it is proclaimed.” Ortiz and Baker (2002:134) presents another definition for contextualization by suggesting that it is the enculturation, localization, or dynamic equivalent. They further argue that it is the implementation of biblical Christianity in culturally appropriate ways by missionaries who should present the gospel and work in a relevant way. Ortiz

and Baker's definition is consistent with the definitions given by other scholars used through this chapter on the meaning of the word, contextualization.

Missionaries from other cultures should be aware that various patterns and cultural context of the host culture. Wendland goes on to explain that "People coming to Christ should not be made to feel that He is a "foreign" Christ." There should an insistence upon forms of worship according to cultural patterns which make people of the receptor-context feel like strangers. "The gospel in context," as someone has expressed it succinctly, "brings Christ as both Savior and Brother."

Bevan (1994:10) contends that all mission theology is contextual theology because it involves the communication of gospel truth by someone with a particular context to someone else in a different context .

He says that "Contextualization is not something on the fringes of the theological enterprise. It is at the very center of what it means to do theology in today's world. Contextualization, in other words, is a theological imperative"

Every context provides a lens through which we view reality and truth, and it thereby influences the way we understand the gospel as well as the way in which we express our faith. This was as true for the writers of Scripture themselves as it is for us today. Every theology in history has been rooted in a particular context and has reflected the concerns of that context. That doesn't necessarily make it any less an expression of truth, but it does challenge us to accept that there is no privileged interpretation of the gospel which is the exclusive possession of any one culture or christian tradition. Hopefully our

understanding of the truth will be stretched and enriched as we listen to other contexts (Whiteman,1997:4): "Contextualization forces us to have a wider loyalty that corresponds to an enlarged and more adequate view of God as the God of all persons, male and female, and as a God who especially hears the cry of the poor. Nicholls(1979:20) discusses the Theological issues concerning contextualization. He distinguishes cultural and theological contextualization. My understanding of the Nicholls argument is that cultural contextualization is really indigenization by another name, and concerns the communication

of the gospel to the traditional institutions of the culture such as the family, law, education etc. Theological contextualization deals with the context as a whole, with its wider issues, the worldview, the values and the socio-political structures.

Bosch makes a similar analysis of the different types of contextualization (Bosch, 1991:421). He sees indigenization as either translation (primarily to do with language) or as inculturation (primarily to do with culture). He further subdivides the socioeconomic model of contextualization into evolutionary (development) or revolutionary (liberation theology). Some traditional evangelical approaches to contextualization have assumed the universal objective truth of the gospel as a 'given', something which only needs to be accurately translated into another language in order to be effective. This could be called the 'translation' model of contextualization and it works primarily at the level of language. It is assumed that the gospel speaks primarily to individuals: it is people who need the gospel, not cultures or contexts. Culture and context are secondary, and may even be considered irrelevant to evangelism. They need not affect the receptor's understanding of the universal truth of the love of God, so long as words are found which provide sufficient equivalence with the original concepts of the faith as given in the scriptures.

Van Engen (1996:13) tells of a friend who attended a missiological conference where one of the speakers said, "There is no such thing as theology of mission or mission theology. There are only biblical exegesis, systematic theology, and mission practice. 'Mission theology' is a meaningless term, an oxymoron, for it does not refer to anything". I hold the view that mission was born in the perfect community of the Trinity, and it was mandated to believers to proclaim the Good News to all people for the glory of God. Believers must obey the mission as Christ's ambassadors for they are duty bound to proclaim God's kingdom as they live in joyful obedience within it. Anderson and Goodwin (1971:594) defined theology of mission as "Concerned with the basic presuppositions and underlying principles which determine, from the standpoint of Christian faith, the motives, methods, strategy and goals of the Christian World mission."

Theology of mission is a multi- and inter-disciplinary enterprise. The mission of God is to reach all cultures, but to do so, it is necessary to apply a certain discipline to the missionary task. Trueblood (1972:91) argued that the Church

will be useless without Jesus, that is to say that the Church does not have a mission, for the very core of the Church is mission. Jesus is the reason for mission, for without Jesus there is no mission. The Scriptures expressed this quite vividly, “I came to cast fire on the earth, and would that it were already kindled” (Luke 12:49 ESV). What Trueblood wanted to explain is that the Church cannot be content to live a life of ease while they happily await the second coming of Jesus. Jesus forcefully states the reason for mission. The mission is to bring fire on the earth. His mission will cause radical changes to happen in all lives. Therefore, the Church being engaged in mission cannot be content with the regular norms, but must identify itself with the mission of God. Trueblood (1972:92-93) draws on Christ’s metaphors, such as salt, light and leaven as illustrations of how the Church of God should function. Just as salt, light and leaven can penetrate meat, darkness and dough, so Christians must penetrate a needy world and function like salt, light and dough spiritually. It is rather ironical that there is again a tension between living in the world and not being part of it. Trueblood (1972:92-93) expressed the fact that it is very frustrating to function in the manner that is truthful to the word of God in that there is always a tendency to protect the light from going out and to prevent the world from becoming overtaken by spiritual darkness. The natural thing to do is to put the light in a protected place, but, if we do so, we run the risk of losing our essence and purpose as missionaries.

However, it is my opinion that God light will shine in the hearts of His Church who will illuminate the world through witnessing to people and attracting them to the origin of the light. I believe that the divine protective arm of God will cover his people. Christians must be prepared to lose their lives for the sake of the gospel: “For whosoever would save his life will lose it, but whosoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel will save it” (Mark 8:35 ESV). This is the bedrock of Christian theology, the foundation of mission. It is the nature by which the Church exists to do mission, being salt and light to the world, and by which its members are willing to lay down their lives for the sake of the gospel message. This takes us back to the prayer Jesus prayed: “As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world” (John 17:18 ESV). Christ was expendable, sacrificing Himself for the salvation of the world. The Church must accept it is

expendable; its primary call is to be committed to the mission of God, even if it means losing one's life for the sake of fulfilling the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Rogers (2003:93) says that just as God had missionary intentions for his people of yesteryear, His missionary intention for the church today is still the same, for He has missionary intentions for his Church today. Rogers believes that the mission of God is more than establishing local branches of churches, but that it consists of a holistic programme of saving souls and meeting all the other needs of suffering humanity. Johannes Verkuyl (1978:6) believes that it is impossible to be engaged in mission whilst excluding holistic participation in all the needs of humanity. He was referring to meeting both the spiritual and physical needs of humanity. He wrote, "If study does not lead to participation, missiology has lost her humble calling." Thus, we find that theology of mission is a process of reflection and action involving a movement from the biblical text to the faith community in context. By focusing our attention on an integrating theme, we receive new insights.

2.4.1 Contextualization

As I will deal with this topic later in the thesis, when I will address cultural issues. I will limit my discussion on the subject in this section. Rogers (2003:80) emphasised the need for contextualization. His understanding of its purpose in fulfilling the mission of God is expressed in his statement where he explained that it must not be limited to how the message of God is being preached to the people, but how they live out their faith in their respective communities.

There is tension between preaching a gospel that is relevant to the hearers and the risk of perverting the written word as we do so. The question arises; "How do we preach a gospel that is relevant to its hearers without distorting God's word?" I restrict myself to a limited opinion on the subject. I believe that it is essential today for Christian missionaries to contextualise the gospel. The gospel must be preached in a manner that is relevant to all people. It is the only way the local branches Churches will impact their local cultures. The message will not be heard if it is communicated in a manner where the hearers cannot make sense of it and cannot apply it to their daily lives. I believe that Christianity is a way of life, not just talking about God, but Christians living Christ's values in

every area of their lives. In order for the gospel of Jesus Christ to be effective, it must be communicated in a manner that will allow hearers to understand the message and respond to it.

Whiteman (1993:2-7) points us to some very clear principles that have to be respected when the Word of God is preached. He explained that many cultures have expectations that have to be met and these cultures determine for themselves what is to be regarded as relevant. Therefore, it is essential for the missionary to respect the values and lifestyle of any culture, without imposing their own worldview on those to whom they are ministering. Whiteman (1993:2-7) also suggested that there should be a component in theology which aimed at making the gospel message more relevant and easy to understand. He believes that contextualization will improve effectiveness in ministering the gospel within specific contexts. One of the biblical passages most frequently cited as an example of contextualization is Acts 17, where Paul preaches at Mars Hill (the Areopagus). Paul was ready to use what was visible and relevant before him to preach to his audience. This is evident from Acts 17: 22-23 ESV where Paul declares, “Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. For I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription, ‘to the unknown god’. What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you.” Beginning in this positive manner, and commending the people for being so religious, he was careful not to condemn or be judgmental, for fear of being thrown out or being killed. He was able to win the crowd’s trust and their openness to hear what he had to say. He was able to use what he saw as relevant among them to connect with them and present the gospel of the true and living God as someone they could truly worship (Adeyemo 2006:1357).

Anderson (2007:1) argued that it is often argued, even among fundamentalists, that Paul adapted his message to gain a hearing among the Athenian philosophers. This is not something new. Paul was able to use his mastery of observation to enhance his message. He contextualised his message at an appropriate time, giving an illustration that was in harmony with his context at that time. It is important to note that Paul did not adjust the content or even the

method of his gospel message. He might have used different illustrations, but he maintained focus on the core of his message. The heart of his message was unaltered.

2.4.2 The Relevance of Paul's Method

Did Paul's method support the type of contextualization being proposed in our day? I will be using the Scriptures to argue that Paul's method is still relevant for use today. The Athens of the day was considered a city with a rich and unique culture. It is described as the most famous place of ancient Greece. It was one of three great university cities. It was the birthplace of democracy and the cradle of philosophy and the arts. However, it was also home to numerous idols, and it was the city's idolatry that especially caught Paul's attention during his brief visit (Bruce, Tasker, Packer and Wiseman 1962:107). Paul had previously seen impressive temples and idols as he journeyed from Macedonia to southern Greece. It is important to understand that Paul did not pretend that he was surprised by the people's interest in so many idols. The Scriptures say in Acts 17:16 ESV, "Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him as he saw the city was full of idols." When Paul had the chance to preach to the Athenians, first in the synagogue (Acts 17:17a), then in the agora or marketplace (vv. 17b–18), and finally before the Areopagus (vv. 19–31), he gave full expression to that burden.

It is necessary for missionaries to establish common ground in any community as a platform to present the gospel. Paul's mentioning the altar to "the Unknown God" recorded in Acts 17:23, was the point in which he made an attempt to establish common ground. Paul used the altar, which is something close to the worship of the true and living God, as an open door for the rest of his message.

Paul was bold enough not to tone down his message. He maintained his stand in the midst of potential persecution. Surrounded by idols and temples, Paul made it clear to the audience that God does not need their temples or gifts, and human services; that God is creator and governor of all things. He explained to the people that God's existence was not dependent on their belief in idols. He emphasized that God was before creation. Though they were confident that the gods were pleased with them, he insisted that the one true God was not at all

pleased, but that He would judge them along with the rest of the world (Acts 17:23-30). Despite their rejection of the resurrection, he presented to them a resurrected Saviour. Paul was direct in his message to the people. He condemned their polytheism, idolatry and ignorance, and demanded that they repent from their sins. Paul made it quite clear that repentance was necessary because God has set a day of judgment where everyone will be judged. Paul was not preaching a difficult message that was difficult to understand. To the contrary, Paul contextualised the gospel and presented a sound anthropology to the Athenians. Despite their sense of superiority over other peoples, Paul preached Scripture's universal themes regarding humanity:

1. All men were created and are sustained by God (vv. 24–25).
2. All men are equal before God and equally condemned (v. 26).
3. All men are accountable to God (vv. 27–30a, 31).
4. All men are commanded by God to repent (v. 30b).

At the point of Paul's conclusion he was mocked and ignored by many. However Acts 17:34a (ESV) says, "But some men joined him and believed."

This is enough to prove that his method was successful.

As we re-read Scripture from the point of view of a contextual hermeneutic, these new insights can then be re-stated and lived out as biblically (-) informed, contextually(-)appropriate missional actions relevant to the faith community in our time. Fleming (n.d:211) argues that missional theologizing today is an act of the church to embrace the same theological task of contextualizing the gospel within the life situations of contemporary people in transforming ways.

He implies that as New Testament writers engaged their world, so we must engage ours. While their ways of expressing the gospel, as Scripture, continue to carry foundational significance, we must find practical ways to present the gospel. Nicholls (2003:8) talks about evangelical communicators who often underestimated the importance of cultural factors in communicating the gospel. In comparing his work with that of Fleming, they both argued that evangelical communicators often missed the point: that they are concerned with preserving the gospel and its doctrinal formulation; that they have been insensitive to the cultural thought patterns and behaviour of those to whom they are proclaiming

the gospel message. Bruce (2003:10) explains that some have been unaware that terms such as God, sin, incarnation, salvation and heaven convey different images in the mind of the hearer from that intended by the Preacher.

Bruce (2003:10) contends that communicating the gospel calls for a greater sensitivity in cross-cultural communication and that it demands patience, discipline and a humble attitude towards discipleship and a call to loving engagement with people.

2.5 A BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION OF MISSION

In this section, I will limit my discussion on what the Bible says about mission because it is a foolish attempt to summarize what the Bible says about mission in just a few pages. Douglas (2002:1) argues that the Holy Bible is all about mission although the word mission is not found in the Bible. Historically, the Church is meant to do mission by sending specific people into diverse parts of the world to proclaim the gospel. Douglas argue that the Bible is the story of mission which is the story of God. God did not want to alien humanity, but to connected to humanity. For example, in Acts 11:20 Christians in Antioch start to preach to Gentiles, not just Jews. Up until this point, Christianity had essentially been a Jewish faith. Only a few not Jewish people were converted, for example, the Ethiopian eunuch and Cornelius. Missionaries were sent out from the mother church.

News of this reached the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas Antioch. When he arrived and saw what the grace of God had done, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts. He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and Faith, and a great number of people were brought to the Lord. (Acts 11:22-24)

Barnabas worked alongside the new church and within a short time, the church in Antioch began to be involve in mission. According to the Bible, the Local church has three important task in relations to mission.

1. To proclaim the gospel. Jesus charged the apostles with proclaiming the gospel to all nations (Matt.28:18-20). The church

was founded on these principles by Jesus. Preaching the Word is the central focus on the church (2 Tim. 2:15,4:2).

2. To preserve the gospel. Paul described the church as a pillar and buttress of truth (1 Tim.3:15). The Bible explain that the church is responsible to preserve the gospel throughout the ages (1 Tim.1:3-4;2 Tim.1:13).
3. To display the gospel. Paul emphasize the importance of making known the wisdom of God to rulers and authorities in the heavenly places (Eph.3:10).

The Bible has a very important place in mission as the source of authority. It testifies to God's mission in many ways. The universal Church is called to fulfil this mandate. The word church in the New Testament is translated from the Greek word *ekklesia* that comes from the words 'ek' meaning 'out' and 'kaleo' meaning to 'call.' In its New Testament sense, an *ekklesia* meaning "calling out" was not just an assembly. It signifies an assembly of the people who are heirs of the kingdom of God. In classical Greek, the term *ekklesia* was a political term. However, with a Christian connotation that recognizes Jesus as King, it is safe to say that the use of the term *ekklesia* meant an assembly of Christians summoned by the cry of the heavenly host to carry out God's biblical mandate. The word *ekklesia*, the term translated church, speaks of an assembling of God's people (Grudem 2007:854). This can be interpreted as meaning:

1. The call of the Great Commission.
2. The call of a people set apart by God.
3. The call to unite in the evangelistic effort.
4. The call to live in love and respect for one another.

To speak of biblical interpretation of mission is to understand fully the foundation and purpose of the Church. The mission of the church is an extension of Christ's ministry on earth. The Apostle Paul qualifies this statement in 2 Cor. 5:18 (ESV). He wrote, "And all this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation." The sole purpose of the church is to bring souls to Jesus Christ. God has entrusted to his

church a specific ministry of reconciliation through Jesus Christ (Adeyemo 2006:1430).

Bosch (1991:15) provides keen insight into the biblical interpretation of mission. His understanding is that the New Testament when compared with the Old Testament teaching on mission gives witness to a fundamental shift with the advent of Jesus of Nazareth and what followed after that. Bosch (1991:16) continues by arguing that the beginning of a missionary theology is the beginning of Christian theology. Mission is the mother of theology. Montgomery (2009:8) says that the missionary character of the Bible is twofold: It is expressed in this form (1) an essential character; and (2) it reveals the purpose and plan of God. Montgomery contends that the core of Scripture is holistically about mission, not only because of what it offers to humanity, but because of what it is. The Bible is the great missionary charter of the universal Church of God. Bosch (1991:390-393) gives a vivid explanation of the term *Missio Dei* and how it is related to the purpose of every local Church. Bosch argues that the wider understanding of God's mission is that it embraces both the world and the Church. Every local church, in its missionary activity, encounters humanity and a world in which God's plan of salvation is present through the Holy Spirit. As the understanding of *Missio Dei* underwent changes, God's mission was seen to incorporate all things, including creation, care and redemption. Bosch goes on to explain that this wider understanding of the *Missio Dei* caused great unhappiness amongst certain theologians. The Church of God serves the *Missio Dei* in the world. It points to God at work reconciling humanity to Himself. The Church of God is a necessary vessel for the advancement of God's mission. Kirk (1999:30-31) explained that mission is so much at the heart of the Church's life that, rather than think of it as one aspect of its existence, it is better to think of it as defining its essence. The Church is by nature missionary to the extent that, if it ceases to be missionary, it has not just failed on one of its tasks, it has ceased being Church. Mission is the fundamental reality of our Christian life. We are Christians because we were called by God to work with Him in the fulfilment of His purpose for humanity as a whole. The presence of humanity in this world brings life to God's mission. Kirk (1990:30-31) agreed that the primary driving force behind the mission of the Church is God himself.

Davies (1996: 28) describes God as 'a centrifugal Being'. This was another way of saying that God is love, always reaching out to every individual, extending his redemptive arm of love. God never distances himself from mission. He is the heart of mission. To avoid mission being confused with other components of the universal Church, Scott (1975:30) argued that mission is not a word for everything the Church does. The Church is mission." Scott goes on to argue that mission embraces the essence of Christianity because it is in being, rather than doing. God lights up his world and brings flavour to the life of all nations through the proclamation of the gospel message.

Newbigin (1989:116) expressed the manner in which the Church of God must carry out its mission. He wrote, "if one looks at the New Testament evidence one gets another impression." Mission begins with a kind of explosion of joy. Newbigin felt that there is a misconception of how the Church should fulfil its missionary mandate. This misconception tends to make mission a burden rather than a joy. Proclaiming the Gospel message is an important responsibility of the Church of God to every culture in our world. (Verkuyl 1978:113) quotes Hendrik Kraemer's comment on Christ's call to the Church, "*A Church without a mission is a galvanized corpse.*" The Church is not the Kingdom of God, but a community, which comes into being as it, responds to the mission of God. The Holy Spirit empowers the Church to fulfil God's mission.

Guder (2002:8) quotes Karl Barth by saying that "the Church is a human community called to the act of mission". He agrees that the Church's primary mission is to be witnesses and proclaimers of the Gospel. Needham (1987:22) explains quite vividly that the Church is not only the society in Christ that is repossessing the integrity of sacramental living; it is a society engaged in reclaiming the place where humanity can find peace in their lives. The Church as the body of Christ is the central point where the very nature of God and likeness of God can be felt. The community should be able to touch God through the lives of Christians. In the unfolding life of the Church, the Spirit frees Christians to restore the lost bond of love and mutual affirmation. The church is therefore responsible as the new creation in Christ to help the world to be reconciled to Christ. Needham (1989:52) says that the reason for the Church is mission. The Church exists primarily for the sake of its mission in the world.

This is the reason why essentially the Church's missionary nature, calling and all its intention must be focussed on the purpose to which Christ died. The Church of God as the chosen vessel is specifically called to bear witness to Jesus Christ the Son of God. The apostle Paul declared this when he wrote: "But you are a chosen race" (1 Peter 2:9a (ESV)). The Church belongs to God. His overarching mission objective in the world is to see all people reconciled to Himself.

2.6 THE OLD TESTAMENT AS THE BASIS FOR MISSION

The Bible is the record of a mission: the divine mission of saving the human race carried out by the Triune God and his commissioned people. The history of mission in the Old Testament is embedded in the history of the Israelites. The burden of Abraham's mission is clearly stated in God's calling to him: "I will bless thee and thou shalt be a blessing and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Gen.12:2-3). Abraham is seen here as the father of mission, the father of the universal blessings of God. To some, it is unimaginable to think that the missionary message to the Gentiles began in the Old Testament. Kaiser (2000:7-9) addressed such a view, arguing with characteristic clarity and concision that the Old Testament should indeed be read as a missionary message to the nations. Kaiser (2000:7-9) argued in his views on mission in the Old Testament: 1. That Israel had a passive, Zion-centred understanding of mission that focussed primarily on witnessing; they understood mission to be an outward-moving of missionaries into the entire world; 2. that Israel were assigned the role of centrifugal witnessing, meaning that they must move away from the central point of things to other areas to proclaim the gospel message. Fundamentally, different views of mission are at issue here.

Kaiser is projecting "centrifugal witnessing" as the role assigned to Israel in sharing with others the Man of promise who was to come. Kaiser has demonstrated here, that mission is at the heart and core of the promised plan of God, a truth that is often obscured and forgotten in contemporary discussions. Kaiser maintains that the missionary mandate is consistently found in the Old Testament, even though it is in rudimentary form. However, it is important to note that Israel received a missionary mandate to be proactive in taking the

message to the Gentiles. While Kaiser maintains that missionary mandate is consistent in the Old Testament, he admits that it is “at times only rudimentarily.” It is my opinion that mission is a “driving passion” throughout the entire Old Testament.

Adrian and Connie (2010) explain that the calling of Abraham in the Old Testament is the most missiological passage in the Old Testament. This is the great command of the Old Testament. God said to Abraham: “Leave your country, your family, and your relatives and go to the land that I will show you.” This is the missionary calling of Abraham. God is sending and Abraham is fulfilling God’s aim in being obedient to the call.

God makes direct promises to Abraham (Genesis 12:2-3):

1. I will make you into a great nation.
2. I will bless you.
3. I will make your name famous.

God determined to call out a special people for Himself whom He would use to bring blessing to all the nations: ‘You will be a blessing to others.’ The rich blessing of Abraham was not meant for his own glory. He received these blessings in order to be a blessing to others.

Bosch (1991:22) placed emphasis on the fact that Christians are not at liberty to talk about Jesus in any way they choose. They are challenged to speak about him from within the context of the community of believers, the whole people of God, past and present. He goes on to say that, a crucial task for the Church today is to remain consistent in mission. Bosch is saying that mission is meaningless if we ignore the foundation of mission that is in the person and ministry of Jesus Christ.

It is quite unusual today to hear a sermon on mission based on a text from the Old Testament. Modern-day Christians seldom refer to the Old Testament as a tool with which missiological insights can be gleaned. Mission is often seen as a teaching of the New Covenant associated with the Great Commission and the sermon of Jesus and Jesus’ discourse with his disciples shortly before his ascension. Bosch (1991:16-17) shifted the Old Testament's contribution mission

to a sub-section of a chapter entitled 'Mission in The Old Testament'. His reason for this is that he felt that the Christian Church cannot afford to separate the Old and New Testaments, which clearly is the test that defines why the Church must be engaged in the mission of God. Although Bosch sees no indication of the believers of the Old Testament being sent by God to cross geographical, religious and social frontiers in order to win others to faith in God, he does not think that the Old Testament concept of mission must be relegated to a minor role. Although Israel received no mandate to go to nations in that sense, there is no other mission mentioned in the Old Testament. Apart from observing that in fact there are many 'barrier-crossing' episodes in the Old Testament story of Israel's journey with God, I would argue that Bosch defined mission in the Old Testament too vaguely. The Old Testament is fundamental to the understanding of mission in the New Testament. God had a purpose for Israel, which is summed up in God's comprehensive purpose when he dealt with Israel in the Old Testament. The Old Testament must be considered a starting point for missionary motives. God had a purpose and plan for Israel; not only was this purpose focusing on a nation, but on the entire universe. When we look at the creation story recorded in Genesis 1, we see that God created the universe with a purpose in mind. God's creation of the universe becomes the purpose of His mission. The reason for this is that humankind is made in the image of God. This is the reason why God demonstrates his unconditional love and mercy for all humanity. The entrance of sin because of the fall of Adam and Eve, and the invasion of sin upon the human race has its consequences. The main consequence is that men will die. The Bible speaks of this in Rom 5: 12 (ESV), "Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned." So ever since the creation and fall of man, God's mission was to restore those who have fallen to renewed fellowship with him (Wright 2010: 49-51).

Verkuyl (1978:92) provides evidence that the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Moses is the God of the whole universe. The table of nations in Genesis 10 is evidence that God works with the whole of creation in mind. Verkuyl argues that God elected Abraham and the other patriarchs with a universal purpose in mind. The intention of God is to bring salvation to the world. Kaiser (2005:2)

explained that there are two outstanding mission texts in the Pentateuch. He believes that Genesis 12:3 and Exodus 19:6 b revolve around the apocalyptic vision of Daniel (7:1-29) which predicts the coming of the Son of Man, who shall put to end the evils that exist in this world and whose domain shall include all humanity. God's plan was to provide for the blessing of all the peoples in all the nations of the earth through the father of the chosen people and the nations that would be born from him. This would confirm the universal motif of God in the Old Testament history and prophecy as mentioned in Genesis 10. St-Onge (2003:1) refers specifically to God's desire for all to "come to the knowledge of the truth." God desires no one to perish, but rather hopes that all will come to salvation. The emphasis in the passages associated with this motif is the love of God for the whole world (John 3:16), God's reaching out to all nations (Psalm 117, Romans 15) and God's desire is that no one be left without salvation.

2.7 THE NEW TESTAMENT IS BASIC FOR MISSION

Is there a place for mission in the New Testament? Is mission at the centre of the New Testament? In the entire message of the Bible, is mission merely a marginal component of the New Testament writings, as many claim and as one is led to believe when sampling various New Testament theologies written in this century? Bosch (1991:17) emphasized that it is important for the New Testament to play an essential role in mission. Determining the place of mission within the scope of New Testament theology also requires an understanding of the nature of New Testament theology. It is important that Jesus' message as Jesus himself has conveyed it rather than how it was interpreted by others be the focal point of New Testament theology. Schlatter (1997:18) argued that the New Testament theology, as a subset of biblical theology, is a task that is both historical and primarily descriptive. The *historical* dimension of New Testament theology brings into focus our own presuppositions, convictions, and vested interests. Schlatter says, "As those engaged in mission or biblical studies, we inevitably approach the New Testament documents with our own understanding of the nature of mission and its place within the scope of the New Testament's theology as a whole." However, as Schlatter reminds us, "it is the historical objective that should govern our conceptual work exclusively and completely.

We turn away decisively from ourselves and our time to what was found in the men through whom the church came into being.” Our main interest should be the thought as it was conceived by them and the truth that was valid for them. This internal disposition upon which the success of the work depends on the commitment that must consistently be renewed as the Word proceeds. Newbigin (1989:119-120) expressed his view that the New Testament bears true witness to the presence of the Spirit of God. It is through this means that Christians must also bear witness to His presence in the world. This paradigm shift in mission means that for centuries to come the missionary message must bear witness to the presence of God in the world, active through the Holy Spirit bringing redemption to all persons. Jesus vicariously endured God’s judgment, which was properly due to Israel and the Gentiles. Therefore, God’s mission is rooted in Jesus. His resurrection likewise brought about a liberating rule, and the lines thus become extended to reach the whole worldwide community of nations and peoples. Verkuyl (1978:101-102) strongly supports the New Testament as the instrument of mission. He says that the New Testament as a book of mission owes its very existence to the missionary work of early Christian Churches, both Jewish and Hellenistic.

Verkuyl supports the importance of the New Testament motifs of mission as embracing the person and work of Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus himself issued his continuing mandate to the world after his resurrection. He says, “Go therefore” (Matt 28:19 ESV). The Greek word ‘poreuthentes’ is best used to describe what Christ commanded, ‘as you go, make disciples of all the nations.’ The point is most important to all who carry out the task of communicating the gospel. It means to depart, to leave, to cross boundaries, sociological boundaries, racial boundaries, cultural boundaries, geographic boundaries, break family ties, whether they be at home or far away. Jesus commanded His followers to “make disciples of all nations.” Although this was the climaxing teaching mission of Jesus on earth, it references Jesus as the all-encompassing authority who alone can give such a charge to the entire world. Therefore, Christ’s mission is focused within an eschatological concept. Kostenberger and O’Brien (2001:108) expressed this quite clearly by saying that the Christian church carries out its mandate on the command and based on the authority of the exalted Christ, the

eschatological ruler, the Son of God. Kirk (1999:30-31) shares some penetrating thoughts on mission. Kirk drives home the point by telling us that God seeks men and women who will dedicate themselves to fulfilling his mission. He seeks out those who have a heart of compassion and are willing to be directed by him. He further clarifies his statement by discussing these critical points:

1. The people of God are not called because they merit it.
2. They are not better quality than others or a cut above them.
3. The people of God are not called in order to gain benefits for themselves.
4. God's calling to mission is a calling to service.

Van Rheenen (1996:37) explains further, what Kirk is saying above. Van Rheenen is not suggesting that God cannot use highly skilful people to carry out his mission; this is not what he is suggesting. When we look at Van Rheenen's explanation, he recognizes that the compassion for mission must be central in the heart of a Christian. Without this motive Christians would not be motivated to take action. Van Rheenen touches upon some of the problems flowing from human mental conflict. However, the issue of sin is probably primarily responsible for a heart not motivated for mission.

2.8 CONTINUITY AND DISCONTINUITY

2.8.1 Continuity of aspects of African Traditional Beliefs in Christianity

Zwede (2008:5-7) in his article "A note on African Theology" presents a very detailed and thoughtful discussion on African theology with special reference to continuity and discontinuity. Zwede defines continuity as having to do with an understanding that there is common ground between historic religions such as Christianity and Islam, and other traditional religions of native people in different parts of the southern hemisphere. He says that when it comes to the situation of Christianity in Africa, continuity represents the understanding that Christianity could be considered as the continuation of what had begun with traditional beliefs of God. Bisnauth (1989:165) argued that many of the African slaves and freemen who became Christians under the impact of Catholic and evangelical

missionaries turned out to be completely orthodox in their understanding of the new religion. Others, however, had only a partial grasp of the new faith, while only a few understood Christianity in terms of religious ideas that had their roots in Africa. He feels that the Christianising of Negroes was not thorough. There were never enough priests and friars to conduct an adequate mission among slaves. This resulted in the continuation of African traditional beliefs merging with Christian practices.

One could also argue that although foreign missionaries brought a westernised style of Christianity, it did very little in banishing the practising of African traditional beliefs. Therefore, Zwede should have qualified his statement more clearly when speaking of Christianity as a continuation of what had begun with African traditional beliefs of God. He leaves the impression that there must have been a merging of the two in order for continuity to occur. This belief is common among Surinamese Maroons, even those who have been converted to Christianity. Velzen and Wetering (2004:13-15) discussed this problem by explaining that the Maroon culture with its adherence to the traditional African belief system, says that "Christianity almost never replaces the native polytheism but is merely added to it as yet another pantheon." Although many Maroons of various tribes have been baptized as Roman Catholics and Moravians, and have rejected practices relating to African Traditional Religions, especially those that deal with misfortune, illness, and death, they remain ideologically Maroon. They remain fearful of popular ancestral beliefs such as protection from evil spirits that are believed to be used by persons to bring harm to others. However, according to their ethnographers, this is not syncretism. Their African Tradition Religious practices have been able, in spite of every opposition from the mission, to maintain themselves in a remarkable way. The result is that each religion functions in comparative independence of the other.

The tension between the gospel and culture have been thrust into this debate for three reasons. Matthews (1990) in his journal presents the following arguments by asking several question; First, the Bible is being translated into the dialects of an increasing array of divergent people groups. This has surfaced a critical question: Should literalness or dynamic equivalence be used in rendering the word of God in another language?

Second, the intention of many missionaries is to plant indigenous churches. Should the younger church be related to the host culture in such a way that the people feel at home, that the members can participate fully in the local assembly?

A third reason for missions being thrust into the debate over the relationship between the Gospel and culture is the recent attention given to contextualization, namely, how to proclaim an eternally valid Gospel in a cross-culturally relevant manner. Matthews (1990) argued that several complex issues are being raised: 1. What within Scripture is the unchanging truth that must be proclaimed to every person in every culture? 2. Who determines what is timeless truth--missionaries or nationals? How is the unchanging truth determined--on the basis of Scripture, tradition, or reason? Should sin be defined by culture or revelation? What is absolute and relative within the Bible? Are moral standards set by cultural anthropology or biblical theology or both? What is primary in contextualizing the church: form, function or meaning?

The relationship between the Gospel and non-Christian cultures is not easily resolved. The West is not the East and the East is not the West. The western world thinks in terms of two realms: religion and science (Hesselgrave 1984:145-195). Therefore, in western culture, a person can make religious changes without experiencing serious difficulties. In non-western cultures, all of life is penetrated and held together by religion. It is the "glue" of non-western cultural relationships (Hiebert 1982:36-38). Hence, religion in the non-west is a sensitive area. A change in religion--conversion to Christianity--in the non-western world has tremendous repercussions that ripple out to the totality of culture. It affects all of life. Zwede's interpretation of a contextualised theology emphasises the need to have African traditional beliefs as a continuum of Christianity. However, Rogers (2003:80-81) defends his position by asking these questions:

1. Is there such a thing as an on-going contextualised theology?
2. Have we, after two thousand years of western theological reflection, arrived at the one way the truth must be explained and accepted?

3. Is our western theology all the theology there is?
4. If theology is something to be contextualised, how do we go about doing it?
5. What are the guidelines for contextualization? Indeed, are there Guidelines?
6. Is culture the final standard?

Kraft (1999:390) says that syncretism is the mixing of Christian assumption with those worldview assumptions that are incompatible with Christianity so that the result is non-biblical Christianity.

It is true that many religious practices have incorporated elements of other cultures and some aspects of secular society. Many Christian movements in an attempt to convert Maroons to Christianity in Suriname, have gone as far as to compromise Christian practices by combining them with African traditional religion practices. The Maroons of Suriname practice ancestor worship. It is founded on the belief that the dead live on and are able to influence the lives of later generations. These ancestors can assert their powers by blessing or cursing, and their worship is inspired by both respect and fear. The ancestor cult consists of praying, presenting gifts, and making offerings. In some cultures, people try to get their ancestors' advice through oracles before making important decisions. Many Christians have condoned going to diviners for help with spiritual problems.

Schreiter (1985:144) refers to this type of syncretism as the second type, where Christianity has merged with non-Christian belief, for example, the African traditional beliefs of the Suriname Maroons. Hesselgrave (1989:153) refers to a new book titled *Religions in Dialogue: East and West Meet*, as radical contextualization. The result of this is a new syncretistic "gospel" which is supposed to eventuate a new day of relationship between God and humanity and among people. His liberal approach to contextualization causes Christianity to lose its foothold on its Biblical foundation and mission purpose, which ultimately disables the continuation of the Biblical mandate.

Hesselgrave (1980:20) explains, "The primary mission purpose of the Church is to proclaim the gospel of Christ and gather believers into the local Churches where they can be built up in the faith and made effective for service, thereby

planting new congregations throughout the 'world.' In this next section, I will give a detail definition of syncretism.

2.8.2 Definition of Syncretism

Sitton (2005:83-97) described syncretism as an assimilation of one religion into another. His view is that it is the marriage of two or more opposing views or system of beliefs and practice merging with the biblical practices. It is the merging of two ideologies, alien to each other but is able to coexist and to interact. Sitton continue to explain that although the word is not found in the Old Testament, it was being practiced. He said that there were tendencies by the children of Israel to adhere to the corrupt teachings of nations while seeking to maintain biblical holiness.

Abraham's separation from his own native land was for the purpose of being separated from the evil and idolatrous nature of his home culture. In the course of their journey to the Promised Land, Israel struggled to maintain holiness. This explains the reason for God cleansing Canaan by exterminating its citizens: this was God's way of protecting the Israelites from being contaminated by the evils of that nation. Paul resisted syncretism in Ephesus. Ephesus could be considered a land rich in culture and practices that included worshipping various gods. It was difficult for Paul when he preached in Ephesus because he came up against Jews and other citizens who openly opposed the gospel and those who practised paganism. Syncretism was a combination of local and foreign elements in Ephesus.

O'Donovan (1996:254) adds further insight to the discussion of syncretism From an African Traditional Religious perspective; he explained that the mixture of other religious beliefs with Christianity is prevalent among non-Christian persons who move from one place to the other. Christians are forbidden to have nothing to do with rituals and practises, which are associated with traditional beliefs and practices. O'Donovan sees syncretism as a sin, because many traditional practices are related to non-Christian practices. It is very easy for people of African descent to embrace African Traditional Religious practices because they want to connect to their past. I will be revisiting the subject of

syncretism when addressing specific issues relating to the Saramaccan Maroons later in this chapter.

2.8.3 Discontinuity of the Mission of God in African Traditional Beliefs

Zwede (2008:7) says that when a person who once practised African traditional beliefs is converted to Christianity there comes a distinct break away from his or her traditions, in this case African religions and cultural heritage associated with the African traditional beliefs. The writer correctly claimed that, "For while every effort, should be made to make Christianity relevant to every people, in their situation. It must be placed in its right perspective. The unique nature of Biblical Christianity must be revealed. Faith must not be compromised with any local non-Christian religion."

The first step in the mission journey is to understand why the church is involved in mission. Mission programmes are not an option in the church; they are the foundation for spreading the good news of Jesus Christ. Mission is a natural aspect of a Christian lifestyle and needs to be incorporated into the on-going life of each congregation. In the forthcoming paragraph, I will proceed to discuss the purpose of mission.

Nusessle (1989:57) in his article shared some very sound ideas to explain the need for continuity in the mission of God. He suggested that God's grace comes upon us abundantly when we have received Jesus Christ. The writer feels that life itself is a grace-filled experience for Christians who reposition themselves to seek and understand what God is doing in the world. This experience is gloriously celebrated in Charles Wesley's most Methodist of hymns: *Oh for a thousand tongues to sing my great Redeemer's praise; the glories of my God and King, the triumph of his grace!* (The United Methodist 1989:57)

The grace of God is richly expressed in the Gospel of John, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16-17ESV). Nusessle (2008) discussed in his article the means of grace in mission as being driven by the love of God. He explained that it is by grace that God loves the whole world and offers the world the divine presence through the incarnation of Christ who made the ultimate sacrifice, taking our sins upon himself. He came not to condemn but to save.

This then, is the foundation for mission theology: to point the peoples of the world toward the gracious gift of love and acceptance in Jesus Christ and for us as the body of Christ, to live the reality of God's loving presence in the world. Christ the Word was God and came to live among us, full of grace and truth (John 1:14). That Christ is the incarnation of this loving presence is the basis of mission, because "God so loved the world". God loves the world so much that He has chosen to dwell among us so that we all might perceive the glory of this grace-filled gift. Mission becomes our task as Christians, because God in Christ is the divine dwelling here among us, and we have received "grace upon grace."

Scrivener (2009:2) supports this in his article by categorically confirming the fact that the Christian mission comes from God in the person of His risen Son Jesus Christ. He further suggests that the task of mission was handed to the Church. Scrivener explains that God's mission is not to be confused with ours. This is where there must be discontinuity. The Church's part in the *Missio Dei* is different from Christ's; the Church's primary purpose is to point people to the Kingdom of God. Peters (1972:11) says that evangelism "refers to the initial phrase of Christian ministry. It is the authoritative proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ as revealed in the Bible in relevant and intelligible terms, in a persuasive manner with a definite purpose of making Christian converts."

As the Church is charged with the responsibility of fulfilling the mission of God, the matter of continuity and discontinuity needs to be understood if the Church is to be effective in carrying out the mission of God. The proclamation of the gospel cannot be stopped if there is a need for it to be preached. The Church is charged with this special task to bring the message to all nations, people and cultures.

2.8.4. Continuity and Discontinuity seen through the Great Commission

In this section, I shall be continuing with the discussion on continuity and discontinuity with emphasis on the continuity and discontinuity of God's mission seen through the perspective of the Great Commission.

The Great Commission reads as follows:

And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age (Matt 28:18-20 ESV).”

Scrivener (2009) provided very important issues for discussion by linking the Great Commission to the continuity of God’s mission and ours.

At the resurrection of Christ, the consummation of the *Missio Dei* is declared decisively in history. He argued that the gospel mission of God is handed to the Church, which keeps the Great Commission alive. He draws a clear distinction between our mission and that of God. This must be understood lest we become confused that our mission originates from God. Our mission must not be confused with His. Scrivener sees discontinuity when our mission becomes distorted and disfigured. He also sees discontinuity when there is absolutely no more need to communicate the gospel. Scrivener (2009:2) stated, “Emphatically our commission comes from the Victor. All authority is His. The risen Christ has established the kingdom. Sin is atoned for, wrath is averted, Satan is vanquished, death is defeated, heaven and earth are reconciled, and man stands on the earth as King under God. Moreover, where this Head has come, this is where there is no more need for the gospel. Christ has come.” Scrivener believes that this is another point where there will be need for continuity. There will be discontinuity of mission when Christ returns; the Church’s purpose, which is that of evangelizing, will be concluded in this world.

2.8.5 Consequences of Continuity and Discontinuity

In the previous section, I discussed both the continuity and discontinuity between God’s mission and ours; in this section we will discuss some consequences. I will discuss two important and striking points raised by Scrivener in his article. Scrivener (2009) emphasised that Christians ought to be faithful in carrying out the mission of God. Through their faithfulness and God’s redemptive act, the Church will see a discontinuity. However, the Church is to

be reminded that it does not bring or give redemption to the sinner. The Church's purpose is to bring Christ to the world as the one who has already accomplished our redemption. The Church will betray its gospel-mission the minute it thinks it can establish Christ's kingdom. The Church does not save the world. In the risen Christ, it is already saved. Believers are not the doers; they are witnesses to His ultimate and all-encompassing doing. We 'go' as heralds, not mini-saviours. Does God depend solely on Christians to continue His mission?

What if Christians are not carrying out the Great Commission mandate? What if Christians are acting as demi-gods? It is my opinion that God intends for missions to carry out His plans and its progress depends upon God's people. Although God is at the heart of mission, He commissioned his Church to carry out the missionary task in association with Him. This shows why God deals with humanity in the first place; missions is the manner in which the Kingdom of God will come to earth. Mission is the method by which Jesus is reconciling man to Himself. Scrivener seems to suggest that continuity of the gospel message is closely related to our understanding of our mission. The *Missio Dei* comes into sharper focus; the ending, going is by nature part of the DNA of the Church. So what is the goal? This question can be answered by explaining that God's purpose is to exalt His Son in His Spirit - empowered Word. God will choose to reveal Himself in many ways, through and out of the lives of humanity as He chooses. The purpose of the Father throughout the ages has been exclusively focused on His Son.

In the power of the Spirit, God's Word has been illuminating the world for centuries. Jesus entrusts to His followers His Word. The Church has inherited a gospel mission for the world, i.e. the Father's mission to exalt His Son in His Spirit-empowered Word. God's mission is completely evangelistic. When the Church sees the implications of this for its mission, it will then realise that its mission is purely evangelistic as well.

I have discussed the continuity aspects of African Traditional beliefs in Christianity, a definition of syncretism, discontinuity of the mission of God in African traditional beliefs, continuity and discontinuity seen through the Great Commission and the consequences of continuity and discontinuity. There is

continuity between mission in the Old Testament and mission in the New Testament. I believe that there is a degree of continuity and discontinuity between both the Old and New Testaments. Carey (1792) in his article, *An Enquiry in to the Obligation of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathen*, argued that the Great Commission had not been fulfilled by the Apostles and is yet to be fulfilled by Christians who ought to be active in converting lost souls to Christ. In discussing Carey's views, it comes across sharply that Christians, whether they are missionaries, missiologists or theologians must validate their practices through the commandments given by God through the Scriptures. The Church is mandated to preach the gospel to the entire world. God revealed His mission from the Old to New Testaments. There must be continuity if the gospel message is to influence culture. I shall discuss the concept of culture in the next section.

2.9 CONCEPT OF CULTURE

Hiebert (1985:30) defines culture as the total way of life of a people, the social legacy the individual acquires from his group, a people's "design for living". "It is an integrated system of ideas, feelings, and values and their associated patterns of behaviour and products shared by a group of people who organise and regulate what they think, feel, and do." Culture is best described as a mode for living or a coping mechanism. Kraft (2003:38) further explained that as cross-cultural witnesses, it is essential that we should be able to effect changes that are the least disruptive to the people. Therefore, it is important to understand the processes of cultural change in a constructive, rather than destructive way. Cross-cultural witnesses must communicate the gospel in an effective way. In order for this to happen, they must have a vivid understanding of the host culture and be able to form a thorough person-to-person relationship. The outcome of any missionary task is fully dependent upon the quality of relationships between cross-cultural workers and the host culture. Jesus was able to fulfil his task on earth by bridging the cultural gap between heaven and earth by becoming a human and living among us. Just as God became one with the world in order to bring redemption to humanity, missionaries must become one with the community to whom they are

presenting the gospel in order to lead them to accept Jesus Christ as their personal saviour.

2.9.1 The Gospel and the Cultures

The Church operates in the midst of various cultures, cognizant that there are enormous cultural differences in most nations of the world. The challenge to the Church is communicating the gospel in a relevant way to the culture in which it operates. Newbigin (1989:185-186) refutes McGavran's words that "God accepts culture" (Lausanne Congress for World Evangelization, 1974); the Lausanne Congress therefore tended to absolutise culture and to minimize the cultural changes which conversion ought to imply. While people who accept the gospel ought to retain the broad outline of their traditional cultures, one could certainly not agree that accepting the gospel leaves unchallenged the non-Christian elements of culture. Some of these relate to eating, sexual behaviours and other aspects of culture. Newbigin stresses that the most fundamental element in culture is language. When people are forbidden to use their traditional language, as for instance the Highlanders of Scotland in the eighteenth century or Taiwanese in our own time, then they feel that the very foundation of their common life is destroyed.

Newbigin (1989:185-186) further explained that nations of the world should not be compelled to learn the language of the missionary in order to become part of the universal Church. Since English is the language so widely used throughout the world, the temptation is to use English for the primary language of communication. Missionaries are tempted to communicate the gospel in English or in their own language instead of communicating in the language of the host culture. On the day of Pentecost, scores of different nations heard the Word of God being communicated to them in their own languages, thus showing that Pentecost is God's way of saying that he accepts all languages. It is important to understand that although God accepts all languages as a means to communicate the gospel, he does not accept all forms of cultural elements. For example, God will not accept a born-again Christian continuing the practice of homosexuality, prostitution, cannibalism, polygamy or any behaviour that depicts corruption. Paul declares that one becomes a new creation in Christ

when he is born again. It took the Church many centuries to understand that certain behaviours are not in conformity with the gospel.

Newbigin (1989:186) argued that it seems clear that no one is willing, in the last resort, to accept a total relativism about culture. All of us judge some elements of culture to be good and some bad. The question asked is whether such judgmentalism is driven by cultural premises or from the gospel itself? The truth is that some missionaries are led to believe that their own culture is the standard by which other cultures should be judged, rather than the gospel. The difficulty these issues bring is well illustrated in the continuing disagreement between the Pentecostal and Full Gospel Churches in Suriname about the lifestyles of the Maroons. There are some social arrangements of the Maroons with which missionaries should have no business to interfere, for example choice of foods, caste identity, and their hierarchical social structure which is not normal in North America, Europe, and the Caribbean or in Paramaribo, the capital city of Suriname.

Verkuyl (1978) suggests that there is a limit to how much is allowed to be continued and discontinued. The gospel must be the basis on which the missionary should justify continuity and discontinuity. In African society, their argument in the support of polygamy is always based on Old Testament models of polygamy among revered patriarchs. There can be no continuity of such practice by a born again Christian. The Biblical teaching as a whole must lead to a conclusion that the proper way is a lifelong, God-ordained relationship embodied in the gospel. The nineteenth century was a time when cultural motives often supplanted genuine Biblical motives for mission. I shall look more closely at this in the following paragraph.

2.9.2 The Cultural Motive

Missionaries of the nineteenth century were seen as ambassadors of the western cultural ideals to nations on other continents. The goal of the missionary was seen as two-fold. It was to present the gospel of salvation, and to carry the cultural values such as mannerisms, customs and the selfish intentions of western nations to the mission field. Van Rheenen (1996: 42-43) argued extensively on this aspect of the motive of mission. He explained that

westerners are often touched by socio-economic conditions of the world, especially in terms of poverty in comparison to their own situation. There is often a strong desire to use their medical, technical and teaching skills to improve the lives and conditions of people in these other countries. Western missionaries often feel that it is God who is the driving force, motivating their desire to go into the mission field.

Van Rheenen continues to argue that the desire to travel the world and to see other cultures, for example, unusual customs and food are some of the reasons why many westerners are inclined towards mission. They have a desire to learn, act and think like the natives of these countries. However, he warned against becoming missionaries because of the adventure, as this is often what motivates people to the mission field. Van Rheenen refers to this type of missionary motive a defective motive. These motives do not reflect the heart of God; it is fused with selfishness and the primary purpose of mission. However, he says that having a secondary motive should not prevent missionaries from fulfilling their primary purpose. He sees God as the only one who can transform defective motives into complete obedience to God's will for missionaries. Western culture views mission as taking an activity from the west to other nations of the world. Van Rheenen (1996: 43) shares the view that a missionary who enters the mission field should enter as one who has a clear desire to build a deeper faith. The missionary has to be the communicator of the gospel to all nations.

Goheen (1992:2) says, "mission should not be defined geographically, but rather in terms of the calling of the Church to bear witness of the gospel in life, word, and deed in all parts of the world." The world mission must re-adjust itself if it is seeking to fulfil its mandate. In order for the Church to reach cultures, the missionary must see himself as a citizen of the entire world, putting away his own worldview to embrace the new cultures with the gospel message. Verkuyl (1978:172) put it correctly when he says that, "this cannot be done if the missionary sees himself as a purveyor of French, English, American, or any other western culture." It is impossible for the missionary to carry out God's mandate with a distorted view of other cultures. Newbigin (1989:190) addressed this issue of a westernised context of Christianity imposed upon the world. He

argued that the history of cross-cultural missions in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is extremely complex, full of unexpected twists and full of ironies. Chinese intellectuals rejected the invasion of missionaries in the nineteenth century partly at least on the ground that they brought with them a foreign culture. Today, the Chinese leadership honours missionaries like Timothy Richard precisely because they brought China into touch with western society and so prepared the way for what is now called modernization.

It cannot truly be proved that the expansion of westernized civilization was solely dependent on western ministry, but in some respects, it is still the same today. Western missionaries are still sometimes seen as heralds for politicians, who use them to establish relationships with other nations. While the expansion of western culture into other nations through evangelisation did occur, it should also be noted that there was strong Christian critique of elements of the so-called Christian civilization. However, it is evident that European and North American civilizations were being spread through missionary efforts because at that time, Christianity and civilization were seen as going together. That era is definitely over. Many discerning people, including Christians, sensing that Western culture is bankrupt, look elsewhere for salvation. This raises a question: If Western culture is bankrupt, where does it leave the expression of the gospel, which is embodied in its culture? To be more specific, how can a corrupt generation be left responsible for spreading the gospel to all nations? Goheen (1999:2) contends that mission must not be defined geographically, but rather in terms of the calling of the Church to bear witness to the gospel in life, word and deed to all parts of the world. The way in which any Christian perceives God's revelation in Christ and in the whole biblical story will be shaped by the culture through which that individual was formed (Newbigin 1989:182). Jesus will be viewed by varying perceptions of Him because each culture is different with culturally different people. The gospel must be communicated in a relevant way although they different cultures perceive Jesus through different lenses. Missionaries must be faithful to biblical truths. Verkuyl (1978:113) refers to one of his compatriot D van Swigchem, *Het missionaire karakter van de christelijke gemeente, 1955*. His doctoral dissertation on the missionary nature of the early Christian congregation as seen in the writings of

Paul and Peter, discussed that the early Church did not have to remind Christians about fulfilling the biblical mandate. They knew that it had to be done. It was a matter beyond dispute and was seen as a responsibility that needs no prompting.

Whenever Paul mentions the mandate, it is to remind himself of his obligation. He deems himself entrusted by God with a specific mission (1 Cor.1:17; Gal.2:7). Paul brought to the missionary mandate many examples of contextualization. He made use of a full range of gifts. His ability to speak various languages and adapt too many cultures proved his tolerance for many cultures. He used Palestinian-Jewish concepts, Hellenistic-Jewish concepts, and Hellenistic-Gentile concepts as the need required. Paul's example is incalculably important not only to Bible translators today, but to any person who communicates the gospel. As part of Paul's strategy, he made it his business to research the cultures by studying their economic and social structures. Even though this strategy may not be normative for today, it may serve well in preparation for the missionary's task, not ignoring the call of the Holy Spirit and submitting oneself to the will of God. The cry of the Maroons of Suriname is to preserve their cultural identity by not sacrificing every aspect of it to the demands of missionaries. The missionary will do well to relieve himself of his cultural baggage if he is to communicate effectively to the Maroons.

2.10 CONCLUSION

This chapter has demonstrated from the Old and New Testament Scriptures that God's redemptive plan is for all nations of the earth to be reached with the gospel. It is the responsibility of all who receive His gift of eternal life to spread the gospel to all the earth. The missionary's purpose is built on a mission-focused relationship with God, keeping in tune with God's plan of salvation and His ultimate intention of rescuing all nations of the earth through the gospel. The chapter gives evidence that the Scriptures have a unique and authoritative way of stating the missionary mandate. Jesus Christ gave the New Testament missionary mandate. The discharging of this order is connected to the Holy Spirit. Jesus issues the command; the Holy Spirit enables his followers to obey.

This chapter has shown how nineteenth century missionaries were perceived, but in spite of their early misconceptions about mission, they often managed to communicate a clear biblical message that emphasised the validity of the Scriptures, the purposes of mission and the Church as a global movement that functioned in a multicultural and multilingual environment. The lesson from this is that the Church must be submissive to learning new cultural ideals without compromising the gospel and without being possessive in communicating the gospel. God's intention is for his Church to emulate the model of the early church's model of evangelisation. Paul's example of contextualization is a strategy worth employing in order to achieve God's saving purpose. God's intention is that the world may know Him. Finally, the theology of mission makes possible the healing and liberation of the penitent. It shows the redemptive presence of Jesus Christ to all nations. Mission is the heart of God carrying out God's command to bring His salvation to all peoples (Isaiah 49:6). Evangelisation of the world should be at the very heart of Christian mission. Newbiggin (1989:118) writes: "The mission of the Church is to be understood in terms of the Trinitarian model. It is the Father who holds all things in his hand, whose providence upholds all things, whose tender mercies are over all his works, where he is acknowledged and where he is denied, and who has never left himself without witness to the heart and conscience and reason of any human being." God is completely involved in mission. He is the reason for mission. He is the reason why missionaries are engaged in mission. Through his prevenient grace, people will be convicted of their sinful state and will come to know Him as their Saviour.

CHAPTER 3: THE CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS PROBLEMS FACING MISSION WORK AMONG THE MAROON OF THE UPPER SURINAME RIVER

Chapter three will be devoted to displaying and analysing the empirical research component of the study. I will present a brief ethnographic profile of the Maroons of the upper Suriname River; the data acquired from the empirical research will be discussed question by question. I received answers from the Saramaccan villagers and Village Captains², Pastors and other Christian workers who are working with the Maroons. All questions asked and answers received were aimed at uncovering and solving the problem of presenting the gospel to Maroons of the upper Suriname River. I will incorporate informal discussions with church leaders and views from some church members relevant to the study.

3.1 A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE MAROONS OF THE UPPER SURINAME RIVER

3.1.1 The Upper Suriname River

The Suriname River is 480 km long and runs through the country. The Saramaccan Maroons are living in villages on the Upper Suriname River area. Kent (1978:5) gives an historical overview of the Maroons' flight from the sugar plantation and their eventual settlement in villages along the bank of the Upper Suriname River. The Maroons of Suriname are descendants of West Africans Slaves who were brought to Suriname by the Dutch. Kent quoted from Dr R.van Lier, who wrote, "the Dutch made their appearance at the West-African Coast in

²The Captain is the administrative head of a Maroon village. He represent the paramount chief or the Graanman who is head of all the Saramaccan villages. The Captain of a village is assisted by a Basia (Price1974:50).

1594 to do business in gold and ivory.” In 1598, they settled in Mauree on the Gold Coast, which was the most important field of operation. They built the Fort of Nassau there in 1611. In 1642, they drove the Portuguese from the coast. In establishing the West-Indische Company in 1621, the Dutch had reached a new stage in their activities on the West-African Coast. The West-Indische Compagnie got the monopoly on the trade to Africa and thus got control of the slave trade, which was developed after 1630. From this time on Africans were sent to Suriname. Velzen and Wetering (2004:7-8) went on to say that the Portuguese controlled the coasts of Africa and supplied most of the slaves to the west around the 1640s. The English and the French soon got involved in the African slave-trading business. Velzen and Wetering explained that around 1730, Suriname became the most important slave-trading market in all of South America. Kent (1978:5-6) described the conditions in which the slaves worked. He says that they worked in very poor conditions on the sugar plantations. They were treated as the possessions of the planters and their values were calculated in terms of their economic value. The planters had little respect for their human dignity. This caused many slaves to flee the plantation for the dense jungle of Suriname. Their escape to the interior was done very soon after their arrival on the plantations. The Maroons hid themselves at the Suriname River, the Saramacca River and the Coppename River. Velzen and Wetering (2004:7-8) argue that incarcerated and abused men would rather risk being killed than remain on the plantations and be subjected to such horrible conditions. Slaves continued to run away from the plantations because of the on-going brutality they faced at the hands of plantation owners, with the largest group fleeing in 1712 when the French led by Cassard invaded the colony. Plantation owners instructed the slaves to hide themselves in the bushes with the hope that they would return to the plantations after the departure of the invader Cassard. The slaves never returned to the plantations, instead, they made their way to the dense jungle to join their fellow Maroons. Velzen and Wetering (1988:9) explained that slaves were working under very harsh conditions on the plantations, hence the reason why they escaped in very large numbers and fled to the interior. Not all runaway slaves made it to freedom, some were unable to survive the harsh and unfriendly tropical rainforest, and they were caught and were quickly returned to the plantation owners. Price (1992) stated in his article

that recaptured slaves would have their Achilles tendon removed for the first offence, and for a second offence, their right leg amputated. Price also said that some runaway slaves would meet their death by castration or being roasted to death.

The slaves continued to run away from the plantations as long as brutality by plantations owners continued. The Maroons as they were now called organized themselves and began to attack the colony. They destroyed plantations and carried out regular raids in an attempt to free other slaves from plantations and to find wives. Their methods of attack took the form of guerrilla warfare. This proved very difficult for the colony to counteract; they responded by destroying villages, but this was unsuccessful.

Kent (1978:6-7) explained how Governor Mauricius, in his attempt to discourage the Maroons from staging further organized attacks, thought that it would be better to make peace with them, hoping that through the new accord they would join him in defeating other Maroon groups. He decided to divide them into tribes with the sole purpose of creating enmity amongst the tribes. Kent (1978:6) discussed how that after a prolonged period of war, peace had finally come on the 20th of September 1749, between the Maroons of Saramacca under the Maroon chief Adoe and the Captain Lieutenant Creutz, who was given the responsibility to see that the mission to Chief Adoe was successful. According to Kent (1998:6), Maroons were given the opportunity to do business with the whites in exchange for the delivery of every slave who fled in 1749. The agreement included a payment of Sf1.50 (One Suriname gulden and fifty cents). Chief Adoe, after much negotiation signed the peace treaty. The signing of this first peace treaty opened the door for other treaties to be signed. Major Meyer made peace with the Aucaneers in Marowijne in 1760. A second peace treaty was signed on the 19th of September 1762 between the colony and the Saramaccan Maroons. The peace treaty of 1749 was broken because of a misunderstanding between the Saramaccans and the colony. They thought that the government was setting them up. The Chief Zamzam of another village who was not aware of the second peace treaty signed in 1762 between the Saramaccan chief Adoe, attacked and robbed a group of people who were on their way to Chief Adoe with gifts. The actions of Chief Zamzam who was part of

the first treaty caused Chief Adoe to raise suspicions against the Government whom he thought had not kept their word. The Saramaccans and the Aucaneers, including a representative from the government, carried on the negotiations for peace after a brief truce. However, this was not to be end of wars between the Maroons and the government, nor between different tribes. Kent (1978:7-8) shared two interesting facts about the attitude of the Maroons towards the Christian religion. It stemmed from the chief Boni who fled to seek refuge in the French-territory, causing top-level discussion between a representative from the French and the Dutch colonial governments. The French were not happy that Boni had fled to their territory. A well-known French representative by the name of Malouet described the mass exodus by slaves off the plantation, saying that they were severely ill-treated by their masters and they lacked religious knowledge. Malouet felt that religion could keep the Maroons in check. This was contrast to popular belief at that time. The local authorities seemed to think that it was virtually impossible to govern slaves in a way without using religion. They also did not think that the slaves were worthy enough to receive the religion of the colonist.

3.1.2. Saramaccan Social Setting

The ancestors of the Saramaccans were among those African slaves who fought their way off the plantations and found refuge in the dense rainforest of Suriname. They settled in small groups and began to build a social structure, which is rich in oral tradition. The well-preserved oral and archival account is highly appreciated by those Saramaccans who continue to live in the interior, preserving their way of life. Price (1975) described vividly the Saramaccans social structure. Their social structure is based primarily on a matrilineal principle which is subdivided into lineages. Price argued that matriliney is spread throughout every aspect of Saramaccan life. It defines membership in two cooperating groups such as the '*Bee*' and the '*Lo*', which are two social classes among the Saramaccan. The two social classes, together with the "village" form the nucleus of the Saramaccan society.

Price explained that the 'Lo' is the second corporate group, which joined the Saramaccans tribe. They come from a maternal line of a common Lo mother. Therefore, the matrilineal descendants of each of these bands belong to the Lo. Every Lo is divided into number of Bees as a group of matrilineal relatives; they can trace their descent from a common Bee mother. The most important clan in the Saramaccans society, as Price wrote, is the membership of the Bee clan. The Bee holds the right to make major decisions in the community. They play a decisive role in matters relating to marriage, residence, inheritance, succession and other daily social transactions. The Bee mother holds the key to the rights of inheritance because succession takes place in the maternal line. Children of a Bee mother are the legal heirs of the mother's brother and not her husband. In case of succession, the sister's child will succeed as captain or chief of the village. Men in each cluster of houses, whether Bee or Lo, would eat meals together. The women likewise spend a great deal of time in each other's company, often spending time farming together. The majority of social interactions take place out of doors between the two clans. Divination plays a pivotal role in the daily aspect of the Saramaccans' social life. Price (1975:38) explained that moral laws are created and administered through divination. He discussed that Saramaccan Maroons utilise divination for everything including toothaches, dreams, accidents such as honeybee bites, or even bad weather. They are highly superstitious. I will argue that the Saramaccans are a religious group of people whose life is surrounded by many facets the divine; it is as if there is no area in their culture in which god/God is not presence. This is one of the reason why western missionaries failed to penetrate them with the gospel. I argue that this comes about when the worldview or opinion of a particular culture is forced upon another culture without any anthropological insights into that culture. This is not evangelisation. Pocock, Van Rhee, and McConnell (2008:234-235) argued that there must be a platform created to facilitate the accomplishment of the evangelistic goal. They are implying that in many situations some missionaries do not have a clear sense of direction. They feel that these types of missionaries focused too much on details instead of the overall mission and that are some who go along for the ride. When considering the Saramaccans way of life, with all the dynamics that play out in their culture, it is imperative that missionaries have a platform, which will act as an entry point

to what is currently considered inaccessible. This platform can serve as a starting point for future possibilities. Mc Connell says, that it answers the question, “Why are you here?”

3.1.3 Political Organization and Social Control

Price (1975:75-77) contends that Saramaccans communities, like any other Maroon groups, are a male dominated society. He shared the view that even though it is a male dominated society, women are very powerful because of the materlinear structure in society. In reality, women can oppose decisions taken by men. It is an unusual society; their society is strongly egalitarian, with kinship forming the backbone of social organization. Elders are afforded special respect and ancestors are consulted through divination on a daily basis. As far back as the eighteenth century, the Saramaccans have had an approved government. The head chief of the Saramaccan tribe carries the title known as the *Gaama*, with captains representing him within various villages. A Basia who acts like a secretary assists each village captain. It is important to know that the role of these officials in political and social control is exercised in context with a clan system, primarily the Lo. The offices are hereditary and the offices of chief and captain will be passed on to succeeding generations.

3.1.4 Livelihood Strategies

The Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLAC) (2006:26-27) and the Caribbean study of Suriname’s Maroons have concluded that the Saramaccans have been sustaining themselves essentially through agricultural farming. Other means of income are met through working in the gold mining sector and harvesting forestry products and a small amount of poultry farming. However, agriculture is the mainstay of their economy. Farming in the Saramaccan culture is paramount. If someone who has reached the age to farm does not engage himself in farming, he is considered unproductive in the community. Fishing is done in various Saramaccans communities but not on a large scale. There is a need for more sustainable fishing practices, taking into consideration the negative impact from gold mining on fishery. In May 2006, the district of Sipaliwini and other neighbouring communities were seriously affected by a

flood, which affected their livelihood. Because of their inability to sustain themselves during this ordeal, various organizations including the government had to ensure that adequate food supplies were shuttled into the affected communities. Continuing deforestation and privatization of land for business and initiatives, has given rise to a reduction in agricultural production, thus affecting many aspects of the Saramaccan traditional way of life. Appeals are being made to government and the private sector to preserve the Maroons' way of life.

3.2. AN OVERVIEW OF AFRICAN TRADITIONAL RELIGION.

Mbiti (1991:7) discussed vividly the dynamics that are found in African religious culture. He identified five elements of religion within the African Culture, e.g. beliefs, ceremonies, sacred items, places and holy people. However, this belief system is without a founder, or sacred writings. This then challenges the use of terms such as 'African Religion'. The writer argued that it is improper to use terms such as fetishism and animism as definitions of African ancestor worship. He suggested that although ancestors are honoured in African religion, fetishes and spirits are usually associated with nature worship. He asserts that in the African Traditional belief systems, there is belief in God. African traditionalists are considered as theists, realising that all persons are limited to their conception of natural forces, e.g. natural disasters, lightning and thunder. They acknowledge God as creator, governor and preserver of all things (Mbiti 1991: 40-53).

3.2.1 Primary Beliefs

Apart from believing and seeing God as the creator, preserver and governor of all things, they also believe in spirits, deities and ancestors (Ngada and Mofokeng 2001:23). African Traditional Religion belief system is graded in a hierarchical structure. God is seen as the highest among the spirits and is remote and inaccessible (Nürnberg 2007:133). The organizational structure is found in the following decreasing order: God, deities, ancestors, spirits, and humankind. A similar organizational structure is used to govern their communities. For example, in the African context, each tribe is headed by a

king or chief who holds the highest office and wields authority over the elders, parents and children. According to Nürnberger no one in the hierarchical structure could be transcend towards a higher authority. They believe that only the highest authority can legitimize the hierarchical structure, therefore there is belief that the hierarchy is divinely placed for the wellbeing of the community or tribe (Nürnberger 2007:74-75). Mtuze (2003:107) asserts that Africans believe that it is important to pay homage to their living dead. They believe that there are evil spirits and that these must be kept at bay, because ancestors are higher in the organizational structure.

3.2.2. The personal Creator –God

O'Donovan (1995:87) discussed that in most African tribes, traditional people view the creation of humanity in a similar way to what is written in the Bible, although there are various connotations. They do not support the evolution theory, they believe in a transcendent God who dwells in a faraway place unable to be reached by humans. He transcends all boundaries; he is mystic and cannot be explained (Mbiti 1969:31-33). They respect God and honour him for his deity, being the highest Supreme Being above all other creation including spirits, divinities and others. He is too supreme and transcendent to even be perceived to be involved in practical life (Nürnberger 2007: 75). Mbiti (1969: 83-84) argued that African tribes usually approach the ancestors for minor needs of life rather than approaching God. He did not say what these minor needs are but it is commonly known that when the people approach the ancestors it is usually related to illness, misfortunes, and even agricultural mishaps. O'Donovan (1995:99) tells us that the words of the village elders and the determination of the ancestors are more important for their daily living rather than living according to the will of the almighty God. This is interpreted to mean that contacting the ancestors and observing the traditions is not disobeying God and his purpose for them. They see their association with the ancestors as God's will for them. They believe that their veneration to ancestors is actually worshipping God (Mbiti 1969:58).

3.2.3 Spirits and Ghosts

Mbiti (1969:81) and Nürnberger (2007:9-10) tell us that in the African traditional religion there are spirit beings. Africans believe that spirits are ghosts of the dead who were elevated to be with the ancestors after death. It is believed that these spirits dwell in rivers, caves, and animals and may possess humans. They explained that the activity of these spirits vary according to their location in Africa. For example, in West Africa, the spirits are more active than those of Eastern and Southern Africa. Mbiti (1969:81-84) stated that all spirits and ghosts are malevolent, meaning that they are malicious and they are usually enlisted to do evil. Craffert (1999:35-36) says that power is needed to protect persons against evil spirits. Mbiti (1969:82) suggests that persons may seek help from traditional doctors and diviners who they believe can exorcise spirits from possessed people.

3.2.4 Ancestor Worship

In this section, I shall be taking a comparative approach and will interact with the Saramaccans view. Thorpe (1991:115) stated that the ancestor cult is one of the most prominent features of traditional religion. It is believed that the departed dead from this world dwell in the spiritual realm where they protect and guide the lives of their earthly relatives. Mtuze (2003:106-107) argued that the living-dead are recognised as being powerful enough to keep evil spirits away from persons. Mtuze further stated that the ancestors represent God and carry out his will for the people. Burnett (2000:65-66) explained that the ancestral state is maintained as long as the ancestor is given homage by his/her living relatives. The ancestor will cease to exist after the departing of the last relative. Therefore, it is important for such families to be very large. The belief is that the ancestors watch over the traditions, punish wrongdoers and give blessings to their relatives (Nürnberger 2007:54). Maboea (2002:12) suggests that it is necessary to honour, thank, respect and pay regular homage to ancestors to avoid malevolent intervention.

To people who grow up with the worldview of African culture there is a heightened awareness of the spiritual forces and the presence of spirits. There is keen interest in matters relating to the spirit of the dead. Although ancestor

worship is practised around the world, it is seen as a primitive practice associated with primitive civilization.

Hardacre (2005) discussed the proliferation of ancestor worship in the eastern culture as being linked to the practice of Buddhism and its impact on those societies. Ancestor worship, in its practise, stabilises the society in supporting social control, uplifting the authorities of elders. Ancestor worship as practised in the eastern culture is highly regarded as a religious practice strictly limited to ethnic groups. In reviewing Hardacre's work, it is true to say that, there is still taboo placed on ancestor worship in some societies. No attempt is made to proselytize outsiders because it is regarded as a cult because of its deep association with the spirit world. This instills fear in outsiders who regard the practice as devil worship. Traditional African belief varies from tribe to tribe, but all accept that there is a creator who is disconnected from the daily details of humanity, but gives the authority to lesser gods (spirits) to carry out his will. It is important to understand that there is a clear distinction between the spirits of ancestors and the dead, although they both follow a similar path and are inseparable. Ancestor worshippers give much credence to the dead. In this way, the dead are believed to have very strong influence over their living descendants. Their spiritual presence in communities holds the key to the moral, ethical and institutional value of culture within a community. The view is that ancestor worship is the life and breath of communities that practice African traditional religion; all of its rituals, religious connotations are intrinsic to the core existence of the society in which it is being practised. It is important to know that Saramaccan Maroons are not devoted to ancestors, but to the gods. They do not believe that ancestors are god. The Saramaccans believe in a pantheon of gods living in water, air, and bush and in certain animals. They believe that there is also the spirit of the dead, who is not a god. The spirit of the dead is called *yooka* (Kent 1978).

Hardacre (1992:263) gives an abstract definition of ancestor worship.

The ancestor worship designates rites and beliefs concerning deceased relatives. Rites of ancestor worship include personal devotions, domestic rites, and the ancestral rites of a kinship group such as lineage, periodic rites on the death day of the deceased and annual rites for the collected ancestors.

Generally excluded from the category are rites for the dead having no specific reference to relatives, and beliefs about the dead in general that lack any special reference to kinship.

Hardacre's statement suggests that there is a marriage between ancestor worship and the cult of the dead. Hardacre implies that rituals, which include personal devotions, are homage paid to the dead. There is no separation between ancestor spirits and spirits of the deceased. Gluckman (1937:117-136) argues that there is a clear distinction between ancestor worship and the spirits of the dead. Gluckman is saying that ancestors represent the positive and moral forces, which watch over man, protecting him from misfortune and which, in turn, require that he follow a moral code of conduct. He further claims that the cult of the dead is not directed at a deceased relative, but that it belongs to the spirit of the dead in all areas. He believes that spirits are prayed to so that certain deeds can be accomplished whereas ancestors are prayed to satisfy basic social principles. All of this contradicts the teachings of the Holy Bible. Later in the thesis, I shall deal with the biblical perspective, giving evidence that there is only one God who is infinitely perfect and who is the only true proper object of religious worship.

Hwang (1977:343) states that ancestor worshippers believe that by giving credence to departed kin, helps to preserve a harmonious relationship with the departed. Actions on the part of the living include giving offerings to the dead, which could be in the form of foods they once desired. This appeasement is to pacify the souls of the dead. There are still very strong arguments today between adherents of ancestor worship and missionaries on the question of the validity of ancestor worship as a *bonafide* religion. Although life in present-day Saramaccans society is changing, the problem of traditional beliefs and practices is still a very important issue. Most traditional religions require a system of intermediaries such as divinities or ancestral spirits to approach God on man's behalf or to solve the problems of life. It is also a way to explain issues relating to their everyday life. Saramaccans worship God as the Supreme Being, the almighty, who is far away and cannot be blame for the evils that are taking place in society. This is in comparison to beliefs and practices in many African communities. Saramaccans communities believe in and practice

rituals, sacrifices, divination, magic, curses. Witchcraft and witch doctors still form a large part of the Saramaccans' religious beliefs today. Christian denominations trying to convert Saramaccans to Christianity are often confronted with these issues. In this section, I shall discuss their traditional beliefs and practices in ancestor worship.

Kent (1978:12-13) defines the Saramaccans' religion as a more or less coherent system of beliefs and practices concerning a supernatural order of beings, forces, places or entities. Kent argues that Saramaccans' are deeply entrenched in their culture, they believe that everything has implications, that is implications for their behaviour and welfare that they take seriously in their private and collective life." This is true in the Saramaccans' society, for they believe in a variety of divinities while they worship the supreme God known as the *Anana Keeduampoor Gaan Gadu*, meaning "the great God above." They believe that this supreme God is not concerned with daily tasks for he delegates these everyday tasks to lower gods who in turn exert influence on humanity.

St-Hilaire (2000:8) quoted Hoogbergen (1990) in suggesting that the supreme God of the Saramaccan Maroons plays a pivotal role in the intertribal relationships. For example, they believe that *Obia* is similar to Christianity because it speaks of the Holy Spirit, which the Maroons believe is their daily protector. The Saramaccans polytheism, like many other elements in Maroon society, is never entirely replaced by Christianity. They believe that Christianity is added as another pantheon of gods. It is the reason why they believe that there is a supreme god, "The Great God above," *Gaan Gadu a Tapu*. The Kent focused on some of the deities and spirits that play an important part in Saramaccans religious beliefs. They are as follows:

1. The Sky god: This takes the form of the vulture, known as *Opete*.
2. The Earth god: (Tonnegod) this is manifested in the form of reptiles such as the cayman.
3. The god of the Forrest: (*Ampuku* and *Akantaas*) are beasts of prey, such as the jaguar and the ocelot, known as *adjain kumanti*.
4. The Water Snake god: (*Vodu*) this is manifested in the form of the boa constrictor. They believe that there are powerful avenging spirits such as:

The Kunu – Avenging spirit, *kromanti*, the tiger spirit and the *Yooka*, spirit of the dead.

St-Hillaire (2000:8-9) corroborated Kent's theory when he quoted Helman (1978) who explained that *Yooka*, or spirits of the deceased, are regarded as lower forms of gods who are subordinates to the supreme God. These lower gods or spirits manifest themselves in various forms and can carry out different functions according to their nature. According to St-Hillaire, it is the belief of Saramaccan Maroons that spirits can take possession of a person who will be influenced by some supernatural power. These spirits speak through possessed persons; however, an ancestor will not do that; only the *Yooka* does this. The *Kromanti* is seen as the most violent of the spirits.

Van Velsen and Van Wetering (2004:27) in their account of Maroons' religious beliefs, made special mention of the avenging spirit, *Kunu*. The Saramaccan Maroons believe that there is a strong link between the Kunu and their matrilineal kinship structure. The Kunu as an avenging spirit is responsible for avenging human crimes such as murders to small and lesser criminal acts. Its primary purpose is to punish the perpetrators and all his or her matrilineage long after the crime has been committed. This summarises their notion of collective curses. For example, the *Yooka* is one of these avenging spirits that if someone kills an innocent person, the spirit of the deceased person will become an avenging spirit or *Yooka* to the murderer's family

Kent (1978: 12-13) explained the role of the avenging spirit called the *Kromanti* (Tiger spirit). The *Kromanti* is a very powerful spirit that possesses humankind but is not feared as much as the *Kunu*. The *Kromanti* can manifest itself in humans allowing them to do things such as walk through fire. Kent continues to elaborate by explaining the role of the *Kunus* in the Saramaccan society. Kent explained that besides avenging murder or other criminal acts, the *Kunu* is also an avenging spirit of a person and other types of gods who were wronged during his lifetime. It is believed that the spirit will dedicate itself to torment eternally the matrilineal descendants. They also torment close matrilineal relatives of the perpetrator. They believe that revenge comes in the form of illnesses, deaths and misfortunes. There are different kinds of *Kunu* in the Saramaccans spirit world. The greatest *Kunu* is the spirit of a murdered man or

woman. They believe that some *Kunu* are very bad and there are those who do not interfere or make much trouble. It is difficult to comprehend that there can be a good *Kunu*. Kent explained that a *Kunu* is morally blind, striking down saints and sinners indiscriminately and without regard to the extent of their involvement in the original misdeed. This is just one of their ways in pouring out vengeance. Kent holds the view that the *Kunu* is another form of casting curses and punishment on those who have done bad deeds in the Saramaccans society. Divination permeates the entire lifestyle of the Saramaccan Maroons. Their daily actions are regulated by it. There is no clear distinction to what are purely human acts or acts being influenced by the spirits. Everything is connected to the social and economic function of their society.

Pansa (1993:23-24) gives support to the fact that Saramaccan Maroons' religious belief system are paramount to their daily survival. Each Saramaccan village has an Obia, for example, *Gaan Tata* and the *Dungulai Obia* in the village of Dangogo and the *Mafungu Obia* in the village of Bendekonde. Alongside the village Obias, several families are said to have their own Obia. They believe that Obia gives supernatural power to villages and families. The writer concurs that in the Saramaccans religious belief system the following gods are important to the well-being and sustenance of the Saramaccan religious way of life: The *Apuku* (Bush spirit), the water snake (*Aboma*), the *Komati* (spirit of the air), the *Wenti* (water spirit), and the *Vodu gadu* (Python snake). They believe that there are lesser gods such as *Busiki*, *Djebi obia*, *Tata wodu*, *Gaan tata*, *Mafungu*, *Anija*, and *Dungulai*.

The Saramaccan Maroons believe that spirits are found in the Kankan tree, in large trees, waterfalls, in creeks, rivers and in the bush. Giraldo (2011) in his article defined Obia, spelt Obeah, as a West African religious practice originated from the Ashanti and Koromanti tribes of the Gold Coast of West Africa. It is believed that the practice harnesses supernatural powers, which are used for both good and evil. As we have discussed in previous paragraphs, Obeah is still widely practised by the Saramaccan Maroons.

3.2.5 What is Winti?

Stephen (1998:15-22) defines *Winti* as wind. It also means spirit. His description of the latter is that it represents the power of the unseen elements in the atmosphere who is the overarching principle over our lives who demands to be worshipped in order to rule well. Stephen further defined Winti as a socio-religious culture of Afro-Suriname origin that, he believes is responsible for a person's connection to their ancestors. This is believed to have its origin from birth.

Zaalman (2005:776; 2002:304; 2006:274) explains that Winti is a religion that is practised by all Maroons of Suriname as well as many persons within the Surinamese society and the Surinamese diaspora. Like Stephen, Zaalman traced the practice and belief of African Traditional Religion back to West Africa. He believed that this highly developed belief system with a strong philosophical background came from areas such as Ghana, Togo, Benin and Western Nigeria where the Akan-Fanti and the Ewe-Fon-Nago-speaking areas, which together formed the greater Kwa-languages and culture zone. The arrival of West African slaves to Suriname brought with it commonly held elements which are being practise in the new environment, for example in the interior of Suriname. This gave birth to a multifarious belief system called *Winti*.

It is true that many Surinamese see Winti as the overarching source of inspiration. Although Winti has its origin in Africa, which we will discuss, later, —religious cultural practices have been borrowed from the native Indians who were in Suriname long before the Africans came through slavery. It is widely believed that the many magical rituals associated with Winti help to preserve a harmonious balance between the spirit world, nature and humans. These are the belief systems and philosophies adapted by the Saramaccans and the other Maroon society of Suriname. Stephen (1998:22) supports Zaalman's by stating that Africa is a continent with many peoples and cultures, and their belief systems undoubtedly differed from one another. For example, African religious adherents can be found in any place in the world where African slaves were transported to work as slaves. There are different connotations of religious practices among the Africans. For example, the religious ideas of East Africa differed from those of West Africa, and North Africa.

Stephen (1998:24) described Winti as the code for the way of life in Suriname and especially for Surinamese Creoles. He maintained that it is a part of Surinamese culture that is worthy to be identified with because it improves and maintains the entire holistic being of humanity, linking his physical and spiritual being with the supernatural world of ancestral gods and spirits. Many people used Winti as a way to obtain wealth and to gain success, for example in immigration matters, trying to evade customs officials at airports, to obtain a visa and so on. Many Surinamese adhere to the Winti practices because they believe that it will heal them from sickness and even psychological isolation. They also think that it connects them to their inner selves and brings out the hidden mystical part of their being. Zaalman (2005:776) argued that Winti means more to the practitioners than just another ritual taking place in a village. He believes that Winti is a combination of human behaviour, with the natural forces around him, his ancestors and spiritual forces of the universe. Thus, the belief is that Winti is a true religion because it tries to connect the unknown with the known, therefore, preventing chaos by establishing order. Stephen (1998:32) suggested that the Winti religion, unlike Christianity, which is largely based on written materials, is an oral tradition. Zaalman (2002:1) offers his definition of Winti by describing it as a new composite religious system based primarily on the basic elements of nature. Stephen discussed seven core foundational principles of Winti. These seven principles are:

1. The role of God the Creator (*Gran Gado or Anana*)
2. The place of the elements
3. The function of prayers, offerings and rituals
4. The systems of rules for life
5. The importance of spiritual and physical purity
6. The respectful relationship between man and nature
7. The meaning of harmony and liberation

In analysing the seven principles outlined by Zaalman, we note that the Winti religious philosophy puts great emphasis on the internal as well as the external structure of man. Humanity's religious experience is centred in his internal structure that is inwardly guided by supernatural forces, which have implications for his external structure. Therefore, a person's internal structure is related to

the will to live. The *Anana* will empower him to achieve whatever he wants in life. This includes health, food and much more. They believe that the Divine God, the Creator has the highest authority. He is the core of the Winti. Prayers are a fundamental part of all Winti rituals. These prayers are directed to Mother Earth, the ancestors and internally, to one's soul. Earth, Air, Water and Fire are the core symbols in Winti. These elements are believed to be the manner in which God reveals himself to man and nature around us. Therefore, it is believed that these elements are the basis of our existence.

Followers of the Winti religion must adhere to a strict code of conduct. There are rules, which they must respect, and violation of these rules or the "taboos" will result in serious consequences. They believe that avenging spirits (*Kunu*) will torment the children of offenders. The external belief structure of Winti is related to ways in which a person tries to order his spiritual life. The bonuman is said to be the mediator between man and his spiritual connection. He is said to be gifted with supernatural powers. It is believed that the bonuman has the ability to help bring man into perfect harmony with his natural environment. This action is expressed through rituals and other forms of ancestor worship. Adherence to the Winti religion is not alone related to the Maroons.

Stephen (1998:151-152) speaks of ways by which many Surinamese have become susceptible to ancestor worship. Illnesses are perceived as punishment for a bad deed. It is interpreted as an act of fate. Patients visiting a doctor often associate their illness with something mystic. For example, some may even think that they are physically carrying some form of a reptile in their belly. These cultural problems are said to be associated with the upbringing of an individual. The writer argues that many Dutch medical practitioners who, for a lack of understanding of the Suriname's ethno-cultural religious context, have often misdiagnosed patients resulting in them getting wrong medication. Stephen is suggesting that local Surinamese medical practitioners, whether they are psychiatrists or social workers, are best suited to help local patients who share their local cultural background. Stephen is saying that there are cultural religious problems which afflict humanity and which cannot be cured through medical help, only through Winti rituals. There are numerous stories told of

many persons within the Saramaccans culture who have been possessed by ancestor spirits who in turn manifested themselves through these persons.

Winti is practised by many Surinamese living in the capital city Paramaribo and other districts. It is not restricted to the Saramaccans and other Maroons living in the interior of Suriname. The culture of Winti is a living phenomenon practised mainly by the Afro-Surinamese people. It is still taboo among some families, because of its deep hidden secrets, which are seen as shameful. However, there are people who unashamedly practise Winti without any fear. A story was told to me by someone who visited a Saramaccan Maroon village in Suriname. He went to film a Winti ritual *Winti prei*, which means “the dance of spirits.” He is believed to have captured during his filming an image not visible to the naked eye. For many days after the filming, he believed that the illness that befell him was due to him being afflicted by an evil spirit while video-taping the festivity. This person strongly believed that evil spirits afflicted him because he saw something that he was forbidden to see. He was adamant that the only possible solution for his illness was to solicit the help of bonuman. I visited and interviewed many Maroons belonging to the Saramaccans tribe who are not born-again Christians. I have interviewed many pastors and researched the work done by existing Christian denominations among the Saramaccans. The identity of pastors and their denominational names as well as the names of Saramaccans interviewed will be withheld alternatively, “expressed in codes”. For the sake of anonymity.

3.3. EMPIRICAL RESEARCH: INTERVIEWEES

This section of the study will report on the findings of this research and will identify principles and make recommendations about evangelism and church planting among the Maroons of the Upper Suriname River. I have visited them in their local settings, listened to their stories, interviewed them on matters relating to their cultural religious practices and found ways in which the gospel can be communicated to them whilst respecting their social settings. Sixteen interviews were done face-to-face with Saramaccan Maroons. Each person-to-person interview contained five questions. Six questionnaires consisting of six questions each were sent out to various pastors and lay workers of various

denominations who are serving in Saramaccan Maroons' communities. Four completed questionnaires were received. The collection of information through one-on-one interviews with Saramaccan Maroons was conducted in approximately thirty to forty-five minutes sessions. It took fifteen months to interview all sixteen Maroons in the course of two visits to the villages of Jaw Jaw, Gunsi, Kayana, Djoemoe, and Pikien Slee. Some interviews were done at the central area Pokigron. The interviews were done between 2008 to 2010.

3.3.1 Empirical Research: The interview

In this section, I will review and discuss responses to questions and compare the pastors' responses with those of the Saramaccan Maroons. I will share brief historical information on the advent of the Christian workers among the Saramaccans, discussing their successes, and their past and present problems in communicating the gospel to Saramaccan Maroons in converting them to Christianity. The research questionnaire was designed to produce results that are as objective as possible. Although the Maroons showed great interest, it was clear that they were not willing to divulge too much information that might negatively influence my perception of them. Very strict measures have been taken to safeguard the identity of the pastors, Maroons and other interviewees. The private information will not be available to the public. Each interviewee willingly gave up their time to share in the interview with much appreciation and respect for the intended purpose of the thesis. I shall first discuss the interview with Saramaccans. There are over twenty villages in the district of Sipaliwini. Seven villages were selected where there are not so many Churches and Christians. The main Churches in these villages are the Roman Catholic and the Moravian brothers.

3.3.2 Questions

I have formulated codes so that there will be easy identification of respondents and at the same time, they will serve to protect their privacy. The age groups of Saramaccans interviewees ranged between the ages of 15-65. Each interview began with a formal greeting and introduction by the tour guide.

How many Churches are in villages interviewed?

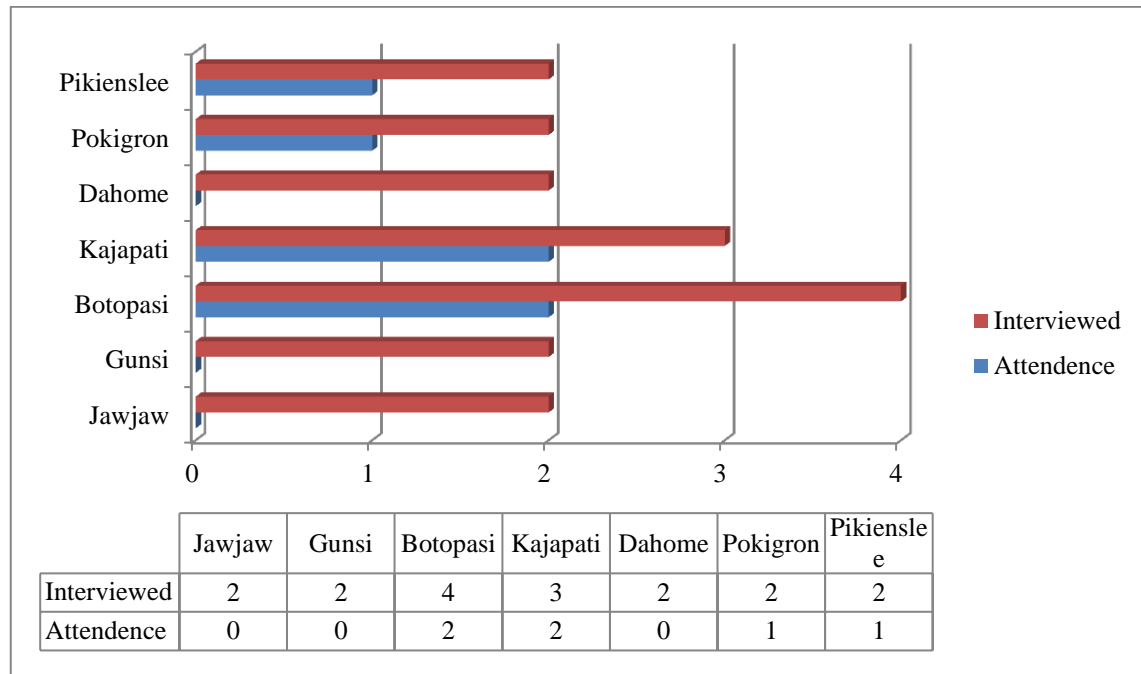
Table 4 Villages visited with Churches and without Churches

Jaw Jaw	One	Roman Catholic
Gunsi	None	
Botopasi	One	Moravian
Kajapati	One	Roman Catholic
Dahome	None	
Pikienslee	One	Evangelical
Pokigron	One	Moravian

Most persons interviewed for this study were Saramaccan Maroons living in the respective villages. They included three village Captains. The two main Christian denominations are the Moravian and the Roman Catholic Churches. Smaller movements such as the Pentecostal and Full Gospel are operating in a few villages. Many congregants of these Churches are nominally involved in activities of their Churches and some are not involved at all. For some, it is prestigious to be associated with one of the traditional Churches. A sense of belonging is very important and acceptance even more important to those who are associated in one way or the other to a denomination. Women outnumber men in attending Church activities.

Do you Attend Church?

Table 5 Chart of Attitude towards attending church in selected villages



In contrast to the number and type of denomination in some of these villages, the number of persons attending Church is very small. In one of the villages where there is no Church, they meet each morning for special prayers to their gods. Some interviewees from this village had no idea who Jesus is, and some were very steadfast in their traditional belief and vowed that they will never leave it for another faith.

The Captain of this village welcomed me to his home and introduced me to the elders of the village. He made it quite clear that they are not interested in having any more Christian denomination in the village. They will only accept social welfare and any other handouts, from any organisation that is willing to come alongside them to help in the social development of their village. I encountered mixed reactions among some interviewees in other villages. I will discuss this in the next section.

What Church do you prefer to have in your village?

Table 6 Preferred denomination in villages visited

Village	Preferred Denomination	Interviewee
Jaw Jaw	Roman Catholic	3
Gunsi	The Moravian and Roman Catholic	2
Botopasi	Moravian	2
Dahome	None but prefer the Moravian and Catholic	2
Kajapati	Dislike all	3
Pokigron	Moravian	3
Pikienslee	Moravian	2

It is very interesting to know that the persons I interviewed in these villages say that they prefer to have the Moravian Church as their main denomination followed by the Roman Catholic. In a village where there is an evangelical movement, the people prefer to have the Moravian as their main denomination.

I will be discussing later in this chapter the history and work of both the Moravian and the Roman Catholic missions to the Saramaccan Maroons. There is no doubt from my interviews that the Saramaccans prefer the Moravian and the Roman Catholic Churches in their villages. There are small congregations of Full Gospel and Pentecostals congregations in a few villages. However, there is a strong resistance to these movements because of the manner in which they approach the Maroons. The Moravian and the Roman Catholic Churches have found ways to blend in with the Maroon tribes. Their missionaries for many years have learnt how to adapt to the ways of the Maroons by learning their languages, respecting their arts and culture which as a result gain the respect of the Maroons. The Saramaccan Maroons felt comfortable with these denominations because they did not threaten their cultural way of life or outrightly condemn their adherence to ancestor worship. Instead, they found common ground to participate with each other. However, inspite of the fostering

of a meaningful relationship between these denominations and the Maroons, the Roman Catholic Church was tolerated more than the Moravian Church. The interviewees in some villages felt that the Moravians, despite having schools and providing education to the villagers, were more determined to convert the Maroons to Christianity. They want them to make a deeper commitment to Jesus Christ, which mean that the Maroons must give up their traditional practises. They said that this was not the case with the Roman Catholic Church. They were allowed to practise their cultural traditional religion although they had been baptised into the Roman Catholic Church. Many Saramaccan Maroons feel comfortable with the Roman Catholic and Moravian Churches because they look after their physical needs and assist villages in setting up community centres, schools and assisting in building homes. In one of the villages visited, it was discovered that from the entrance to the village from the Suriname River, that the entire path to the central area of the village was lined with various types of objects, which was learned later from a villager that they are associated with the occult. Many Saramaccan Maroons attend functions at the Church because in their minds they understand that it is their duty to do so. Some of them believe that adherence to some form of Christianity harmonizes with their traditional cultural practices.

Why is there such resistance to other Christian Churches?

- Jaw jaw11A : They do not understand culture.
- Gunsi 11B : They do not understand us Maroons.
- Botopasi11C : There is nothing to offer us, we need schools and jobs.
- Kajapati 611D : They are trying to force their Churches on us.
- Dahome 11E : We do not want any more Churches in our village.
- Pokigron 11F : I do not trust them.
- Pikinslee 11G : We do not understand what they are trying to tell us.
- Gunsi 11H : They condemn us.
- Jawjaw11I : I do not know much about Christianity
- Pokigron11J : I am not interested in the God of the Christians

Dahome 11K : We like it the way we are.

Dahome11L : We do not want any Church in our village.

Botopasi 11M : What we have is enough.

Responses received to this question are interesting because although a small group of persons attend a Pentecostal or a Full Gospel Church, the general feelings are that their methods of communicating the gospel are too harsh. It is not void of criticism towards the Roman Catholic or the Moravian Church, and their methods of spreading the gospel. They present themselves as the sole recipient of the Holy Spirit, and that all persons whether they belong to a denomination, is in need of conversion because they lack the power of God which they say is evident in the speaking in tongues, healings and the ability to cast out demonic spirits.

The Pentecostals and Full Gospel missions are very much against all forms of traditional cultural religious practices. They have vexed many Maroons, including village leadership in the manner in which they openly condemn and disrespect the Maroons way of life. It is clear that these missionaries did not learn from the mistakes of both Roman Catholics and the Moravians Churches, who failed in their earlier attempts to communicate the gospel to the Maroons. They did not look at currents methods used by these two denominations, which they could have borrowed. The Pentecostals and Full Gospel Churches have been successful in a few villages in converting some Maroons to Christianity, albeit the method used was usually intimidation.

Do you find it easy or difficult to have Christians visit your village? If your answer is that you find it difficult, please say why.

Jaw Jaw 11A : I find it difficult because they do not respect my cultural belief.

Gunsi 11B : I do not have a problem if they respect my religion.

Botopasi 11C : I do not have a problem.

Kajapati 11D : They must respect my belief.

Dahome 11E : I find it difficult because we already have our religion.

- Pokigron 11F : I have no problem.
- Pikienslee 11G : I have no problem with Christians coming to our village.
- Gunsi 11H : I have a problem.
- Pikienslee 11I : I do not want any other religion.
- JawJaw 11J : No, they must learn to respect us.
- Botopasi 11K : I must consider first.
- Kajapati 11L : No! Because they are disrespectful.
- Pokigron 11M : Yes! And they must help us with our needs.
- Dahome 11N : We need education so I welcome the Churches.
- Gunsi 11O : Yes, but they must first respect our culture.

There was a common thread in most answers to this question. Generally, in the villages where there are Churches, mainly the Roman Catholic and Moravian Churches, the respondents were contented with what they have. A very few were only concerned about social welfare and hand-outs. For example, they said that they will permit my organization to set up a Church, but only for welfare purposes. A large group of Maroons did not favour having any other denomination in their village. I discovered that they were mainly angry over the manner in which their own cultural lifestyle has been criticised by the non-traditional Churches. However, the dynamics of relatively small villages would make it very difficult to have another denomination in such a small space. I sense that a few Maroons in the villages in where there is no Church, are ready to accept the gospel, but on condition that there is trust, respect and acceptance of their culture.

3.4 INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

This section contains interview questions and responses to the questionnaires sent out to pastors and other Christian workers who served in the Saramaccan Maroons' community. Two of these responses came from pastors currently serving in a Saramaccan Maroons communities. The purpose of this additional probing is to gain further information about pastors who were and are engaged

in ministering to the Maroons. The answers below are not verbatim. Some editing was done without removing the message of the interviewee. I have used codes instead of names in order to protect the interviewees. I have used the code PAS for pastor instead of providing names to protect the identity of the interviewees.

How long have you been serving the Saramaccan Maroons as a missionary?

PAS1 : 5 years

PAS2 : 3 Years

PAS3 : 15 years

PAS4 : 5 Years

Have you encountered any difficulties communicating the gospel to the Maroons? If yes, what were some of the difficulties and how did you overcome them?

PAS1 : In the early stages of my ministry to the Saramaccan, I encountered harsh resistance. They were not ready to put away ancestor worship. They expressed their hurt and anger because of the unkindness shown to them by some fellow Christian workers. I overcame this obstacle through ceaseless prayers and fasting. I decided to change my way of communicating by living among them and working with them to do small repairs and farming. I gained their trust little by little and used the opportunity to start presenting the gospel to small groups of men. This did not materialise into a full-fledge Church. However, it is important to know that souls were saved through the small Bible study groups. Many of the elderly Saramaccan Maroons cannot read and write.

PAS2 : It was difficult for me because I could not speak their language and came from a North American country. The only language I spoke at that time was English. I communicated through an interpreter. I encountered resistance because of the colour of my skin, surprisingly not by the women, but from some men in the village. I knew that there were traditional and non-traditional denominations operating in this village. There were disagreements between the two denominations and strong opposition from both of them to my methods of

evangelising. I admitted that my method was too head-on. I did not take time to learn their culture and to adapt to it. I moved from the first village after one year Without any significant breakthrough. I went to another village where there was an evangelical Church and found that they were not compromising the gospel but they were telling the villagers that their culture is sinful and that they are doomed to hell. I spent close to two years working with this denomination. I took advice from a Roman Catholic priest who became a very close friend. He explained that although different priests have used different methods over the years, they have learned to adapt to the lifestyle of the Saramaccan Maroons, which became an open door to communicate the gospel. I completed two years in this village and credited the success rate to respect and adaptation. I was able to use customs and mannerisms of the Saramaccans, including songs and clothing to find the open door to spread the gospel.

PAS 3 : I am affiliated with a denomination that has been operating among the Saramaccan Maroons for more than a hundred years. Our method was to help the villagers with education through building schools, notwithstanding resistance in the initial stages. This was an opportunity to educate them about new things and work side by side with them to build their community. Through these methods, the gospel of Jesus was taught in schools, and prayers in school became a normal practice. This led to many Saramaccan Maroons receiving water baptism and ultimately becoming members of our Church.

PAS4 : I did not encounter very much resistance in working among the Saramaccan Maroons. The only problem I faced was how to get them to understand that what they were doing is wrong and to change their ways. I realised that the best way is to learn to live among them and respect their normal way of life.

What do you recommend as a preferred method to communicate the gospel to the Maroons?

PAS1 : Blending in with the Maroon tribe. Learn their ways, their culture.

PAS2: Love and respect. Dress like them, eat what they eat, learn to speak their language.

PAS3: Build trust by respecting their way of life. Only when there is trust, understanding, and knowledge about my belief, will they will open up and give a listening ear to what you have to say. This is the open door to gradually communicate the gospel of Jesus Christ.

PAS4: Contextualization is one of the best methods because it considers doing something in relation to the situation that exists. You do not have to adapt to their religious practices. Maroons love to see strangers learning their language, and respecting their everyday norms.

Do you agree that the Roman Catholic and Moravian Churches are successful in communicating the gospel effectively to the Maroons? If your answer is yes, what contributed to their success? If your answer is no; what are the things preventing them from being successful?

PAS1: Partly, 'Yes' because they were effective in setting up schools and they contextualised. In the beginning, they misunderstood the culture of the Saramaccan Maroons, resulting in heavy resistance, but they learnt the hard way.

PAS2: I applauded the efforts of both Churches. However, I think that they are only partially effective. They have contextualised in some ways but they have compromised so much that they have ceased from effectively communicating the gospel. Because of this, I consider some of the many Maroons who consider themselves staunch Catholic and Moravian members, to be nominal Christians; hence the reason for forthright criticisms from the Full Gospel Churches whose methods are less inviting.

PAS3: I think that these two Church organisations used different methods to make inroads into the Maroons. I differ on the methods used by the Roman Catholic Church. I think they were effective in contextualising but I do not think that many of the persons who were baptised into the Church understand the gospel and salvation. The Moravian Church is less tolerant. They do not compromise the gospel of Jesus Christ in favour of ancestor worship. They have used converted Maroons to help communicate the gospel to their own people. This has proven successful.

PAS4: I think that the two Churches were effective in setting up systems to educate the Maroons and used those avenues and other activities to make connection with the people. It is obvious that once a Church is involved it would be expected that those who will benefit should attend and become members of these Churches. It is the same method applied by other movements. I am not entirely convinced that they have been effective in communicating the gospel and in bringing the people to a deep realization of Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour. If I were to compare the two movements in this quest, I would lean towards the Moravian Church as the more effective in evangelizing the Maroons to an extent.

There are more Roman Catholics and Moravian Churches in the Upper Suriname River area than any evangelical Churches such as the Full Gospel and Pentecostals. What do you think is the reason for this?

PAS1: I am convinced that the Roman Catholics and Moravians have learned the art of adaptation. Because of this, the Maroons do not feel threatened. On the other hand, the other Churches are forceful and disrespectful in their attempt to communicate the gospel to the Maroons. They do not understand the cultures nor do they take time to do their research.

PAS2: The acceptance goes together with the history of both Churches. The Moravians first visited maroons at the end of the eighteenth century. A century later, the Catholics came but they were less successful than they had been with the Creole and Native Indians. However, both Churches persevered, and lived amongst the Saramaccan Maroons. They built a relationship, which saw the setting up of schools, medical posts, stores, and tools with which they used to do lumbering. I believe that they were both successful in building a relationship with the Maroons. I also believe that the relationships had binding agreements, in that the Maroons' had to give back something in return for all material things these two Churches gave them. They had to be baptised and become members of one of these Churches. The other Churches did not have the benefits that the Roman Catholic and Moravians could offer and they were not the first to enter the interior. They only started their work in the late twentieth century.

PAS3: The Roman Catholic and the Moravian Churches were the first of the established denominations to enter the interior, mainly the upper Suriname River area. They were effective in first meeting the social needs and later the spiritual needs of the people. They did so effectively after some resistance by adapting the way of life of the Maroons. This is not the same case with the other Churches.

PAS4: They have more schools and are tolerant to the Maroons' way of life. The other groups are only interested in condemning their way of life and confusing them. The Saramaccan Maroons will resist anyone who tries to force them into something. Some of them want to practice their ancestor worship so they will stay with a Church that is going to be lenient towards them.

What message would you wish to hear from the Church to the Maroons?

PAS1: The Church must spread the message of the love of Jesus Christ. They must know that Jesus loves them and that He wants them to trust him with the present as well as the future.

PAS2: I want the Church to spread the message of unity in Christ. The Maroons must know and feel fellowship from us who are seeking to tell them of Jesus Christ.

PAS3: They must receive the uncompromising message that God's word, not the advice of a diviner, is the way to new life.

PAS4: The Church must spread the message of love.

These questions were, by far, general comments from people who have and are still having hands-on relationship with the Saramaccan Maroons. We were able to discuss the questions with them and to request advice, which would benefit anyone starting out in ministry to the Saramaccan Maroons. I summed up the advice in the following order; (1) Respect them, (2) Contextualise without compromising the gospel, (3) be a friend and use the opportunity to communicate the gospel. Each of these points is relevant to the effective communication of the gospel to the Maroons. It is important and valuable in assisting all Christian workers attempting to fulfil a mission amongst the Saramaccan Maroons.

3.5 THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHRISTIANITY IN THE UPPER SURINAME RIVER AREA

This section will take an in-depth look at the birth of the Christian movements among the Maroons of the upper Suriname River area. I will be discussing the arrival of the Moravian and Roman Catholic Churches, their failures and successes, including the influence of Pentecostalism and other denominations serving in some communities.

Bakker and Dalhuisen (1998:72) stated that the Maroons were attracted to the rituals of Christianity brought by the Moravian and Roman Catholics Churches. They were particularly interested in the burial rituals. Their greatest fear was that after death, they could be regarded as being an evil spirit. This fear was based on their strong belief in superstition. It is this fear that explains why they feel that after their death, they will be called an evil spirit. Hence, the reason why they permitted the Moravian and Catholic Churches to baptise them. The baptisms were seen as a success for the missions. However, I argued that the missionaries were being misled. The missionaries thought that with the baptism of Maroons they would automatically put away religious cultural practices. The question is asked: Were the Moravians and Roman Catholics successful in their work among the Maroons? There are varied views and opinions concerning this. I will be discussing the influence of the main Moravian and Roman Catholic Missions and some Evangelical Churches on the Saramaccan Maroons.

3.5.1 The Moravian Mission to the Saramaccans

Kent (1978:15) discussed the arrival of Moravian missionaries to Suriname. He explained that on December 29, 1735, three young men, Georg Plesch, Georg Berwig, and Heinrich Christof von Larisch arrived in Suriname from Germany. Their purpose in Suriname was to look at the possibilities of setting up the mission of Moravian Church. It meant that they had to earn their living. The Dutch colonial government offered them work at Berg en Dal. Their hope was to use this opportunity to preach the gospel to the slaves on the plantation. Little did they realise that they were to come up against an inhospitable tropical climate and insects. Christof von Larisch died on February 4, 1736; Berwig and

Plesch left for Europe. In 1738 Georg Berwig return to Suriname with his wife and Michael Tannenberger. After the return of Bro Berwig, his wife and Bro Michael Tannenberger, the way was opened for scores of other European missionaries to enter Suriname (Kent 1978:15).

The early missionaries faced resistance from the colonial government, who did not tolerate them. They also faced other resistance from the Dutch Reformed Church. This did not deter them; they were highly motivated although they were not wanted in the colony. Pansa (1993:27) argument on how the Moravian's mission reached the Saramaccan Maroons is consistent with Kent's accounts on the discussion. Missionaries L.Ch. Dehne, Rudolph Stoll and Thomas Jones arrived in Suriname. They met with the then government officials after which they departed for their long journey to the interior village of Senthea. Their arrival at Senthea took place in 1765 after the peace treaty was signed. Senthea was a non-Christian community. They were received and welcomed by chief Abini. Dehne used the opportunity to explain his reason for coming to the interior. He said, "He loved the Maroons and had come to tell them about their Creator." The missionary Thomas Jones, along with Rudolph Stoll, joined Dehne later in the village. Jones became very ill because of diseases such as malaria, smallpox and other tropical deceases. Jones succumbed to his illness. He died in the interior and on the mission field. This was a great loss for the missionaries. It was imperative for any missionary to adapt to the new culture if they were to make an inroad into the Saramaccan Maroons. They had to learn their language to be able to communicate the gospel. It must be noted that although they contextualised in communicating the gospel, that it took them quite some time achieve a breakthrough. Kent (1978:17-19) gives an account of the period of drought the missionaries experienced. They were well taken care of by the son of chief Abini called Arrabini. Chief Abini instructed his son to take care of the missionaries. Dragtenstein (2002:233) provided information on chief Abini's death. He was shot and killed in the village of Musinga on the night the village was attacked on the 3 to 4 January 1766.

Kent (1978:17-19) continues to provide information on various methods the early missionaries used to bring the gospel to the Saramaccan Maroons. They started a school in the village where the villagers learnt to read and write. They

spread the gospel through teaching and Church services, which were well attended, but there were few responses to the gospel. It was very difficult to communicate the gospel to the Saramaccan Maroons. Kent quoted Nitschmann who wrote in 1978: *“At the present time we do not see any fruits. Idolatry prevails in the community and all indication is that it will become worse.”* The missionaries continued to be devoted to their mission. They continued to use the school and other opportunities to spread the gospel. They saw spreading the gospel as their primary purpose. The Saramaccan Maroons were not keen on giving up their religious cultural practices.

In analysing the method used by the Moravian missionaries, it was discovered that they did not target large groups nor did they concentrate on mass crusades. Their strategy was to first build relationships by collaborating with the community in providing education and adapting their daily way of life. The emphasis placed on education, that is, teaching the villagers to read and write, would eventually enable them to read the Bible. The breakthrough came for the missionaries when in June 1770 five persons, including Arrabini, attended baptismal classes. Although many others discouraged them, they decided to break away from their old way of life. Arrabini made a clean break from ancestor worship of Obia. He was the first Maroon to be baptised on January 6, 1771. There is an account of Arrabini’s testimony and affirmation of his faith in Yahweh God. It was said that one day Arrabini took his Obia pot and placed it before him. He took his gun and aimed it at the pot saying, “if you are really a god, then you will not be destroyed when I shoot you. If you are destroyed, then I will not believe in you anymore. If you are not destroyed, then I will keep believing in you. With that being said, he shot the pot that was destroyed. He also took his Obia stick and muttered the same words and destroyed it in fire.

The missionaries moved from village to village spreading the gospel. It was not easy, for many Saramaccan Maroons were not willing to give up their ways. Their account was that the year 1774 was the most difficult one for them in every way. They described their presence amongst the heathens as horrible and compared it to being in hell. Despite their challenges, they continued to communicate the gospel assisted by Arrabini. It is very important to note, that another method used by the missionaries was to use Arrabini in helping to

evangelise the Maroons. He was a Maroon, he knew his people well. He was one of them, so he understood the way to approach them with the Word of God. Their labour paid off when in 1775 three men were baptised. The early missionaries completed an entire translation of the Book of Acts in 1778. They translated other parts of the Bible and made a dictionary of the local Saramaccans language.

The Moravian Church has not changed their way of evangelising in the interior of Suriname. As mentioned before, their method is to provide education and use it as a vehicle to spread the gospel. They have been successful in setting up health-care centres. Unlike other denominations, they have trained and used native Saramaccan Maroons to work among their own people. They know the language, culture and lifestyle in this part of the country. Moravian Churches have been established in the following villages located in the upper Suriname River area. They are established in Pokigron, Abenaston, only a school in Guyaba, since the village rejected the church, Njun Aurora, Botopasi and Djumi. At the time of my visit, there was one minister and four pastoral workers with their families actively engaged in mission among the Saramaccan Maroons. Today, there has not been upward momentum in the work among the Maroons of Upper Suriname River, other than what has already been established.

3.5.2 The Roman Catholic Mission to the Saramaccans

Vernooij (1996:167) concluded that the Moravian Church was the first to begin missionary work in the interior among the Saramaccan Maroons. There was no collaboration between the Moravian Church and the Roman Catholic Church because the two were not on good terms. Vernooij (1996) recorded that the Roman Catholic Church's first trip to the Saramaccans' villages in Upper Suriname River area was in 1907. Their second trip was in 1917. They faced many difficulties in that they had a shortage of qualified priests for the type of mission that awaited them in the interior. The Church adapted a similar method to the Moravians. They built schools and introduced the catechism to the people. Although some villagers were baptized, they did not eradicate their ancestor worship culture due to a lack of pastoral care by priests. The Church had too few priests with which to guide new converts to Catholicism. There

were too few visits by local priests and too much dependency on priests from the capital. As a result, they continued in their heathen culture, blending it with their Church life. It was also clear that the Roman Catholic system was a hindrance to them having any major breakthrough in the early days. Maroons who were converted were not qualified to teach.

A priest and a nun visited the area to check on catechists' performance and to provide training. The Roman Catholic mission to the Saramaccans was always seen to be walking in the shadows of the Moravian. They worked tirelessly to convert Maroons to Catholicism, but the converts continued to live and practise their old traditional culture within the traditions of ancestor worship. Vernooij explained that the Roman Catholic's new strategy between 1962-1965 was to approach mission work as addressing the whole needs of men and woman, which included education, health, employment. This suggests that they were more tolerant of the Maroons' heathen culture than other denominations; hence the reason why today many Saramaccan Maroons are less tolerant of other denominations seeking to make inroads into their communities. This was confirmed during my interviews in some villages.

Vernooij (1996:173) seems to confirm my belief where he wrote, "The Church heard and read about the new meanings of mission, namely the concept of accommodation and enculturation of the Old Catholic Church in new people and young nations." The Roman Catholic Church understood the importance of contextualising in order to convert Maroons to Catholicism while showing appreciation of the cultural elements of the people. They were very sensitive to the desires of the Maroons and in so doing tried to please them. The Maroons welcomed this new attitude by the Roman Catholic Church. The conversion of Maroons by the Roman Catholic Church is very rare today. The gospel is preached mainly through Sunday services and special services for children.

3.5.3. Evangelical (Full Gospel) Churches Missions to the Saramaccans

In this section, the following information was recorded from an interview conducted with a pastor who was once associated with a Full Gospel Church located in village located in the upper Suriname River area. This person is no longer serving among Saramaccan Maroons. He will remain anonymous for the

sake of privacy. Jabini (n.d.) asserts that the Full Gospel Church was invited to the village of Futunakaba, one of the villages in the Upper Suriname River area. The invitation to James Cooper came from Gotalie Eduart who became a Christian in 1968. In 1969, James Cooper and others visited the village Futunakaba. There were other evangelicals already operating in other districts. Their methods on evangelism were very different from the Roman Catholic and Moravian Churches; they were less tolerant of the Maroons' heathen culture. They believed that the Maroons who were converted through the efforts of the Roman Catholic and Moravian Churches were not truly saved. This brought much tension between the evangelicals and the other Churches. However, the Full Gospel Churches visited homes and conducted meetings where the gospel was preached. They did not experience an immediate breakthrough. Like the others, they waited for almost three years before they began to see the results of their labour. They faced the uphill task of convincing Maroons to put away their heathen ways. The Full Gospel Church was heavily criticised for the manner in which they approached evangelising the Saramaccan Maroons. Their manner was described as being disrespectful to the other Churches and the Maroons' culture. As a result, they faced hostility by Maroons, which made it difficult for the Church to keep operating their mission. The civil war between the National Army and Maroon Rebels (1986-1992) affected many of the evangelical activities of the Full Gospel Church. Many residents fled the area to Paramaribo and other areas to escape the war and the atrocities some villagers experienced. The Full Gospel continues to serve in some villages among the Saramaccan Maroons. They are still conducting house meetings and have been successful in training locals to head up their Churches in some villages.

3.5.4 The Outcome of Missions among the Saramaccan Maroons

In this section, I shall limit my discussion to examining the outcome of major missions to the Saramaccan Maroons of the Upper Suriname River. Vernooij (1996:167-171) spoke frankly about the confrontation between the missionaries and the Maroons. The underlying errors made by missionaries were to demand that the Maroons abandon their culture and accept the gospel as a new culture. This approach to culture by missionaries was egocentric.

The hostile relationship between the Roman Catholic Church and Moravian Church in that period eroded the situation much further. Not only was their approach to Saramaccan Maroons' culture ethnocentric, they also caused division and rivalry amongst the two groups of Christians. The Churches were the greatest hindrance to spreading the gospel because often they caused division, hatred, jealousy and competition. Today, there are still very bad memories of the past, which are responsible for some of the problems faced today in communicating the gospel to the Saramaccan Maroons. This problem has lived on and has spread to other denominations and still creates division, competition and causes jealousy and discontentment among them.

Vernooij (1996:177) discussed that the Roman Catholic Church and the Moravian Church were not only engaged in personal grudges, but they both saw the culture of the Saramaccan Maroons as being despicable. Their culture contradicted all that the missionaries stood for; they saw this as being an abnormal way of life. The Church could not conform to the ideals of the Saramaccan Maroons as such practices were forbidden according to the rules of the Church. However, according to Vernooij, in their process of enculturation of the gospel there was a change of attitude. There began a new way of dialogue which they hoped would bear fruits. I agree with Jabini (n.d.:50-51) when he discusses the importance of understanding the relativity between the gospel and culture. Jabini argued that the role of Churches among any native culture would be enriching if the Church were willing to use elements from the natives' culture to enhance their mission. However, the missionaries were acting in accordance with their view of ancestor worship early in the twentieth century. According to the Jabini, the work of these early missionaries must be respected for they introduced Christianity to people of another faith in the interior of Suriname. Vernooij (1996:171) said that missionaries introduced education by building schools wherever they settled. This provided education and jobs to the Maroons. These valuable contributions aided in fulfilling the mission of God. According to Kent (1996:27), the presence of the Church in the Saramaccan Maroons community has brought about visible changes and improvements for Saramaccans. This is not only credited to the work of the Moravian missionaries, but also to Roman Catholic missions. Evangelical

movements such as the Full Gospel Church tried to include some aspect of social services, but they preferred to concentrate their efforts on spreading the gospel and opening new Churches. It is important that Saramaccan Maroons be made to feel that there are valuable things existing in their culture. For example, Kent (1996:28) discussed some of the problems that affected their own self-esteem. After they were baptised, they were given new names by their European missionaries or names associated with biblical names. Saramaccan Maroons were made to feel ashamed of their own names. Kent further argues that the significance placed on the new name was theologically wrong, as there are no so-called Christian or heathen names. Every born-again person is connected to Christ in whom we are made anew. Saramaccan Maroons are very expressive people; their religious rites are marked by drumming, dancing and singing. Kent (1996:29) pointed out that some of their musical instruments, such as the Apinte drum which is used to send messages and to evoke spirits, are gone. There are drums that are only used for religious practices. These drums are the *Papa* and *Agida*. Many missionaries forbade the Saramaccan Maroons from using the drums for religious practises related to music associated with ritual dancing, singing and other animated expressions used in Saramaccans communities as a form of worship to GOD. The Missionaries made the Saramaccans' believe that these forms of expression are related to heathenism and do not belong to Christian worship. This in my opinion was wrong because it was based on the so-called European piousness among European missionaries. Ironically, the Westerners permitted musical instruments in worship. Either a European or western culture must permit the Saramaccan Maroons to live a life in their culture that is not done in oppression by many peacekeeping souls. Although Christianity is associated with the Western culture, it does not mean that the Western man is permitted to force his culture on the Saramaccan Maroons. When this happens, the Saramaccan Maroons will soon see their culture as being held in contempt, then there will be no interest, no self-worth and no value for the things that matter most to them.

3.5.5 Conclusion

To conclude, it is important to address the following question which must be answered: Is Christianity in Suriname in danger of syncretism? Religious syncretism often takes place when foreign beliefs are introduced to an indigenous belief system and the teachings are blended. The new, heterogeneous religion then takes a shape of its own. This has been seen most clearly in Roman Catholic missionary history. Take, for example, the Roman Catholic Church mission to the Saramaccan Maroons. The Saramaccan Maroons were baptised into the Church by the tens of thousands without any preaching of the gospel whatsoever. Many Catholic chapels were built. The Saramaccan Maroons were allowed to substitute praying to saints instead of praying for gods of water, earth and air, and replaced their former idols with new images of the Roman Catholic Church. Yet, the animistic religion the Saramaccan Maroons had formerly practised was never fully replaced; instead, it was adapted and allowed to flourish. Is this syncretism an excuse for lack of faith in God and his plan of salvation? The ultimate goal of this thesis is to suggest a suitable approach in communicating the gospel to the Saramaccan Maroons. An approach for the Church to deal with the challenges which ancestor worship still poses in this specific context. The next chapter will seek to suggest possible solutions in presenting the Gospel to the Saramaccan Maroons of the Upper Suriname River.

CHAPTER 4: TRANSFER OF EVANGELICAL TRUTHS VIA CORRECT CULTURAL INTERPRETATIONS

The basis to all the cultic traditions among the Maroon population in Suriname is the influence of West African religion. During the era of the slave trade, black African slaves brought their cultures and religions with them to the West Indies and to parts of South America where they were enslaved as plantation workers. There are cases where they mixed their religious practices with those indigenous to the various areas in which they settled. This West African influence opened the way for a new religious sect known in Jamaica as ‘*Pocomania*’ and ‘*Spiritual Baptist*’ in the sub-Caribbean area. These Afro-Caribbean” religious groups contain traditional West African religion with elements of Christianity, particularly Roman Catholicism. A problem that arose and which will continue to affect the spreading of the gospel in a legitimate way to the Maroons of Suriname and by extension, people who indulge in ancestor worship, is the introduction of syncretism into religious monotheism.

The Roman Catholic Church and the Moravian Church influenced many communities located in the Upper Suriname River. Most Saramaccan Maroons are identified religiously by being Roman Catholic or Moravian. The reality is that syncretism is being practised. Although not all missionary groups practice syncretism, Christianity has not had the exclusive impact that missionaries had hoped for among the Maroons. There have been reports of complete conversions to Christianity, but from my own personal visits and interviews, generally, this is not the case.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Africa is considered the mother of traditional religions for black people. There are few places in the world except for Europe, where one will find such a unique blending of traditional religions and Christianity. My study has shown that it is not only in Africa that there are strong traditional religious practices, but due to the African slave trade, these practices were brought to the South American country of Suriname as well as other parts of the western hemisphere.

Van Velzen and Van Wetering (2004:35) give an account of Charles Mortan Kahn's (1939) visit to the Saramaccans' and Ndyukas' villages in the 1930s. Charles Mortan Kahan described his experience in the interior of Suriname as "Africa's lost Tribes in South America." He used this title in one of his academic publications. This chapter will attempt to provide the communicational principles which need to be applied in order to effectively reach the Saramaccan Maroons with the gospel whose lifestyle is heavily dependent on traditional cultural religious practices. Further to this, it will provide possible solutions for missionaries on how to cope with ancestor veneration. Besides contributions from various scholars, this chapter will discuss the biblical and theological truths suitable for communicating the gospel to the Saramaccan Maroons.

4.2. THE ROLE OF FOREIGN AND LOCAL MISSIONARIES

In this section, I will limit my discussion on the task of the missionary in general terms, as I address the question: Who and what are missionaries here for? Foreign missionaries are people who leaves their original home to, for example. A North American missionary comes to the continent of Africa or other to carry out missionary work is considered to be a foreign missionary. A local missionary is one who comes from within the same culture and is engage in doing missionary work among his/her own people. As I address the question: Who and what are missionaries here for? The answer will confirm that it is the

responsibility of both foreign and local missionaries, in their attempt to communicate the gospel to the Saramaccan Maroons, that they communicate in a manner that is relevant and which shows respect to the Maroons as a people who are in need of hearing and understanding the truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Webber (2010:132) argued that the Church, in trying to ingratiate itself by aligning itself with the views of the world and it has not succeeded in presenting the gospel in a manner that makes it relevant to people who have difficulty in understanding it. Webber argues that if the Church is going to be relevant, it must remain faithful to its mission.

The Church must communicate the gospel of Jesus Christ in a way that the Maroons can understand and respond to the gospel message. Missionaries must communicate to adherents of the local culture in such a way that it meets their deepest needs and penetrates their worldview, thus allowing them to follow Christ while remaining and retaining some aspects of their own culture. In order to understand the purpose of the Church and its missionaries, I will revisit the term “God’s mission,” to help us gain a better understanding of God’s mission.

The Church is the vehicle that is used to carry the gospel message to all parts of the world. *Missio Dei* could be seen as God’s activity in the world beyond that of the Church. It must be clear to all that the Church is still the primary vehicle of mission to the world, but the Church does not decide upon what mission is to be carried out to the world. *Missio Dei* confirms God as the Creator, Preserver and Governor of the universe and that the mission to the world is God’s mission to reconcile humanity to Himself. It is the only purpose why the Church exists today. The motive for mission plays an important role in God’s mission to the world. Wright (2010:23-24) argues that the role of the Scriptures as it confirms the mission of the Church as God’s mission. Wright recognised that mission has at its core the motif for sending and being sent. This is evident in the Old and New Testaments. He made reference to biblical characters who were sent. For example, Moses was sent to deliver the Hebrews who were being oppressed by the Egyptians (Exodus 3:10). Jeremiah was called and sent to preach God’s word. Jesus himself declared that he was sent to bring freedom, to give sight to the blind and to free those who are oppressed (Isaiah 61:1) and in (Luke 4:18-19). Wright (2010:26) argued that the mission of the Church flows directly from

God's mission. In order for mission to be successful, the Church must see itself flowing directly out of God's mission. Gailey and Culbertson (2007:32-33) give evidence of how both the Gospel of John and the book of Acts emphasised the importance of sending. They explained the central purpose of God's mission is emphasised in the Gospel of John. Jesus often referred to himself as being sent by the Father: "Jesus said to them again, Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you" (John 20:21 ESV). The scripture brings to light the divine purpose of his coming and the purpose of mission which is to save humanity from eternal damnation. Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost showed how the early Church realised that its mission was not to one group of people. They realised that the mission of the Church was to the entire world. Jesus confirmed in the book of Acts that the missionary task is global and of His involvement in the life of the missionary: "but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the world" (Acts 1:8 ESV). This passage of scripture emphasised that God is the heart of mission. He is involved in mission, the mission is His and His alone and the whole world must be reached with the gospel message of salvation, which is possible through the redeeming blood of His Son Jesus Christ.

Martin (1989:1-4) gives support to the role of the missionary by first explaining that the Church is called to proclaim the gospel through teaching, preaching, evangelizing and bringing converts into the fellowship of the body of Christ. The Church must establish new missions and new congregations. Martin based his arguments on Acts 1:8 (ESV): "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." He argued a valid point when he stated that, "It is true that the missionary's role in the modern world is changing." There are many roles that missionaries must perform. Some of these roles are to help protect people from political oppression, racial discrimination and social. Injustice. Martin (1989:5) sees the missionary as performing a pioneer role. Missionaries are sent to areas where people have never heard the message. The minister as an administrator, must organize, structure, and instruct new congregations. In many places, the ministry usually includes schools and

clinics, which usually cause the missionary to switch from a pioneering to an administrative role. The writer also described the missionary's role as being that of a servant leader. There are areas, especially in small communities, where the missionary performs less prominent roles such as administration and take on a role of working side by side with the villagers, working for the good of the community. This is the type of mission approach that is needed among the Saramaccan Maroons.

4.3. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GOD AND CULTURE

Hiebert (1985:14) emphasised that it is important to understand the gospel in both the historical and cultural settings. Hiebert contends that without knowledge, the gospel would not be communicated in a relevant way. It would be meaningless to its hearer. Therefore, the missionary must know what God is saying, have knowledge of, and possibly background information, about the people to whom he intends to communicate the gospel. The Christian mission is an unconditional mandate given by God and a total commitment to the authority of God. The missionary response to culture according to Hiebert (1985:17) is that, "A theology of missions must begin with God, not humans." God is the Creator, Governor and Preserver of all things. He is a creator of culture, He supersedes culture and He must be revealed in culture through the missionary motive. God revealed Himself through the incarnation of Jesus Christ. His intention is to redeem sinners who seek His gift of eternal life through repentance.

O'Brien (1993:2-3) examines Paul's missionary calling and its impact on global evangelism. Paul's witness and preaching as he evangelised provides the impetus to get today's missionaries on the right track. In O'Brien's discussion of Galatians 1:11-17, he clearly explained Paul's calling into missionary work. Paul gave testimony of God who was evident in his life, enabling him to understand the gospel: "For I would have you know, brothers, that the gospel that was preached by me is not man's gospel. For I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ (Gal 1:11-12) ESV. Paul remind us that the mission is not his, but God's mission. O'Brien

explained that Paul experienced Christ as the exalted one, the risen Saviour and one who will be unveiled in all His glory on the final day.

4.3.1 Paul's Theology of Mission

Adeyemo (2006:1414) commented on 1 Corinthians 9:19-23. He argued that Paul's attitude and example presented a great challenge to the Church of God. Paul stressed that his self-denying love for Christ and love for people led to him to surrender all privileges afforded him for the purpose of seeing people saved. For example, he speaks with full confidence of his freedom to take a wife, yet he does not take one. He refused to receive a salary. He willingly gave up many things, which he was entitled to, for the sake of preaching the gospel. Paul further illustrated that he submitted himself to slavery from which Christ had set him free. Paul is not saying that he wants to give up his freedom from sin and shame to become a slave again. It is vitally important to distinguish between the essence of our liberty before God and the exercise of that liberty before men. There is an important difference between Christian liberty and the use of Christian liberty.

Paul was willing and ready to freely choose not to exercise his liberty so that he could continue to carry out the mission of God. This explains why missionaries must forsake all to follow Jesus. Paul knew that he was free because of the redeeming act of Jesus Christ; with regard to the use of his freedom, he acted as if he were a slave. Paul adapted to new cultures and became one with the community he intended to evangelise. In 1 Cor. 9:20-23 (ESV) Paul wrote,

“To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law that I might win those under the law. To those outside the law I became as one outside the law, not being outside the law of God but under the law of Christ that I might win those outside the law. To the weak, I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people that I might save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings.”

Paul did not hesitate to participate in certain Jewish customs for the sake of gaining a hearing with the Jews. He was willing to be a vegetarian, if need be,

for the sake of preaching the gospel to them. Paul was willing to go to great lengths to meet the Jews on their level. It must not be concluded from this that there were no boundaries to Paul's accommodation. If Paul was able to accommodate their ethics, in the parenthetical comment, the apostle tells us that he was careful not to work outside of the law of Christ. Indeed, there are limitations, important limitations, in the missionary role, when trying to accommodate other people's beliefs and practices for the sake of the gospel.

Adeyemo (2006:1414) explains that it is very important for communities to whom the missionaries are sent to have the conviction that missionaries identify with them. It is important in new communities where there is opposition to the gospel, which missionaries should adapt to their culture. Young (2006) made this observation in his article. The writer explained that it is not possible to present the gospel when the truth of God's Word is at stake. He used the phrase, "when the battle lines are drawn (either by you or by someone else) over the revealed precepts or principles of God's Word," to suggest that when faced with a compelling situation, the only option is not to accommodate other beliefs but to remain committed to the Word. The writer further suggests that compromising our faith is to break that law. He wrote, "Accommodation must end where biblical precept and principle begin." His further comments on 1 Cor. 9:23 reveal that Paul gives passion and purpose for contextualising. Paul's statement of the principle, suggests the following principles:

1. Evangelise for the sake of the gospel.
2. Accommodate the weaknesses of the weak.
3. Become one of them so that they can become one of you.

Young (2006) asks the following rhetorical questions: "How far should we go in accommodating the people to whom we minister?" "What about our colleagues-some of whom at times act and talk in ways that assault our theological sensitivities? How far should we go?" "How should we go to relate to the ignorant, uninstructed, weak believer?" "Should we not try to accommodate his or her weakness for the gospel's sake?" The answers to each of these question are summed up in Paul's statements recorded 1Cor. 9: 24-37. Paul uses athletic metaphors to describe his single-minded focus on the mission of God, to pursue the advancement of the gospel. In verse 26, Paul's only aim is to

bring as many people to Christ through the gospel from whatever state they may be in. Corrie (2007:236) suggests that the challenges facing the Church of Christ today as it seeks to carry out the mandate of God may be classified as three major developments in mission: cultural, Church-based and holistic. The gospel of Jesus Christ is no longer seen as a message for one culture, for example, it was seen as a message applied only to Western Christians and carried to the world by Western missionaries with a western perspective. The gospel of Jesus Christ has become everybody's gospel, as the writer argues. Therefore, it is impossible to think of a response in terms of one's own worldview. A response for example, to traditional African belief system must be a contextual response. Therefore, the Church must be engaged in cross-cultural relationships as it seeks to evangelize in a multi-religious context.

Corrie (2007:236) says that the responses of missionary organizations should be;

1. Commitment to God's mission as the only mission that will bring redemption and re-birth to all humanity, and culture through Jesus Christ.

2. That commitment to evangelizing must be the focus of all mission societies, being careful not to compromise God's mission with the secular society. The Church's mission must be centred on the ultimate purpose of God's mission, which is to redeem humanity, to create Christian communities and to bring about holistic transformation.
3. That mission societies must lead a down-to-earth Christian lifestyle, encouraging all Christians to be part of God's mission to all the earth.

Fleener (2003:11) in his discussion on Paul's theology of mission, asserts that Paul's approach to missionary work will at the same time help us to understand his calling to missionary work. Paul, after making it clear in his expression that he was everyone's slave, that is, that he would do whatever they wanted or whatever the situation would require, said, "And to the Jews I became as a Jew that I might win Jews; to those who are under the Law, as under the Law, though not being myself under the Law, that I might win those who are under the Law." A more reasonable possibility is that, in order for mission to be successful, Paul intends for "those under the law" to refer not only to Jews, but also to everyone (Neller 1987: 134). Within the context of Saramaccan Maroons, they as a people and a culture of this world are eligible to hear the

gospel with the hope that they will respond and accept Jesus as Lord and Saviour. I agree that God's creative power includes the visible and the material. All powers are under and even those that oppose Him, are subject to Him. They owe their existence to Him. Hiebert (2008:268-269) explained that the misunderstanding of scriptures by those who understood all things to be related to traditional or cultural customs whether supernatural or natural. This understanding has given rise to many false cults and a misunderstanding of God's holistic involvement as creator of the universe. The writer further emphasised that God alone is one and eternal, he is the creator and everything is dependent on Him. This confirms that God supersedes culture. Therefore, it is my opinion that man's understanding of culture should begin with his understanding of God. He must accept God as his creator. The writer made it profoundly clear when he stated that, "there is no power that can challenge Him, for he is the source of all power."

Hiebert (2008:269) regards God's sovereignty as being part of His nature. It is not a case of God being against the will of humanity. God's sovereignty is wrapped up in His unconditional love for all humankind. Kraft (1979:103-105) introduced a series of models. I will discuss four models.

1. God the Originator of Culture?
2. The God Against Culture Position
3. The God Above Culture Position
4. Christ Transform Culture

4.3.2 God the Originator of Culture?

Kraft (1979:103) comments on this question that God is responsible for culture. He contended that because God created human beings, this brings into perspective humanity's response to culture, which becomes part of man's existence. Kraft believes that man and culture are interrelated. Kraft (1979:104) says, "As far as we can now determine, culture has been an inescapable part of human existence from very near the start of that existence." If we are to take Kraft's argument as being true, we ought to believe that God created human beings with the capacity to live and operate in a culture. Therefore, man and

culture cannot be separated. It is inconceivable for human to exist well without sets of rules and mannerisms with which to guide them. A breakdown in society and humans' reaction to it is a clear example of how fragile man is without a functional system with which to guide his daily life. God created human beings and He confirmed through His word that His creation of culture was good. The scripture confirms this in Genesis 1:31: "And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day." The Christian point of view suggests that God created human beings with the ability to produce culture.

4.3.3 God Against Culture Position

Kraft (1979:104-10) argued on the God against culture position, and highlighted the position taken by Christians and those who hold the view that culture is evil and is wholly under the control of Satan. Therefore, those who hold this position see culture as being associated with Satan and Christians are to be separate from it in order to live completely holy lives. This position is based on scripture passages such as, "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions is not from the Father but is from the world" (John 2:15 -16 ESV) and "We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one" (1 John 5:19 ESV). Monastic orders were developed with the belief that complete separation from culture is a means of separation from the evils of this world. It is the only means to living and abiding in complete holiness to God. This also took place among the Saramaccan Maroons, when their drums and other forms of art were excluded from Christian worship. In my opinion, this is an antagonistic, distorted view of culture and lacks understanding that the Church is a microcosm of culture. Kraft (1979:105) suggests that this thinking brings into contention God as Creator and the master of the universe. The question is asked: "Does God expect Christians to be totally separate from culture?" It is rightly understood according to Scriptures that Satan will make use of culture for his own evil purposes. However, to go to the extreme of suggesting that all of culture is evil because it is of the world is putting a negative cloak on creation. It is also a misinterpretation of what is written in the Scriptures. John was not

referring to the entire culture of the world. He was specifically referring to that part of culture that is evil and that operates according to the principles of Satan.

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever (1 John 2:15-17 ESV).

Here the scriptures are referring to the world as an organized world system controlled by humans and demonic powers that are in opposition to God (Adeyemo 2006:1335). Pawson (2003:1218) presents a clear picture of the main theme in Scripture. He describes the world as two hemispheres, one of which is governed by God. This can be described as a world of love and light, while the other half is ruled by lawlessness, lies, lust and wickedness. This is seen as the world in which demonic spirits lurk. Pawson suggested that John is encouraging his readers to live in the world of God, being under His direct control. John urges his readers to live by such standards and not be distracted by the world of lies and wickedness. When we abide in Christ, we become children of His world; if we choose to live a life of disobedience to God, we become children of the world ruled by demonic forces. Laymon (1971:937) supports this view by explaining that the word “world” in this context means, those who are separated from God, who choose to follow the temptation of Satan. Laymon commented further by suggesting that such persons are blinded by sensual pleasure, they fail to see Christ’s redemptive act, in conquering sin and death for the freedom of humanity. They do not see Christ at work in the world for their redemption.

There are particular aspects of the culture that pledge alliance to the evil one. Christians must live in the world and must be part of a culture that is connected to God. Christians are to use culture for God. It is impossible for those who see culture as an external thing to run from it. To assume that one can run from culture is incorrect. Kraft (1979:106) explained that culture is part of us, it is

embedded in us; human existence makes up culture, and therefore culture is shaped to suit the needs of humanity.

4.3.4. God Above Culture Position

Kraft (1979:107-108) holds the view that many perceive God to be far above culture and that he is unconcerned about human beings and their culture. Not only does Kraft think that this is the view of Westerners, but it is also widely believed in many African cultures. The same holds true for the Saramaccan Maroons. In the previous chapter, while addressing the religious beliefs of the Saramaccan Maroons, I mentioned they hold the view that the higher god is less concerned with the everyday business of the people, but permits lesser gods to deal with their daily matters. Although this is not seen in the same context as Kraft described, it shows us how relative many people are in their perception of who God is and how they think, he views human beings and their culture. They perceive God to be static, who programmed everything according to his own desires. They see him to be unconcerned about human beings and is a far cry from them. Thus, it is useless for humankind to worship him. Kraft explained further, that this view has led to many moving away from God in complete denial of his existence or they have depersonalised God into some sort of eternal force dwelling way above the reach of the human being. In the light of all that is happening in human culture, man sees God as being displeased with human beings. He wastes no time in listening to their cries, hence the reason for endless disasters and plagues on humanity. This viewpoint is one of the reasons why humanity is influencing many attitudes within culture giving rise to popular beliefs, which give rise to many cults. Humanity is looking for answers; everything that is touched, which is seen and is involved with becomes a pantheon. A person usually seeks the way for solutions. As Kraft rightly stated,

It has, rather, contributed to a tightening of social structuring in an apparent attempt to replace the security once seen as proceeding directly from God with one seen to proceed primarily from the society, though society is often still understood to function as God's intermediary.

4.3.5 Christ transform culture.

There need not be a blank affirmation of culture for God, but a combination of God and culture. Culture is not bad for it is part of God's creation which is good. We live in a world that has fallen and a culture that is subjected to God. Although man has fallen, God's work is still being carried out in culture; man's redemption is made possible through the grace of God. This Grace comes from the God whose grace is seen as far-reaching and unconditional. It is His grace that sustains our strength and which causes us to love our fellow brothers and sisters. This is only possible in culture.

Wright (2010:246-246) supports Kraft by confirming that the world is a place where Satan exists as the prince of darkness. The world dwells in lies, lust and wickedness influenced by Satan. He says that friendship with darkness is hatred towards God. Wright connects further with Kraft by explaining that the mission of God is to permeate all living cultures with his grace in order to rescue man from those evil cultural ideas and practices that affects his relationship with God. Human culture is corrupted by sin. Does God accept all cultures, even when that culture is corrupted by sin? Newbigin (1996:192-193) suggests that Christians ought to perceive each culture as Christ did. Christians are to make a difference in the world. Christians cannot change the way people were born into their respective cultures, but Christians can transform the way people think in accordance with the biblical truths, and the gospel of Jesus Christ. The writer says that the Christian community has been called to be bearers of the His gospel for all cultures. Newbigin (1996:194-195) presents another interesting argument when he explained that Christians who accepted Jesus Christ as their saviour, believes that as a response to the gospel, they too must spread the message. They came out of one culture that could be described as a corrupt culture to the other culture described as citizens of God's kingdom. Newbigin explained further, that this does not mean that God is not the God of the other culture. God accepts all human culture, and he will judge all human culture. He writes, "We are to cherish human culture as an area in which we live under God's grace and are given daily new tokens of grace." Newbigin is reminding us that we continue to be part of two cultures as children of God and human beings

but we are sustained by the grace of God as we live in this world as believers. God will do the same for person in any culture who receives salvation.

This is true for the Saramaccan Maroons who believe that God is high above human culture and cannot be reached. How does all this make sense to them? How can they be connected to God? Before we answer these two questions, it is important to be reminded that they argue that God gave their culture, including their religion, to them, for their wellbeing. They do not see religion as an intangible part of their everyday life. They see religion as a substantial part of their lives (Kent 1978:14). O'Donovan (1995:222-223) presents arguments to support a biblical perspective on traditional beliefs and practices. The writer sees rituals, sacrifices and offerings to ancestor spirits and/or other spirits as directly related to Satan and as breaking God's commandment to have no other gods before him. O'Donovan's intention is to warn about the consequences of the practices associated with African Traditional beliefs. Since these practices are associated with Satan, a failure to permanently break with the beliefs and practices has greatly weakened the African Church. It is a serious sin which will bring God's judgement if the practices are not completely put away. The Saramaccan Maroons, whose religious beliefs are founded on African Traditional beliefs systems is in danger of bringing God's judgement on themselves if they do not put away their non-Christian practices.

Christian missionaries to the Saramaccan Maroons will have to explain what the meaning of Exodus 20:3 ESV is: "You shall have no other gods before me." They will have to explain that the supreme God does not support practices that involve other spirits and that they are not from Him. The missionary will have to explain that honouring and respecting those who have died does not have to include rituals that are associated with traditional African beliefs and practices. They must be taught to honour God through Jesus Christ as the first and foremost part of their religious culture. O'Donovan (1996:223) says that there must be no contact with the spirits of the dead as it is forbidden according to the Word of God "There shall not be found among you anyone who burns his son or his daughter as an offering, anyone who practices divination or tells fortunes or interprets omens, or a sorcerer or a charmer or a medium or a necromancer or one who inquires of the dead" (Deu. 18:10-11 ESV). Missionaries will have to

explain that God's desire is that all things associated with sacrifices and offerings to spirits must be destroyed.

“Also many of those who were now believers came, confessing and divulging their practices. And a number of those who had practiced magic arts brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted the value of them and found it came to fifty thousand pieces of silver.” Ephesian converts were to physically burn and destroy all items associated with non-Christian beliefs and practices (Acts 19:18-19 ESV).

I believe that no Saramaccan Maroons can claim to have receive complete satisfaction from some of the influences of their religious practices. When it comes to these practices, I regard their operations as being superstitious. In understanding O'donovan views, he regard African Traditional Religion (ATR) as part of the African culture, a private issue that has nothing to do with Christianity. Biblical Christianity. He believes that we are dealing here with evil powers that can only be broken down by the power of the Cross. The ultimate joy comes when victory is won through Christ's power.

4.3.6. Brief Definition of Culture

Horby (2000:323) defines culture as being the customs and beliefs, art, way of life and social organization of a particular country or group. There are many other definitions of culture given by many scholars. Hesselgrave (1991:100) defined culture as “a design for living, a plan by which society adapts itself to its physical, social, and ideational environment.” Gailey and Culbertson (2007:90) agree with Hesselgrave's definition by saying that “Culture refers to people's way of life, for example, customs, ways of thinking, and material products of individual.” Gailey and Culbertson refer to Sir Edward Taylor's own definition of culture, described as a complex whole including knowledge, belief, art, law, morals and customs. Hiebert (2004:30) defines culture as a combined system of ideas, feelings, and values of a group of people, associated with various patterns of behaviours. People regulate their own behavioural patterns, for example, what they think, feel, and do. This shows that cultural values and

behaviours are correlated. In my view, culture could be further understood as a group of people expressing their human personality in arts, recreation, inventions, religion, and work; these expressions possibly manifested in communities, institutions and through various systems. Culture is the manner of thinking, behaviour, or a perception of a group of people. Therefore, it is wrong to perceive any particular culture as being primitive or even superior. A culture must be respected for what it is. If the definition of culture is to be respected, it therefore eliminates any discriminatory or superior conception of particular cultures.

Livermore (2009: 80-81) stated six definitions, which I will quote in the following order:

- Culture is the artificial, secondary environment superimposed on the natural.
- Culture is “a pattern of thinking, feeling, and reacting to various situations and actions.”
- Culture is the shared understanding people use within a society to align their actions. “While culture is defined, created, and transmitted through interaction, it is not interaction itself, but the content, meaning, and topics of interaction.”
- Culture is the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group from another. It is the software behind how we operate.
- Culture is the way a group of people solves problems and reconciles dilemmas.
- Cultures are comprised of “webs of significance” that people spin and in which they themselves are suspended.

Livermore’s description of culture is inescapable; it influences both the internal and external life of humankind. Humanity not only sees things and uses things within culture, they relates intimately to culture, their lives are ordered by it. Culture dictates man’s existence; it is difficult to separate human beings from culture because. It is difficult to separate the views of Livermore, Hesselgrave, Gailey and Culbertson. They all agree that culture affects the way people believe, think and behave in a society. Man relates to his culture inseparably

because culture orders his life. Mayers (2003:17) described culture as the anthropologist's label for distinctive characteristics of a people's way of life. This could be defined as people's reaction to language, arts and science, thoughts, and spirituality.

4.4 ETHNOCENTRIC AND CULTURAL RELATIVISM

Van Rheenen (1996:96-98) illustrates vividly the monocultural and ethnocentric tendencies of missionaries. Van Rheenen describes people who grew up knowing one culture and language as monoculture. The philosophy of these types of missionaries with limited cultural experiences tends to refer only to their own culture in their actions and perceptions. They tend to insert their own cultural ideals into the culture of the people to whom they are sent to evangelise. Van Rheenen discusses that although some missionaries have received training in cultural studies, yet many have not learned to communicate in the language of their host people and their society. Van Rheenen (1996:96-98) cited some of the reasons for monoculturalism. For example, Western missionaries tend to think that all cultures are the same. They tend to think that their own Western culture is above all other cultures, especially if that culture does not share the same ideals. They live in isolation from their host community, only communicating through translators. It is true that to a certain degree ethnocentrism is included in all cultures. People everywhere consider their own culture to be the best. They usually see others as less civilized than themselves. For Christians, monocultural and ethnocentric tendencies are unacceptable. The gospel sets the tone in what must be accepted, rejected or developed. It is generally believed that the church is a microcosm of culture; hence, the reason why there are strong beliefs that ethnocentrism breathes racism, tribalism and a disregard for people's rights. 'Leslie Newbigin', in his book "Foolishness to the Greeks: The Gospel and Western Culture", introduced us to a completely new perspective in the relationship between the gospel and culture. Newbigin (1986:2-3) explains that although missionaries have made

Inroads concerning issues relating to the gospel and culture, very little has been done to actually address issues in the mainstream western interpretation of the gospel and culture. Although missionaries have become aware of the growing

influence of the western interpretation of the gospel, they struggle with issues of cross-culturalism, and contextualization. I believe that this is one of the main reasons why missionaries in Suriname have not had the great impact they desired in evangelizing Maroons. While there will always be concerns with the gospel and culture, the matter to be addressed here is the issue of syncretism. The reluctance of Protestant Churches to preach the gospel in the language of the hearers explain their misunderstanding of contextualization and its relevance to communicating the gospel. It is my opinion that the gospel must be preached in the language of the hearers; the evangelist must adapt to the mannerisms and culture of his hearers to a limited extent. One of many questions that will certainly arise is, "how can the church be fully committed to culture and yet not be brought into disrepute by the worldview that shapes a language". Newbigin (1978:1-3) illustrates this problem by referring to the time he was engaged in evangelistic missions in India. Newbigin's idea of introducing Jesus to a culture ignorant of Him suggested that instead of using the name "Lord", Jesus should be called *Swamy*, meaning Lord. The problem with this is that there are many lords in the Hindu traditions and if Jesus is seen as just another one of those lord, then he will be seen as just another god to be added to the list. Jesus cannot be seen as just one more lord or an addition to the gods of the Maroons. As Newbigin suggested, Christ must be portrayed as He is in Scriptures. The problem is if other names relating to Maroons' ancestral deities or any other cult are used to describe Jesus, the church runs the risk of syncretism. Newbigin (1978:2-3) argues that if the evangelist is to communicate the gospel in a relevant way, he must use the language of the culture, adapt to its customs and mannerisms and risk syncretism. Newbigin realises that this will be problematic. The gospel cannot be compromised, and the missionary struggles to divorce the problems of irrelevance and syncretism. The problem with missions to the Saramaccan Maroons by most missionaries is that they run the risk of syncretizing.

Corrie (2007:373) provides evidence on the origin of the term 'syncretism.' "The term 'syncretism' derives etymologically from the Greek *syn* (with) and *krasis* (mixture)." It is the assimilation of one element of religion and culture into another to form something new. He says that the problem with indigenous and

tribal groups is that they tend not to give up their animistic beliefs and practices, even after they accept Jesus Christ as Saviour. Tippet (1981:639) suggests that it is possible for a person with tribal belief systems and practices to be converted to Christianity without having to give up his tribe. The dilemma is that Christian workers and missionaries usually find themselves entangled in this type of web, while they try to preserve some aspect of the tribal customs. Bosch (1991:297) says,

Another issue centres on who should make these decisions. It is unwise for missionaries to plough ahead with premature judgments about cultural traits they do not fully understand. The best scenario is for missionary and national church leadership to pray through these matters together and make unified decisions that are both true to the scriptures and culturally expedient.

During my visit to some of the villages on the Upper Suriname River, I came to realise that in the villages where there is a Roman Catholic Church, the Saramaccan Maroons felt more at ease because they were allowed to continue many customs and mannerisms relating to their religious beliefs. Here we see the Roman Catholic Church absorbing the worldview of African traditions. It is my opinion that they believe that if they are going to be relevant, they must risk syncretism. However, the missionary must be relevant and at the same time be faithful to the gospel. O'Donovan (1995:256) explained that God would not accept a divided relationship. Loyalty must be to Him and Him alone. This is further emphasized in Scriptures, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might" (Deut.6:5 ESV). Is there a biblical way of praising God? Why was it necessary for the Saramaccan Maroons to get rid of his cultural instruments e.g. the talking drum? He replaced it with a Church bell and an organ. The traditional dance was not allowed to enter into the Church. The way the missionaries handled these issues was due to their ethnocentric views.

4.5 THE MISSIONARY ATTITUDE TO NON-CHRISTIAN RELIGIONS

Adeney (1995:15) says that, the first step to overcoming ethnocentrism is the recognition that my own values are not necessarily the same as God's. All Christians hold many values derived from their culture. A second step is to understand that our own interpretation of Scriptures comes from a particular cultural context. A third step is to see that God's values may be enfolded differently in another culture from how they are in my own.

Adeney highlighted the need for faithful contextualization. The missionary needs to move beyond cultural boundaries and be engaged in open dialogue. This will help to avoid ethnocentrism and relativism. This dialogue must lead to the respect of all cultures, thus opening up the way for the gospel to be communicated. It protects the missionary from being absorbed into the culture of the place and enables the gospel to be communicated fulfilling God's purpose of grace and His final judgment. Steffen and Douglas (2008:198) revealed that the socialization process in responding to culture is very successful if Christians will move from enforcing their worldview. Christians must have genuine respect for others without compromising their moral values; it calls for a genuine and thoughtful understanding of the host's cultural beliefs and behaviours, without conforming to them. Understanding and respect for the host culture allows for participation and trust. In the previous chapter, I addressed some of the problems faced by the Roman Catholic Church, the Moravians and Evangelical denominations, which, in their attempt to evangelise the Saramaccan Maroons, did so with little regards to their culture. The interviews I conducted clearly pointed to disrespect by some denominations in their attempt to communicate the gospel to the Maroons. It is clear that they were ignorant of the Saramaccan Maroons' culture and did not care much in wanting to know about their lifestyles. They were bent on Western acculturation of the Saramaccan Maroons. There must be ecumenical dialogue if there is to be faithfulness to the gospel within the Saramaccan Maroons' culture. Many families are divided between denominations and this affected some community activities, since members of the different Churches do not always work together

and some have said that their denominations will not allow them to do certain things, while others received permission to participate. Newbigin (1993:250-251) drew from his own experience in India; he explained that in order to faithfully contextualise without conforming to the host culture, it is valuable to have ecumenical dialogue. When he returned from India to Britain, he was confronted with many questions which led him to see within his own culture perspectives which led him to ask, “could there be an Archimedean point, so to speak, from which one could look critically at one’s own intellectual and spiritual formation”? Newbigin believed that the Archimedean point could be found in mutual ecumenical dialogue. He thought that this would bring richness and progress in missionary work amongst non-Christian religions. I will continue to discuss the missionary response to non-Christian culture by looking at other critical points which need to be overcome if there is going to be respect and success.

4.5.1 Bridging the Gap between the Gospel Message and Cultural Settings

Hiebert (1985:14-15) argues that missionaries are often not well prepared although they are well trained in scriptural knowledge and at times, have knowledge of the people to whom they are sent; they take for granted that the culture will readily accept and understand the gospel. In many cases, the missionary has no clue or understanding of the historical background and cultural settings of the culture. Hiebert stresses the need for a deep examination of the people and culture we serve. This is important if the message is to be understood. He suggests that anthropology, sociology, history and other social sciences be used to help the missionary as they provide the tools to aid in examining the cultural settings within which the missionary serves. I agree with Hiebert’s suggestion because I believe that anthropology will bring great support to the missionary’s understanding and embracing of cross-cultural issues. Take for instance in the Maroons’ culture where their religion takes on an animistic form. It can help the missionary to analyse special events such as Christmas and other cultural celebrations, which that are done in contrast to the missionary’s own worldview.

4.5.2. Bible Translation an Integral part of Communicating the Gospel to the Maroons' culture.

Jabini (n.d: 65-68) explained how the Moravian missionaries were able to work on Bible translation in the language of the Saramaccans'. Jabini explains that the Moravian and Catholics were the only two denominations working among the Saramaccans' in the early 1960s, but only the Moravians were engaged in Bible translation. Moravian missionaries Thomas Jones, Luwig Christoph Dehne and Rudolf Stoll arrived in the Saramaccans' territory in December 1765. Their mission to the Saramaccan Maroons was not without incidents, for Jones died on February 7, 1766. This did not prevent the other missionaries from continuing their mission. Ludwig and Rudolf continued to study the Saramaccans' language and people. Rudolf Stoll was the first to engage in Bible translation. Communicating the gospel even in the Saramaccan Maroons' own language was not easy. Their culture, which is polytheistic, meant that the gospel had to be communicated in relevant ways to avoid syncretism. It is important to know that in their religion it was difficult for them to understand God becoming man who was later crucified on the cross. The Saramaccan Maroons' religious beliefs would embrace the fact that the spirit of such Jesus who died on the cross and who had been killed in a horrific manner would become an avenging spirit to all those Soldiers, religious and political leaders who participated in crucifying Him. It meant that they and their families would be tormented forever. The message was preached to them that resulted in conversion of some Maroons. Stoll continue to translate scriptures and was able to complete the book of Acts on December 15, 1767. He also translated the book of Genesis which, according to Jabini, was closer to the Saramaccan Maroons' worldview. The Saramaccan Maroons could find relevant stories within the book that coincided with their practices. For example, if a Saramaccan Maroon commits a murder in the community, he will be excommunicated from the community. This is related to the punishment God gave Cain for killing his brother Abel.

Hiebert (1985:15) provides insight into the use of Bible translation in contributing to the missionary's task. It is imperative that the language of the native be learnt. Many of these languages are not written down, nor do they

have any formal grammatical structure. Many problems with communication occurred because the missionary could not communicate in the language of the Saramaccan Maroons. This resulted in the missionaries not being able to properly understand and lead the Maroons. Arthur (2006) pointed out that “Bible translation is fundamentally a Kingdom activity.” Bible translation will get people involved and interested in the gospel. It will bring about valuable changes to communities, which in turn will help poor and marginalized peoples to become more developed. Arthur emphasized that the process of translation will increase the chance for educational opportunities for minority groups and help them to move out of the poverty, which so often enslaves them. I agree with Arthur’s views of this aspect of translation. I have seen some of the advantages translation has brought to some Maroons who have benefitted from the Bible translation work in Suriname which falls under the Suriname Bible Society. Although not all Churches have embraced the translation, some missionaries have used the translation. The gospel message must be preached to every nation and to all tribes. I believe that a more rounded understanding of the gospel of Jesus places emphasis on the spiritual work in a much broader context. This will help both local and foreign missionaries to appreciate the full effect of Bible translation work as an integral part of communicating the gospel to the Saramaccan Maroons’ of Suriname. I will discuss the missionary adjusting to cultural differences in the following section, drawing on specific areas where missionaries, both local and foreign usually encounter problems in communicating the gospel.

4.6 THE MISSIONARY ADJUSTING TO CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

There is always a feeling of excitement and gratification among Christian workers who are about to embark on a new missionary journey, whether local or foreign. They feel a sense of satisfaction that they are fulfilling the mission of God in taking the gospel to other cultures. From my own experience, I sample esoteric foods, read books about the forthcoming culture and increase my expectation with what I read and hear about the forthcoming culture.

It is never exactly what we foresee it to be. Our expectation is quickly shattered when the reality finally sets in. Many Christian workers continue to make the

common mistake of thinking that their worldview is superior to the host culture. They are fooled by their initial introductions to these cultures where for the first few days everything seems romantic and exciting but this soon becomes strange and threatening.

4.6.1 The meaning of World-View

O'Donovan (1992:3) definition of World-view explains that it is the way a person thinks, understands and interprets things that happen to him and other people. He explains that it is the way persons understand life, what is real and not real to them. This varies in different cultures as each has its own world-view. Their behaviour and actions depend on the community where they grew up. This includes languages, food, style of clothing, education, and the type of people in that community. The Christian world-view is wrapped up in the Bible. The Christian sees the Bible and the gospel message as the correct view for shaping lives. In many ways, the World-View of the Bible is presented forthrightly because this is the only thing the Christian worker knows and understands. Van Rheeën (1996:81) expressed this problem vividly when he observed that; missionaries without adequate cultural training usually tend to think that all cultures are the same. It is important for Christian workers to recognize that all cultures are different and although there may be some co-expression of culture, the reality is that there must be a change of approach to each culture. Missionaries need to draw on the fact that culture is a combination of values, behaviours, characteristics and norms, which must be understood and respected.

People base their lives on their own worldview. It conditions them to believe that their world is being controlled by an invisible force that is beyond their control (Kraft 1979:54). Kraft continues to show how basic values, goals and institutions are all guided and judged by a worldview of cultural norms. Other people's cultures are seen to be inferior and inappropriate. Kraft discusses another problem in relation to worldview. People find comfort in each other when they share the same worldview. This is necessary in times of bereavement, birth, illness and other situations where the psychological reinforcement provided by the group is welcome. The psychological support in time of crisis tends to

reinforce the group's worldview (Kraft 1979: 56). I argue that although this behaviour strengthens cohesion among the group, it does very little in helping the persons adjust to the culture. I agree that the people's world-view helps to validate basic premises about man and his relationship to the world. We cannot invalidate the important part it plays as a controlling mechanism in man's behaviour. It forms the basic guidelines that order the daily lives of humankind. Kraft (1979:75) points us back to an interesting discussion where he quotes Wallace (1966:29). Wallace's views are that there must be an inherent world-view because it is important for cohesion as it helps to reduce internal conflicts due to cultural changes. He suggests that it brings about a balance, by addressing issues that could lead to irreconcilable differences between adjusting from an old to a new culture. It is my opinion that it is necessary for the acculturation of Christian workers. It is necessary if they are going to be successful in their missionary task to have knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, and behaviours that enable them to participate and function in the new culture (Van Rhee 1996:85). I will be discussing the importance of both the contextualization and acculturation process in the following section.

4.6.2. The Missionary Contextualization and Acculturation Process

The present concern for consideration is whether theological principles will provide a direction, for how and where contextualization techniques ought to be used in evangelism and church planting among the Saramaccan Maroons. To do this, we must address a problem David Bosch discussed. Bosch (1991:421) argues that the use of the term contextualization is often unclear. He stated, that the use of the word itself is, a 'blanket term for a variety of theological models'. The term was first used in the 1970s in the circles of the Theological Education Fund of the World Council of Churches. Hesselgrave (1995:139-143) defined contextualization as "the process of communicating the biblical gospel in such a way as to make it meaningful to the people of any given cultural context". Hesselgrave suggests that the gospel should be communicated in any new culture, allowing them to follow Christ and remain within their own culture. The emerging Church should become the 'hermeneutical community' context. Which decides how the Scriptures are best understood and applied in the Church's own context. Hesselgrave recognised that although the local Church

is the main focus in the process of contextualization, the foreign missionary is the facilitator of that process. Frost (N.d.:3) gives a full definition of the term contextualization. He defined it as “the dynamic process whereby the constant message of the gospel interacts with specific, relative human situations” and “It involves an examination of the gospel in the light of the respondent’s worldview and then adapting the message, encoding it in such a way that it can become meaningful to the respondent.”

Frost (n.d.:4) says, “No matter the socio-economic, ethnic or age group, the gospel must relate to the whole human context, including both the situational and the experiential.” Frost argued that proper contextualization, and the transforming of any culture depends on the whole message of the Bible being properly contextualised. It must take into consideration the true situation of people in their given situation, their past, present and future; including their culture, nationality, language, the laws that affect them. He further suggests that the gospel must relate to the experiential context of people. This is not merely the dilemma of missionaries. While he appropriately distinguishes the gospel from culture and non-Christian worldviews, the vast majority of people in the world regard personal identity and culture to be fundamentally inseparable from religious traditions and beliefs. In their understanding, conversion to Christianity, by definition, implies abandoning one's native culture in exchange for another. The relative failure of Christian outreach to Maroons of all tribes illustrates this dilemma and reinforces contextualization as a strategic imperative. God still chooses to use and bless cross-cultural ministry, to break new grounds, and to open the toughest hearts. It is imperative to this study that the relation between the gospel and culture is discussed in the following section. The gospel message must be preached in a relevant way to a relevant culture. Luzbatak (1989: 69-70) suggests some models that are considered to be valuable tools for the process of contextualization and acculturation. Luzbatak suggests three very important ways in which contextualization can be accommodated. They are as follows:

1. The primary agents.
2. The direct concern of mission.
3. The ultimate goal.

I shall limit my discussion to these three viewpoints.

The Church and the work of the Holy Spirit are the primary agents involved in the taking of the message to the culture. The local Church is the vehicle, while the Holy Spirit is the one who enables and brings conviction. Luzbatak sees the people of God as the primary agents who, being empowered by the Holy Spirit are mandated to enculture the community. He believes that the enculturation process demands trust in the Holy Spirit and the local Church. It is the responsibility of the Christian, being guided by the Holy Spirit, to permeate their communities to bring about changes.

The direct concern of mission is to proclaim the message of God and salvation. The gospel must be spread to all six continents of this world. The host culture should be the primary beneficiary of contextualization and enculturation. The ultimate goal is for a mutual enrichment of the gospel benefitting the sender, the missionary and the host culture. The enrichment of the body of Christ is the main focus.

Van Rheenen (1996:87-88) suggests three stages that missionaries go through in the process of contextualization and acculturation. These stages are: (1) the glamour stage, (2) the rejection stage, and (3) the identification stage. I will compare Van Rheenen's suggested stages with current situations faced today by missionaries, as I look at the difficulties some missionaries experienced in attempting to evangelise the Maroons. Van Rheenen's discussion brings to light the problem they encountered. The lush scenery often fascinates most missionaries to native communities. Van Rheenen explained this as the glamour stage. This is where missionaries seem to be blinded by the natural beauty around them, which is a sort of a façade that glamorizes the superficial elements in the new community. Missionaries often try to fit in by trying to familiarise themselves with the local type of living accommodation and foods. A seemingly naive ignorance sometimes leads a missionary into folly as he attempts to befriend locals and to fit into their environment. It is explained that this is the honey-moon stage. Nothing significant is happening at this point; missionaries are still battling with the process of contextualization. Languages are not yet learnt, there may be illnesses and other crises that often occur at this stage. The danger is that the missionary is idealizing the culture which in

turn will be disappointing. Van Rheenen (1996:88) explained that stress levels are raised when missionaries find themselves in a situation where languages are not learnt and knowledge of the culture is a far cry from what the missionary had actually hoped for. This is called the rejection stage, usually a period where the feeling of rejection, fear and anxiety steps in and erodes the true intentions of the missionary. This is where they come to grips with reality and realize that they are in a new culture. A problem such as culture shock occurs.

Hiebert (1985:63-65) says that cultural difficulties can lead to many situations. The sudden impact on a person's worldview can lead to numerous problems. For example, a missionary moving to the jungles of Suriname to work among the Saramaccan Maroons will find that they must travel by dugout canoes, they must wait for the mail boat and time seems to stand still. Hiebert says that these cultural differences will create difficulties for the missionaries. The causes of culture shock according to Hiebert are not the sight of the new environment such as dirt roads and thatch huts etc. Culture shock is caused when disorientation sets in because they no longer have the coping mechanism they are used to such as all the cultural maps and guidelines they learned as a child. The missionary is stripped of all that was familiar and must suddenly adapt to a new culture. He becomes fearful, angry and confused. Van Rheenen (1996:88) says that they begin talking to themselves, speaking about "us" and "them". They may even exhibit their frustration in trying to adapt by angry outbursts. I believe that this is the period when their own worldview comes into focus and they begin to compare things.

Some missionaries find their coping mechanism and will adjust to their new culture. This however, as we have discussed above, does not occur in an instant. Effective adaptation for the missionary is a two-way street. Not only is he to adapt to a new culture, the host culture must adapt to the missionary. Missionaries must not expect that the local community will automatically adapt to them. They must learn the language and culture of the new society effectively to communicate the gospel of Christ. This is the beginning of identification. Missionaries must evaluate their behaviour in relation to their host culture and learn from their mistakes. Van Rheneen (1996:91) says, "They must neither

uncritically accept every new concept they learn, nor uncritically reject every new concept.” Therefore, missionaries must avoid syncretising. The danger of contextualization is its misuse and misunderstanding. Missionaries must reject any activities that are anti-Christian.

The gospel message must be communicated in relevant terms to the Maroons. I want to address two main hindrances to contextualization. The integrity of the gospel depends on the missionary eliminating all elements that could potentially prohibit the communication of the gospel. Missionaries must avoid their own enculturation, customs, languages, and belief systems. Contextualization is to communicate the gospel in more relevant terms so that it can be understood by the host culture. The New Testament provides examples of contextualization. Paul’s own approach to the linguistic and cultural problems at Lystra is one of these (Acts 14:8-20). The apostles, after realising there were going to be difficulties explaining the gospel because they could not communicate in the people’s language and due to their misunderstanding of the local culture, responded by contextualising their message (Acts 14:15-17). Paul did not forthrightly criticize the religious practices of his listeners. He recognised that they were willing to worship Barnabas and himself. Paul used this as an open door to argue against the deities they worshipped which were symbolised in various objects and images. Paul’s teaching was to present God as the true and living God, the only proper object for religious worship. Paul preached that the one and only living God made the world and everything in it. He taught the people of Lystra five truths about God.

Frost (n.d.:7) gave credit to Paul's speech at Lystra (vs.15-17). He described it as a magnificent example of contextualised communication. Paul boldly addressed the problem of listeners whose worldview of polytheism. Frost argued that Paul was able to preach about a God who has revealed Himself in the created order of things, a concept already well-known to them in classical legends.

1. God is present in creation. His goodness is seen in its work.
2. God is merciful and seeks to meet the needs of people whom he loves unconditionally.
3. God’s desire is for people to be happy and joyful.

4. God alone is worthy of worship as the only true and living God.
5. God's demands are that people turn from their old ways and follow Him.

They discovered too, that they had to address the polytheism issue by urging the crowd to turn from their useless gods to the living God.

This was a pattern Paul used whenever he was confronted with similar issues. Schnabel (2008:166-167) and Newbigin (1986: 42-64) suggest that that proper understanding of the gospel and understanding of Scripture is essential to contextualization. A heightened interest in the authority of Scripture cannot be ignored. Newbigin emphasised that faithful contextualization requires a complete obedience of the word of God: "True contextualization accords the gospel its rightful primacy, its power to penetrate every culture and speak within each culture, in its own speech and symbol, the word which is both No and Yes, both judgment and grace"(Newbigin1989:152). Newbigin warns against syncretism and says that failure in contextualization within a particular culture takes place when the word of God is suppressed. When missionaries compromise in order to fulfill their own ego and the word of God is not preached to effect true conversion, syncretism will be the result. This is called domestication of the gospel. The culture is affirmed. This means that contextualization is irrelevant. Therefore, the missionary will resort to a cultural form of the gospel. Newbigin discussed two solutions relevant to the challenges missionaries faced. His suggestions are borrowed from Hogg (1945:9-26), and Kraemer (1939:4). He stated that the writer implied that Christians must utilise concepts of institutions within the host culture in order to be heard, but at the same time must reject the use of forms of that culture (Hogg 1945:23). Hogg's suggestion is similar to that which Paul used in the book of Acts. He suggested that the missionary employ familiar images and forms of the host culture which express the religious desires of the people and use them as springboards, but filled with new meaning in sharing the gospel message. It is important that the missionary should not accede to the popular notion of the religious and cultural beliefs about the kingdom of God; he must challenge them and bring them to full realization of their need for salvation. The call is to repent of their sins. A similarity is found between Hogg's suggestions and Kraemer's, who believes that man's greatest desire is to be fulfilled with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

However, sin stands in his way, subverting the gospel message from reaching the heart.

‘T Hooft (1967:13) writes:

Key-words from other religions when taken over by the Christian Church are like displaced persons, uprooted and unassimilated until they are naturalized. The uncritical introduction of such words into Christian terminology can only lead to that syncretism which denies the uniqueness and specific character of the different religions and creates a grey relativism. What is needed is to re-interpret the traditional concepts, to set them, in a new context, to fill them with biblical content.

Newbigin (1986:6; 1995:336) challenged the notion of relevance and subversive fulfillment. This he did to avoid syncretism and irrelevance. Both Newbigin and ‘T Hooft agreed that the model John offers in his Gospel is relevant for communicating the gospel. John uses classical cultural forms that his hearers understood, e.g. light and darkness, flesh and blood, heaven and earth etc. These were relevant terms which he used effectively to communicate in such a way as to confront them with the word of God and bring about results.

The following section will address principles in cross-culturing among Saramaccan Maroons. I will discuss the biblical perspective on traditional beliefs and practices.

4.7 COMMUNICATING THE GOSPEL OF JESUS TO AFRICAN TRADITIONAL BELIEF SYSTEMS

African Traditional religion is tied to many popular ethnic cultures throughout the world; it has spread through the slave trade to the Caribbean, South and North America. I have discussed the arrival of slaves to the Suriname and that with the departure of African slaves from the plantation, how they took their African traditional practices to the interior of Suriname, where their descendants now live. Ellwood (1996:51) explains that African traditional religious worshippers believe that the universe is ruled by gods and spirits. The African traditional religion does not conform to any theological belief system. It is not a religion

founded by any human founder. It is not based on any particular creeds. Adherents to African traditional religious practises their belief systems in a wide variety of ways (Manske and Harmelink 2011).

Fernando (1999:43) supports Ellwood's theory by stating that African Traditional religion is a religion of spirits. They believed that the spirits, in the form of ancestors, help foster harmonious relationship between humanity and spirits. They believed that it is a source of material blessings and preserving the community from misfortune. Missionaries must find common ground with which to communicate between traditional religions and Christianity. What are some of the similarities between Christianity and traditional African religion? This study of the Saramaccans' religious practices has pointed to several important areas that could be considered avenues for communication. They are as follows:

- Both religions believe in a Supreme God who is creator.
- The Supreme God is also benevolent.
- God in both religions, rules by delegated authority.
- In Christianity, God rules by his Divine Son and through governments and family heads. But in traditional religion, God rules through lesser gods, ancestors, and families.
- Both religions have creation accounts.
- The two religions believe that the universe is inhabited by spiritual beings as well as physical beings. They believe that these spirit-beings are both good and bad.
- They both have ministers presiding over certain functions for the people they serve.
- They both believe in the continuation of life beyond death.

The information provided above suggests that there are common grounds between Christianity and traditional religions. This commonality is useful in dialogue between the two religions. However, albeit so, it must be understood that there are crucial disparities between Christianity and traditional African religion. One of these is the belief that God speaks in many ways through scriptures and through practical means. It is argued that God speaks through traditional cultures; it is the work of the Holy Spirit to prepare the heart of men

and women to receive His word. Invariably we fail to see the work of God around us because of our own worldview getting in the way of recognizing the foundation already laid down for evangelism. It is suggested that a clear approach is to use the foundations already laid to introduce Christianity to these cultures. The missionary should work through the Holy Scriptures, utilising particular stories that are parallel to the local culture. I believe that stories, which show similarities between the two religions, should be focussed on as they represent values where the Christian message can be clearly used to bring about conversion (Thesis 1 Lausanne Consultation on World Evangelism Thailand 1980).

O'Donovan (1995:220) gives us a compelling, biblical perspective on what the Bible teaches about the spirits of the dead. Christianity does not permit any form of communication with spirits except with Him who is the supreme and most high God. The Scripture forbids association with the spirits of the dead. Jesus quotes Luke 16:25-28, where the rich man died and was aware of the great mistake he made in not serving God during his lifetime. The fact that there is a great divide between the world of the living and the dead, means that it is forbidden to make a connection between the two. The writer makes reference to the disciples experience on the mountain recorded in Luke 16:29-31. During the transfiguration, while Jesus was talking to Moses and Elijah, the apostles did not talk to them although they witnessed what was taking place. They were not permitted to engage in that type of interaction.

4.7.1 Communicating The Gospel to Saramaccan Maroons

I will present and discuss several suggestions for communicating the gospel to Saramaccan Maroons. Firstly, I want to look again at the work done by the Roman Catholic and Moravian Churches in the upper Saramaccan River area. Although the methods used in the early days were not all in line with proper and consistent cross-cultural principles, they had significant influences on many communities, which are still adhered to in their denominational teachings and principles.

Many Saramaccan communities have been influenced by Christianity, primarily by the work of the two major denominations. I recognise to some extent the

work of other evangelical movements, albeit their method is more that of forcing their worldview upon the Maroons' culture without respect for their convictions. In Christian villages many customs associated with the worship of other gods are forbidden. For example, the *Azanpau* or *Faakapau*, the Saramaccans' place where spirits are worshipped is instead being replaced by a church building. The people worship every Saturday evening and Sunday morning and on Monday mornings in some villages. I recalled visiting one of these churches where Monday morning worship was about to begin. In contrast to this, I witnessed in a nearby village the people gathering around the *Faakpau* for worship. I met the village bonuman (priest). Churches introduced clinics and schools. To some extent, their influence helped to improve the economic life of the Maroons. The Church was the first to influence development in many Maroons' communities.

The Roman Catholic Church organised schools, established buildings, and medical services. These programmes influenced the Maroons to the extent that the Church was driven by the initiative of the locals. This proved too much and in the long run, they had to scale back their work. The Roman Catholic Church changed their attitude of forcing their worldview on the Saramaccans' by initiating the process of enculturation of the gospel to the Maroons. Although there is to some extent syncretism, as is clear from some of the interviews conducted, many Saramaccans feel comfortable attending the Roman Catholic Church. The question we need to ask is, what has worked for both the Roman Catholic and the Moravian Churches? I believe that their new way of dialogue with Maroon culture is built on respect and trust (Kent 1978: 29-31 and Vernooij 1996:176-177). The message of God as Creator and Redeemer of the universal sinfulness of all human beings, and their need for redemption must be preached. We have examined some commonalities from where the Christian worker can draw resources. I agree that in addressing the universal sinfulness of humanity, that Christian workers need to expand the Saramaccans' understanding of sin and salvation according to biblical concepts. The Christian worker must define sin as the Bible sees it. With this approach, the Saramaccan Maroons will see turning to ancestors and spirits for freedom from bondage to sin as fruitless. Rightly communicated, the word of God will meet the primal

man at the point of his greatest need. I agree that it will provide answers to his questions and point him to a more effective way of coping with persistent problems in his life. (Thesis 7 Lausanne 1980). The following are important concerns for the Christian worker.

4.7.1.1.DevelopingTrust

This is a way of forming good relationships between the two cultures. It is described as a relationship that continues to develop although it may suffer slight problems. It is not assuming that trust is easy to form, but it gets better when participants realize that they are being drawn closer in a relationship. Establishing trust on the mission field depends greatly on some principles of cross-culturalism. The ultimate purpose is to lead souls to accepting Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. In this context the acknowledgement of Van Rheenen's explanation of the identification stage must be brought to light. The missionary, being able to build trust within any culture is evidence that respect is being shown (Mayer 1974:6-7). He has become actively influenced through learning the language and being able to communicate by teaching, preaching and engaging in other activities within the new culture. The missionary realises that there are strengths and weaknesses in every culture, just as in his own and that all culture will ultimately be judged by God (Van Rheenen 1996:92-93).

4.7.1.2. Learning a New Language

Hiebert (1985:64-66) discussed some of the problems missionaries face when entering a new culture. One of their biggest setbacks is their inability to communicate in the language of the people. This causes constant frustration for missionaries, especially when they cannot communicate about basic things. This causes culture shock that can lead to depression. The desire to return home gets much stronger. The writer quotes Smalley (1978:698) who writes, "even after weeks of study the missionary is unable to discuss much more than the price of a pound of potatoes." Hiebert suggests that in order to learn a new language the missionary must be willing to make mistakes and must keep practising until the language becomes familiar to him/her. Van Rheenen (1996:91) supports this discussion by suggesting that the missionary must learn the language and culture of the new host in order to be effective in communicating the gospel. Gailey and Culbertson (2007:105) strengthen the

discussion by explaining that missionaries must not give up when facing frustration because of language difficulties. Gailey and Culbertson recognise the enormous difficulties and frustration that set in whenever missionaries are struggling with a new language. The temptation to withdraw and bond with one's own culture is counterproductive. Gailey and Culbertson (2007:115) suggest that the missionary should begin learning the new language by mimicking the sounds of a native speaker. Gailey and Culbertson recognised this method to be one of the best techniques to learn a new language. The writers are suggesting that that proper placement of the tongue, observing the teeth, and movement of the lips as well as the speaker's use of tone is essential to learning the language very fast. This could be true for learning to communicate the language of the Saramaccan Maroons. Language is necessary for communication. It is always a new challenge for missionaries engaged in cross-cultural ministry to learn a new language (Smith2001:277-285). The writer tells us that language plays a pivotal role in the everyday life of a community; it affects the political, economic and social structure of a community.

4.7.1.3 Adapting to a New Environment

Hiebert (1978:67) supports Van Rheenen's theory by arguing that in diet and coping a new environment takes its toll on the missionary's performance. The writer emphasized the fact that strange foods and surroundings, operating in a place where things are not familiar can be depressing. It appears that in this new culture, the missionary is almost seen to be struggling to survive. All of the amenities have disappeared. Van Rheenen (1996:91) commented that instead of the missionary running away or allowing depression to drive him/her insane, the missionary should do all within his power to adapt to the new culture. In order for this to happen, the culture must be viewed and accepted for what it really is, with its strengths and weaknesses, and all of its dynamics. The writer says that the missionary must be involved in interpersonal identification. That is, the missionary must know himself first, then the people to whom he is sent and be realistic about them. The missionary should perform the role as a servant leader, a coach and mentor, coming alongside his new community as a co-worker. The writer says that there must be a display of pure love for the people.

4.7.1.4 Contextualization

Stetzer (2011) presents contextualization as a means by which the gospel can be effectively communicated. The message must be contextualised using simple language; for example, the missionary must use child-related illustrations, games, and activities, to help in presenting the gospel message. There is no such thing as a 'one size fits all' presentation of the gospel. The missionary must not think that a method used in another context will always be relevant in another situation. The writer says, "Whoever the target audience, we should contextualise the message for them, as Jesus did. Contextualization does not compromise or water down the gospel message in any way. In fact, this is what non-contextualization does, because it obfuscates the message!"

Regardless of the culture, the concept of contextualization applies equally to whomever we are communicating with, not only those of a different culture. I agree with Stetzer's argument for contextualization because it further suggested that contextualization is necessary because while the human condition and the gospel remain the same, people have different worldviews, which in turn impact on how they interpret themselves, the world and the things you say. People who care about contextualization care because they want to see the gospel being communicated clearly and effectively. Hesselgrave (1991:143) supports this when he comments on contextualization as an attempt to communicate the gospel in a way that affects in the holistic being of a person, including his environment. Hesselgrave believes that contextualization is the will of God, and that the task must be faithful to God's revelation. The writer is saying that contextualization must always be faithful to the gospel message. We are already contextualising, so let us do it well. Whiteman (1993:2-7) pointed out in his article, 'Preparation for Cross Cultural Missions,' that culture determines what is important for it. The writer highlighted the important point that having a vivid knowledge of the culture and its lifestyle, worldviews, and having respect for the new culture is paramount to effectively communicating the gospel to the new culture.

The writer agreed with Hesselgrave that contextualising the ministry within the culture to whom the gospel is intended to be preached is an effective tool which enhances communication. Anderson (2004:101-125) supports Whiteman views

on the importance of contextualising. He was also careful to underline a few important facts about contextualising; for example, he stressed that although contextualization is an important tool for reaching new cultures with the gospel, the truth of the matter is that the gospel truths which are Jesus Christ being crucified and risen to life to bring mankind to himself must be communicated in a manner that is relevant to the Saramaccan Maroons. The Maroons must be encouraged to respond to the gospel but allowed to keep some aspects of their natural traditions, instead of being infiltrated by the missionary's own cultural worldview. Contextualization could also be considered to be integration of several thought patterns with a culture. It is important that the missionary be made aware of the differences as this process moves ahead. For example, there is a vast difference between the Western and Eastern cultural patterns. Eastern thought would usually focus on multiple perspectives on any given matter. It focuses on finding a middle ground in issues, always trying to strike a balance so as to keep a harmonious flow whatever is being considered. Western thoughts are centred mostly on individualism, the quest for personal gratitude, freedom and success. It leaves no stone unturned and makes its decision based on analytical data. Unlike the Western view, the Eastern culture views relationships as central to a community's existence. Scripture must be the basis in the efforts of contextualization (LaBute 2006:35-76).

4.7.2. Biblical Perspective on Saramaccan African Traditional Beliefs and Practices

Although life in the present day Saramaccans' culture is changing, the problem of traditional beliefs and practices is still a very important issue. In times of crisis, many weak Christians still turn back to these practices in order to solve their problems. It has happened many times with many Saramaccan Maroons who once were converted to Christianity. It is important that missionary workers help new converts to understand that the Bible gives us a completely accurate view of reality and truth. We must understand and believe the worldview of the Bible before we can deal with the problem of ancestral spirits, spirit possession, initiation practices, divination, magic, curses, witchcraft, with witch doctors and other issues associated with traditional beliefs. It is especially important to understand what the Bible teaches about the dead and what happens after a

person dies. Jesus Christ is King of Kings and God of all Creation, including all spirits in the unseen world. In answer to the believing prayer, God is more than able to deal with any problem or crisis which evil people or evil spirits may bring. Even if he chooses not to deliver a Christian from the crisis or to directly solve the problem, the Bible teaches that, “God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God” (Roman. 8:28 NASB), (O’Donovan 1992:225-228).

There is a great need for many Saramaccans who are bent on African traditional belief systems to repent of all non-Christian beliefs and practices and to destroy the objects associated with these beliefs. There is a great need for Christian missionaries to patiently disciple new believers into maturity in Christ

I further discuss that the Christian missionary needs to explain that witnessing about Christ does not consist of introducing something foreign into the traditional culture, instead it is to let the gospel relate to the revelation God has given of Himself prior to Christian witness.

4.7.3. Primary Objectives in Communicating the Gospel to Maroons

The ultimate goal in evangelistic communication is to persuade the non-believer to accept Jesus Christ as his/her saviour. I will present five objectives which will help the missionary to overcome some practical problems that stand between him and the host culture. Hesselgrave (2000:142) suggests the following objectives:

1. To mobilize as many believers as may be available and can be effectively deployed in evangelising the target area.
2. To relate the Good News of Christ to the audience(s) in a way that will be clear, convincing, and compelling.
3. To employ the most appropriate methods of evangelism.
3. To utilize the potential of various communication media within the Target area.
5. To reach the evangelized in the target area as set out during

the Pauline Cycle.

Paul used the following method for communicating the gospel to various target groups. The following is the order in which Paul worked:

1. Missionaries Commissioned-Acts 13:1-4; 15:39-40
2. Audience Contacted-Acts 13:14-16; 14:1
3. Gospel Communicated-Acts 13:17-14; 16:31
4. Hearers Converted-Acts 13:48; 16:14-15
5. Believers Congregated-Acts 13:43
6. Faith confirmed-Acts 14:21-22; 15:41
7. Leadership Consecrated-Acts 14:23
8. Believers Commended-Acts 14:23; 16:40
9. Relationships continued-Acts 15:36; 18:23
10. Sending Churches convened-Acts 14:26-27; 15:1-4

I concur with Hesselgrave that the Pauline cycle included a message that was contextualised so that it become relevant to the target groups. Paul carefully selected his method of communication and media. He fully relied on the Holy Spirit as the Divine director of this new theatre, the missionary enterprise. It is true that Paul's method requires thoughtful investigation and preparation, as is the case with any other method. The New Testament offers a variety of ways to present the gospel:

1. The gospel can be communicated privately to individuals,
2. Family and household groups (Acts 10:16; 20: 20; 13:14-41; 19:8-9)
3. The gospel can be communicated through preaching.
4. Teaching and witnessing (Acts 2:14-40; 10:34-43).
5. The gospel can be communicated through drama (Acts 2:15-36; 17:16-17).

6. Proclamation (Acts 13:14-41; 17:16-31; 19:8-9).

These methods involve interpersonal communication. This was an acceptable method used in Paul's time and with our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The advantage was that there was interpersonal communication thus opening up an avenue for building up closeness and relationship. It allows for a significant degree of interaction between the missionary and the host culture. There is no doubt that the gospel communicated in the apostolic age had significant impact. Such method is more practical in indigenous settings where the use of public address systems and other extravagant media devices are rendered useless.

4.8 CONCLUSION.

The Christian missionary worker needs an objective understanding of culture. If the message of God is to be effectively communicated. The use of anthropology in helping Christian workers to understand Saramaccan Maroons cultural settings is important. It help missionaries not to allow their own worldview to obstruct the communication of the gospel. It is important to communicate the gospel in the context of the cultural worldview of the Saramaccans. The missionary must present the gospel of Jesus Christ as a message of hope to the Maroons. It offers new birth and cleansing from sin and introduces the Most High God as the alternative source of healing, restoration and dependency. The gospel points to the sacrifice of Jesus as the only valid sacrifice to overcome all evil powers, even death. It introduces the Saramaccans' to God's mercy and love.

God is building the Church of Jesus Christ with people from every nation, and tribes from the four corners of this world. We must not be ignorant of the fact that Satan is fighting to oppose and delay the work by spreading evil to all parts of the world. It is the responsibility of every Christian to evangelise; this is not an option. Jesus will judge all people of every nation and tribe according to their deeds (Matt. 25:31-33). The Christian message is both universal and specific. It provides the traditional religionist an opportunity to recognize and respond to the living God he had previously thought was an avenging God. God is now being revealed to him as a God of mercy, who loves and wants to save

mankind, including the Saramaccans, from final damnation in hell. The study in cross-culturing discipline must not be marginalised. It must be treated as a part of the communication principles for the effective spreading of the gospel.

Many missionaries have chosen to ignore this vitally important discipline in evangelization. Newbigin (1994:115) has offered helpful insight toward the gospel-culture and gospel cultural issues that have relevance beyond the cross-cultural mission of the Church.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

My study has shown that the Saramaccan Maroons' traditional religion is based on African Traditional belief systems. Traditional religions such as the Saramaccan inbred beliefs claim that the universe works by rules set down by the Supreme God assisted by lesser gods or spirits, some of whom are friendly and others who are not (Ellwood 1995:51). Williamson (1965:85) states that African Traditional religions have no set founder or creed; their belief system is not presented as a theological system. Manke and Harmelink (1996:100) believe that African Traditional beliefs are expressed in a broad variation of beliefs and practices. Similar to the African Traditional beliefs, the Saramaccan Maroons believe in a supreme God, who they claim is the God of the universe and who is also preserver of all things (Kent 1978:12). This is a religion that is based mainly on oral transmission. It is written on the hearts and minds, through history, rituals, religious functions; for It is not written on paper. It has no founders or reformers like Gautama the Buddha, Asoka, Christ, or Muhammad. African Traditional Religion has no missionaries, or even the desire to propagate the religion, or to proselytise. Its practitioners are loyal worshippers and, probably because of this, Africans who have their roots in the indigenous religion, find it difficult to sever connection with it (Mbiti1970:1).

Kent (1978:12) explained that in the Saramaccan culture, there are many pantheons, deities and spirits. The ancestors' spirits play a pivotal role in the life of the community. It is said that Christianity never replaces native polytheism in the Saramaccan culture (Velzen and Wetering 2004:13). There remains today a tension between Christianity and Traditional Religion. Although both religions claim that there is a supreme God, they differ on how human beings enter into eternity. In traditional belief, communication with the spirits is a norm, while with Christianity the word of God discourages contacts with the spirits of the dead. African Traditional beliefs system focuses on maintaining connection with spirits

as a means by which mankind can be harmonised with nature, but Christianity emphasises that repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ is necessary to receiving eternal life, which is the ultimate goal of every Christian (Boafo n.d.4). The proclamation must be the central goal in cross-cultural mission work. Communicating the gospel to the Saramaccan Maroons must be relevant. Christian workers must be aware of the cultural and historical backgrounds of the Saramaccan Maroons.

I think that any community who practises the African Traditional Religious belief system is not based on the same foundations with Christianity: "Remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world" (Eph. 2:12 ESV). It is my belief that African Traditional Religious practices are contrary to God's covenantal relationship with His people: "You are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant that God made with your fathers, saying to Abraham, 'and in your offspring shall all the families of the earth be "blessed"' (Acts 3:25 ESV). "And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying," 'In you shall all the nations be blessed'" (Gal 3:8 ESV). The condition for salvation is determined by God and not man. God is not going to re-establish Israel today in order to fulfil His covenant with either Abraham or David. The covenant has been fulfilled and it will remain fulfilled. Man will only be saved today not by works but by faith in Jesus Christ. Man cannot be saved by any other religion. Those that claim to believe in the Bible must accept Jesus as the fulfilment of God's promises.

I do not hold the notion that the African Traditional Religion is equivalent to Christianity nor are there any other religion that bear any semblance to the gospel. I believe that there are rituals and symbols that can be used to help communicate the gospel effectively to the Saramaccan Maroons. For example, we can use their belief in the supreme God to demonstrate their fear is in God rather than in man. We owe our reverence to God rather than to spirits of the dead and to humans. We can demonstrate that Jesus Christ's death was sacrificial and that it is far superior to any other sacrifice ever made by man. It conciliated God and appeased His just anger towards humankind. I believe that

we have the opportunity as Christians to present Jesus Christ as the King of Kings, as the only object for religious worship, and that He is alive and is working in our daily lives, through the Holy Spirit. The mission approach to the Saramaccan Maroons must be an evangelical contextual approach. It must be based solely on the Bible, the gospel must be the central truth and Jesus Christ must be presented as King of the universe. The missionary has the responsibility of presenting Christ as the real power who is above all deceptive mythical belief systems. Jesus Christ as Creator, Preserver and Governor of all things, including demons, will return and will triumph over all demonic oppression, and social and economic oppression. His return will be a significant moment for all who accepted Him and worship Him as the supreme God over all other gods. A true commitment to contextualization will depend mainly on our sound application of the gospel. The missionary must not distort the truth, but deliver the truth to bring about reconciliation of man to God. "Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude v.3 ESV). We were warned against perverting the grace of God, denying the Saramaccan Maroons the truth.

Communicating the gospel in a relevant manner must focus on the application of the truth. It must be communicated in a manner that will confront all areas of the Maroons' lives, bringing about a complete transformation.

5.2. RECOMMENDATIONS

My focus on this thesis has been on finding possible solutions in communicating the gospel to the Saramaccan Maroons of the upper Suriname river area.

It is my opinion that the following recommendations serve as a guide for missionary organisations, Christian denominations, missionaries and for future research projects along the lines of my study.

Recommendations 1: Mission Organisations

Mission organisations should seek every opportunity to expose their missionaries to cross-cultural training. The proclamation of the gospel is the central focus. Mission organisations should determine what kind of education

and training is needed. It is true that many mission organisations and denominations require a certain level of theological study or degrees from a Bible college or seminary. Obtain information from these institutions' websites. There are many range of programmes for either undergraduate or graduate students in missions and evangelism. Missionaries must concentrate on theology of missions, cultural anthropology cross-cultural communication, world religions, and a range of other subjects that will assist them in effectively carrying out their missions to the Saramaccan Maroons.

Mission organisations should partner with other denominations to determine which can provide hands-on experiences or internships for new missionaries. Some might have training programmes in coaching, and equipping missionaries through direct service. Understand the need for strategic partnerships.

Mission organizations should reflect on the relationship between helping suffering humanity, saving souls and growing saints.

Mission organisation should recommend that their foreign and local missionaries undergo language orientation before they enter into the new culture.

Mission organizations have to be aware of and prepare their missionaries for health issues such as HIV/AIDS, malaria, and yellow fever, tropical weather patterns, immorality and traditional religious influence.

Mission organizations can follow some of the methods used by both the Roman Catholic Church and the Moravian Church. Although Christianity is widely resisted by many communities, it cannot be ignored that in communities where these denominations are present, Christian mission social projects and the gospel message have improved the lives of the Saramaccan Maroons. This relationship grew out of respect for the people and their culture. A common ground was established and effective communication developed.

Recommendations 2: for Future Research

The work done by many missionaries associated with organizations or by themselves provides valuable information which can be used as a guide to discover the problems and possible solutions in communicating the gospel to the Saramaccan Maroons of the Upper Suriname River. The information

gleaned from their experience could assist other missionaries on the “how” and “how not to do” when trying to communicate the gospel to the Saramaccan Maroons. More is needed to be done in order to recognize the many challenges faced by Western, non- Western and some local missionaries. I recommend that further research be done in the following specific areas;

- Anthropological research in the contemporary Saramaccan culture. Specific emphasis should be given to cultural linguistic.
- Acculturation and the elevation of non-contemporary linguists. This is to enable missionaries to more effective in communicating the gospel to the Saramaccan Maroons.
- Type of race, for example, whether Saramaccans prefer to communicate to white, black or missionaries of other races. This should assist churches and missionary organizations in the planning and preparation of future missionaries to these places.

Recommendations: 3 Missionaries must balance their ministry

New missionaries who intend starting new missions in any Saramaccan community must continually be reminded that they are not political activists for the locals. Although the missionary must be aware of injustice, he must speak up for the weak and vulnerable. I propose as recommendations the following,

- I recommend that missionary organisations be encouraged to do ministry along with projects that will improve the lives of the Saramaccans, without creating a culture of dependency. Some of these projects must be focus on improving the education of the young adults, adults, adolescence and children.
- I recommend that missionaries acquaint themselves with the practical needs of the Saramaccan Maroons, and learn about the realities in which they are living. Missionaries should live amongst the Saramaccan Maroons in order to learn their language, customs and mannerism.
- I recommend that missionaries work within their existing social structures. Missionaries must respect their tribal orientation and work with these groups by allowing them to be part of the decision-making processes. It is imperative for missionaries to respect highly the Saramaccan Maroon culture. Being friendly and becoming useful.

- I recommend that there be consultation with others as to one's ability for missionary work. Talking with a member of the clergy or fellow missionary can provide insights into the best possible training for the prospective missionary. Many organizations require recommendations on health issues, physical examination and commitments with regard to financial, family and other issues.

Too many foreign missionaries think that they are more suitably qualified to fulfill missionary roles than the local missionaries. This is one of the reasons why they do not delegate assignments to locals, because they fear that they are not capable of carrying out even the smallest task efficiently.

- I recommend that local missionaries must be trained and developed in all areas of leadership within the local Church and that locally-trained missionaries, especially if they are from the same community, assist foreign missionaries because of their knowledge of local complexities, for example, languages, customs and mannerisms. As locals, they understand and can deal with the sensitive nature of the culture.
- I recommend that more Christian Saramaccan Maroons belonging to the Roman Catholic, Moravian and evangelical movements be trained in handling of the Word of God so that they can in turn effectively and faithfully communicate the gospel in their own Saramaccan context. I believe that inserting locally- trained Christian workers will be valuable in the Saramaccan Community.

Recommendations 4: Empowerment of lay people for missions

I recommend that lay people in local churches situated close to or in Saramaccan communities be empowered through training to evangelise Saramaccan Maroons. They must be given access to all theological resources that are available. Stevens (2002:133-135) supports the empowerment of the local lay people. He suggested that the entire Church including the laity, must work in harmony with the to bring about healing and salvation to the whole nation. In this regard, I refer to the Saramaccan Maroons. He further recommended that lay people use their knowledge when dealing with daily issues in conjunction with their Church, bringing all that knowledge into harmony with their work among the Saramaccan Maroons.

Recommendation 5: Establishing a local Saramaccan Maroons' Bible School

I recommend that a Saramaccan Maroons' Bible School based on the belief in the Bible and teaching the gospel message be set up. Trainers would need to be well trained in handling the Word and how to work towards a Bible-based contextually-oriented evangelical approach to mission in the Saramaccan Maroons. I believe that this must be encouraged and supported by local Churches, especially those already well established. This might not fit into the structure of the Roman Catholic Church, but I believe that it can be done through the evangelical movements working together to communicate the gospel. I believe that the pillar of our evangelical thrust must be Christ-centered in our belief, our worship, our attitude and behaviour and our service to God and the Saramaccan Maroons. The obstacles are real. Missionaries cannot ignore the depth of ancestral veneration and other belief systems of the Saramaccan Maroons. It is undeniably the greatest hindrance for many Saramaccan Maroons to allow Jesus to be Lord and Master of their lives to the exclusion of syncretism. Finally, I believe that Christ's commission to the Church includes the evangelization of all humanity. His instructions were specific: "And he said to them," "Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation" (Mark 16:15 ESV).

Recommendation 6: Recognize the vital Importance of learning the language and cultural adaptation

Cross-cultural communication is vital to building relationship with the Saramaccan Maroons. Their language must be learned in order to build relationship for the gospel to be heard. Language adaptation is challenging, but it has positive consequences: Know what are the values and thinking of the Saramaccan Maroons. Language acquisition and cultural adaptation takes many years. Missionaries must exercise diligence in acquiring knowledge of the culture.

People in communities usually feel respected when persons outside of their commune can communicate in their own language and adapt to the new culture.

APPENDIX A: Research Questionnaire

RESEARCHER Questionnaire for Masters of Theology Programme in the field of Missiology at the South African Theological Seminary (SATS)

Kervin Harry

THESIS: IDENTIFICATION OF PROBLEMS AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS
IN COMMUNICATING THE GOSPEL TO THE SARAMACCAN MAROONS
OF THE UPPER SURINAME RIVER

(Please provide your answers on a separate sheet of paper and return with questionnaire attach.)

Question 1. How long have you been serving the Saramaccan Maroons as a missionary?

Question 2. Have you encountered any difficulties communicating the gospel to the Maroons? If “yes”, what were some of the difficulties and how did you overcome them?

Question 3. What do you recommend as a preferred method to communicate the gospel to the Maroons?

Question 4. Do you agree that the Roman Catholic and Moravian Churches are successful in communicating the gospel effectively to the Maroons? If your answer is yes; what contributed to their success? If your answer is no; what are the things preventing them from being successful?

Question 5. There are more Roman Catholics and Moravian Churches in the Upper Suriname River area than evangelical churches such as the Full Gospel and Pentecostals. What do you think the reason for this is?

Question 6. What message would you wish to hear from the Church to the Maroons?

APPENDIX B: MAP OF THE REPUBLIC OF SURINAME



<http://www.google.co.za>

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