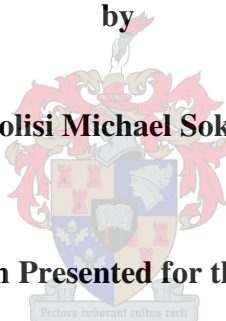# THE PRIESTHOOD OF BELIEVERS: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

AND EVALUATION OF DEVELOPMENTS IN THE

ECCLESIOLOGY OF THE SEVENTH-DAY

ADVENTIST CHURCH

by

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DECLARATION

I the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this dissertation is my own

original work and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it at any

university for a degree

Signature…………………………………………..

Date…………………………………………..

ABSTRACT

This dissertation is a critical analysis and evaluation of the teaching of the priesthood of believers and the development of ecclesiology in the Seventh-day Adventist church.

The study analyses this development in Seventh-day Adventist ecclesiology by evaluating how the doctrine of the priesthood of believers has been viewed in biblical, historical, and theological contexts. The comparative analysis of (mainly, though not exclusively) the Free church ecclesiology with the aim of contributing towards the understanding of the development of the Seventh-day Adventist ecclesiology is key. The importance of the development of ecclesiology in general and more specifically within the Seventh-day Adventist church is reflected in the discussions on the priesthood of believers by Free Churches and Seventh-day Adventist church historians and theologians.

This research demonstrates that the development of ecclesiology cannot be studied in isolation. Therefore the development of ecclesiology in the Seventh-day Adventist church should be viewed with the history of the Christian church in view. For the purposes of this study this implies that the reflection of the Christian church on the priesthood of believers should have an impact on the development of the history of ecclesiology within the Seventh-day Adventist church. The critical analysis and assessment of the development of Seventh-day Adventist ecclesiology highlights the importance of biblical, historical, theological and ecclesiological contexts combined, on the priesthood of believers. Therefore this highlights the importance of the doctrine of priesthood of believers in the development of ecclesiology.

OPSOMMING

Hierdie werkstuk is 'n kritieke analisering en evaluering van die leer van die priesterskap van gelowiges en die ontwikkeling van ekklesiologie in die Seventh-day Adventist Kerk. Die studie analiseer die ontwikkeling in die Seventh-day Adventist ekklesiologie deur te evalueer hoe die doktriene van die priesterskap van gelowiges gesien word in bybelse, historiese, en teologiese konteks. Die vergelykende analisering van (hoofsaaklik, tog nie alleenlik nie) die Vrye kerkse ekklesiologie met die doel om by te dra tot die begrip van die ontwikkeling van die Sewendedagse Adventiste ekklesiologie is opperste. Die belangrikheid van die ontwikkeling van ekklesiologie in die algemeen, meer spesifiek in die Seventh-day Adventist Kerk, word gereflekteer in die gesprek oor die priesterdom van gelowiges deur die Vrye Kerke en die Sewendedagse Adventiste geskiedkundiges en teoloë.

Hierdie navorsing demonstreer dat die ontwikkeling van ekklesiologie nie in isolasie bestudeer kan word nie. Daarom moet die ontwikkeling van ekklesiologie in die Sewendedagse Adventiste kerk gesien word met die geskiedenis van die Christen kerk in sig. Vir die doel van hierdie studie impliseer dit dat die refleksie van die Christen Kerk op die priesterskap van gelowiges, 'n impak moet hê op die ontwikkeling van die geskeidenis van ekklesiologie in die Seventh-day Adventist kerk. Die kritieke analisering en assesering van die ontwikkeling van die Seventh-day Adventist ekklesiologie beklemtoon die belangrikheid van die bybelse, geskiedkundige, teologiese en ekklesiologiese konteks saamgebind om die priesterskap van gelowiges. Daarom word die belangrikheid van die doktriene van priesterskap van gelowiges in die ontwikkeling van ekklesiologie beklemtoon.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my wife Ntombizanele, and my children Sibabalo, Sinedinga and Saneliso, who have supported me through the challenges of writing.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The developments in the ecclesiology of the Seventh-day Adventist Church did not happen in isolation. While Scripture is foundational in the development of Seventh-day Adventist doctrines, there is also a historical context and a heritage from which the Seventh-day Adventist doctrine of the church developed. This research focuses on the doctrine of the priesthood of believers as it relates to the developments in the ecclesiology of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The research will examine the priesthood of believers from different contexts that prove to have had an influence in the developments in Seventh-day Adventist ecclesiology. This doctrine will be evaluated first within the context of biblical interpretation, second within the context of the history of the church, from the early church through to the nineteenth century, third in the context of theology in particular from the nineteenth century onward, and fourth, in ecclesiology. The critical analysis and evaluation of this doctrine from these different contexts will form the basis for the evaluation of the developments in the ecclesiology of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

1.1   Problem Statement

A number of studies have been conducted on the priesthood of believers in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, but no study has been conducted on how the teaching of the priesthood of believers relates to the developments in Seventh-day Adventist ecclesiology particularly with the biblical, historical and theological contexts in view.

In the history of the Free Churches[1] it appears that there is no consensus on the application of the teaching of the priesthood of believers. Those churches that have clearly articulated the doctrine have different ecclesiologies while they subscribe to similar principles and teachings particularly on the priesthood of believers. This is evident from the different interpretations and approaches used in applying the teaching of the priesthood of believers. This creates a need for a more comprehensive analysis and evaluation that is Biblical, historical, theological and ecclesiological.

The Free Churches trace their historical heritage from both the Radical and the Magisterial Reformations. It seems that there is variance between these Reformation movements as well, on the teaching and application of the priesthood of believers.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church arising from the context of the Revival Movements of the nineteenth century is a good test case for exploring the teaching of the priesthood of believers on the one hand and its application on an ecclesiology on the other hand.

Large groups of people from predominantly different Free Churches, joined a movement championed by William Miller from around 1841. This is an important historical connection for understanding the ecclesiology of the Free Churches and the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Charles Bradford (1999:9), a former president of the North American Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church has pointed to the ecclesiology of the Seventh-day Adventist Church as a key need area for investigation; he points out that "the most urgent theological task before us today is to understand what the church is all about." A year after this call was sounded a volume was published that addresses this need, the

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[1] This term was first used in the nineteenth century about the same time that the Seventh-day Adventist Church was formally organized.

Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology. An article in this volume by Raoul Dederen "The Church" has as its stated purpose to first consider Christ's relation to the church, the nature and scope of the church, an examination of its mission and government, the ordinances and marks of the church and finally the survey of the historical development of the doctrine of the church (Dederen, 2000:538). The fact that the priesthood of believers is omitted from this discussion confirms Edward's contention that "throughout our history Seventh-day Adventists have held the doctrine of priesthood of believers as one of our cardinal beliefs and most cherished distinctives. Yet in spite of our profession we have seriously misunderstood and certainly inadequately expressed the full meaning of this doctrine" (Edwards, 1995:63). Oliver wrote a doctoral dissertation on the *Organizational Structure* that was published in 1989. In his recommendations for further research he points out that "the need for clarification of ecclesiological perspectives still exists. The Seventh-day Adventist Church should make a decided effort to integrate both functional and ontological perspectives in a distinctive Seventh-day Adventist ecclesiology which gives adequate attention to its missionary mandate…*there is also a need for* studies in the area of Seventh-day Adventist ecclesiology, especially insofar as such ecclesiological reflection could impact contemporary administrative structures" (Italics mine) (Oliver, 1989:364, 5).

The central question around which all the issues covered in this research orbit is: what is the significance of the doctrine of the priesthood of believers for Seventh-day Adventist ecclesiology? There are several discussions on the priesthood of believers by Seventh-day Adventist theologians. There is however no clear, in depth, official doctrinal

statement on how this doctrine is developed from Scripture, explained theologically and applied ecclesiologically within the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

1.2   Research Hypothesis

While the focus of this research will be on the developments in the Seventh-day Adventist Church ecclesiology, attention will be given to the Baptist and Methodist churches as a cluster of Free Churches. The Methodist and the Baptist Churches by definition have been established as Free Churches. The important role of the magisterial Reformation in the development of the teaching of priesthood of believers, particularly the Reformed and Lutheran traditions will also be highlighted. Therefore this research claims some evidence that the Seventh-day Adventist Church, can be identified among the Free Churches based on its teaching of the priesthood of believers, under girded by Free Church heritage in terms of its theology and ecclesiology. Unlike most of the Free Churches, the Seventh-day Adventist Church has never claimed its roots from a particular tradition. The Seventh-day Adventist Church claims its roots from the Bible and the history of the church in general. It is in the sense of a common heritage that this study seeks to identify the Seventh-day Adventist Church among the Free Churches.

(1)   The Seventh-day Adventist Church shares the same heritage with the classical English Free Church and in particular the Baptist and the Methodist Churches. (2) The priesthood of believers is an underutilized key to understanding Seventh-day Adventist ecclesiology, and the impact of this teaching can be seen in both the theology and ecclesiology. Based on the preliminary review of both primary and secondary literature and identification of the core problem, it is the researcher's contention that the priesthood

of believers within the Seventh-day Adventist Church has not always been seen to play a central role both in ecclesiology and theology. The researcher submits that given its own place of importance in the theology and ecclesiology of the Seventh-day Adventist Church as the priesthood of Christ, the priesthood of believers would have more meaning and impact in all aspects of church life. This will result in a balanced understanding of the tensions that exist around the meaningful application of the doctrine in theology and ecclesiology and in every believer's life. This study also has implications for the role of the church in the socio-political and ecumenical contexts. The church is called to be the salt and the light (Matthew 5:13) this is only possible when the church understands Christ's priestly ministry and its own priestly role. This also has serious eschatological implications, as Christ comes to be united with his bride, the Church. Will He find a fragmented body or a united family of believers? Reflection on the priesthood of believers forces the Church to do an introspection on the role of women and children in ministry, racism, denominationalism and helps us to deal with these issues from a Biblical perspective. Is the Church moving towards that goal? The Church was organized for mission, every member of the body of Christ should be a functional member fulfilling his/her priestly role. An institutional approach[2] may lead to stagnation and fossilization, but an organic approach that permeates all aspects of the life of the believer leads to growth and fruitfulness. The structure of the church determines its growth and its destiny. The life of each believer is a far more effective witness than 365 sermons.

While the different approaches and understanding is to be acknowledged among the Free Churches there are also some foundational points of commonality that are evident. One of

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[2] By this the researcher means a case where ecclesiology is enslaved to the institutional view of the Church. In such a case the institutional view of the Church takes dominance.

these is the fact that the mission of the Church depends on the entire priesthood of believers and there is no qualitative difference between clergy and laity.

This cluster also shares the same tradition and at the same time differs (in certain respects) in terms of their theology and ecclesiology from other Free Church traditions and the Roman Catholic Church.[3] The teaching of the priesthood of believers has an impact on this difference (including similarity). While both the Magisterial and Radical Reformations share the biblical understanding of the priesthood of believers, this study shows that there is no consensus on the application of the teaching in ecclesiology.[4]

Eastwood in his study accounts for the Baptist and Methodist understanding of the priesthood of believers. This study will strive to point out that the Seventh-day Adventist Church shares the cluster of Baptist, Methodist Free Church's understanding and teaching of the priesthood of believers.

This study also sets out to demonstrate that this sadly neglected biblical concept is one of the key elements to understanding Seventh-day Adventist ecclesiology. The Seventh-day Adventist Church has emphasized the priestly ministry of Christ. The priesthood of

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[3] It is important at this point to note that there are different traditions of Free Churches, such as Scottish Free Churches, however these are beyond the scope of this research. Our focus will mainly be on the English Free Churches that included Baptists, Methodists, and later Evangelical Free Churches.

[4] This difference can be illustrated inter alia by the great peasant's war 1524-1525. Williams (1963:59) states: "modern Christian historians in the Lutheran and Reformed traditions, as consequence of their concern for civil, social, and ecclesiastical order and obedience – a legacy from Luther and his resolute stand against the revolutionary appropriation by the peasant insurgents of his good news concerning Christian freedom – have long perpetuated the customary burdening of evangelical Anabaptism with the charge of having arisen out of a combination of heresy and sedition, while historians standing in the Anabaptist tradition itself, because of their pacifism and aversion to both Marxism and secularism, have been primarily concerned to dissociate, so far as possible, the peasant unrest from the Anabaptist witness. Both groups of Christian historians have therefore largely left it to the Marxists, and others without confessional predisposition or inclination, to vindicate the evangelical ideals of the rebellious peasants." While this study highlights the differences, no attempt will be made to compare the differing traditions, but rather the different traditions and their approach will serve as a backdrop for the understanding of the teaching of the priesthood of all believers within the Free Church tradition and the Seventh-day Adventist Church in particular.

believers is directly related to the High Priesthood of Christ. Therefore underrating one may lead to undermining the other.

This study also opens an opportunity for engaging in ecumenical debate in the way that will harmonize with the Seventh-day Adventist heritage.

Therefore this study seeks to demonstrate that:

(1) The Biblical foundation of the priesthood of believers is important in the evaluation of the developments in ecclesiology.

(2) There is a need for further exploration into the Biblical interpretation of the priesthood of believers by theologians.

(3) A broader view of heritage has enriched the Seventh-day Adventist Church in its ecclesiology. This opens an opportunity for dialogue with many church traditions.

(4) Tracing a specific historical heritage is also important for the development of ecclesiology. In a sense therefore the Seventh-day Adventist Church is a Free Church on the basis of such historical investigation.

(5) The discussion on the priesthood of believers came at critical times in the development of Seventh-day Adventist Church structure. This shows the importance of the priesthood of believers as both a biblical and theological teaching for the development of organization.

1.3 The Introductory Overview of the Ecclesiological Heritage of the Free Churches

The ecclesiological heritage of the Free Churches provides an important background and historical context for the development of ecclesiology within the church. It must be noted from the start that there are a number of Free Churches that stem from different

traditions. Historically the use of the term "Free Church" may have started in Scotland.[5]

The Free Methodist church was founded in 1860 (marston.freemethodistchurch.org). On

the other hand the Evangelical Free Church of America was born in 1950 as a result of

"the merger of two church bodies: the Evangelical Free Church of America (Swedish)

and the Norwegian-Danish Free Church Associations. Both groups had been birthed in

the revival movements of the late 19th century" (www.efca.org). A term used in England

earlier was "Separatists" who were later known as the "Protestant Dissenters." This goes

back to the Act of Uniformity of 1662 in England that was rejected by the Dissenters who

were later known as Nonconformists (Tripp, 2004:769).

Besides the Free Churches that are recognized territorially there are also Free Churches

from the Lutheran tradition whose origins are in Germany[6], Presbyterian Free Churches

which originated in Scotland for example (Jackson, 1901:377). Sell, a Reformed

Theologian tracing the history of English Free Churches describes them as

Nonconformists who did not kowtow to the Church of England established within the

English political context. The term for him generally denotes Protestants although in

some general sense it may include Roman Catholics. However since the nineteenth

century the nonconformists have been identified under the Free Church umbrella. Under

the oldest nonconformist groups he includes Congregationalists and Baptists, which came

from Puritan Separatism; Presbyterians (from the1662 influxes from Scotland, Ireland,

and Wales); and Quakers (1668). The Methodists followed with their separation from the

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[5] The Free Church of Scotland was formed in 1843 by a group of Evangelicals who separated from the Established Church. They protested against the interference of the state on the spiritual matters of the Church (Ross, 1993:337; Cameron, 1911:213, 214).
[6] See (Clark, 1910:81), "The Lutheran free churches in Germany do not recognize the position of the secular ruler as supreme head of the Church, and have organized independent congregations without the aid of the State."

Church of England (Sell, 1992:259)[7]. For the purpose of this research the focus will be on the English Free Church tradition. The reason for this choice is that throughout the research the focus will be on tracing the historical context of the Seventh-day Adventist ecclesiology parallel to that tradition. The research will also demonstrate how the Seventh-day Adventist Church shares a common heritage with a particular tradition of Free Churches namely, the English Free Churches. Although the term, Free Church was first used in the nineteenth century, the roots of the English Free Church tradition may be traced from the first half of the sixteenth century with the Anabaptists[8] as the pioneers. According to Payne (1944:27), Anabaptists appeared as the left wing of the Reformation movement. From 1525 onwards they began to form separate groups. "The Anabaptist ideal implied a self-governing congregation independent of the state or Episcopal control, having the Bible as its law and living a rather ascetic life of strict conformity to a literal interpretation of supposedly Biblical requirements" (Payne, 1944:27). From about the middle of the sixteenth century through to the nineteenth century we find English Dissenters, including Baptists, Congregationalists, Presbyterians, and Methodists refusing to conform to the dictates of the crown on religious matters. This culminated into the

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[7] . See also (McBrien, 1995:544), on the Free Churches. It seems that both the Reformed and Catholic theologians trace the roots of the Free Church from England.

[8] Anabaptists are part of the Radical Reformation which "believed on principle in the Separation of their own churches from the national or territorial state…followers of the Radical Reformation denounced war and renounced all forms of coercion except the ban, and sought to spread their version of the Christian life by missions, martyrdom and philanthropy. No less confident than the fighting Calvinists that they were the chosen remnant of the Lord…In insisting on believers baptism or on the possession of the gifts of the Spirit or on experience of regeneration and in being often quite indifferent to the general political and social order, the various exponents of Radical Reformation differentiated themselves from the sixteenth century protestants Lutheran and Reformed." (Williams, 1963:xxv) While there are a number of Free Churches that claim their roots from the Radical Reformation, the revolutionary, spiritualizers and the restitution forms of the Radical Reformation are identified by Littell (1957:25,26). Identifying the Anabaptists with the latter Littel, further states: "Against the revolutionaries on the one hand, and the spiritualizers on the other, the Anabaptists set forth to realize in concrete form that life and order which they saw plainly expounded in the New Testament. Especially after their experience with various special revelations and with the principle of individual inspiration, they wanted to know nothing but the Bible" (Littel, 1957:37).

formal organization of Free Churches in England during the nineteenth century (Durnbaugh, 1999:495). Although there are variations in the understanding of ecclesiology among the Free Churches as much as there is a variety of Free Churches, the Dordrecht Confession (1632)[9] sums up some of the basic principles that form part of the teaching of the Classic Free Churches concerning ecclesiology thus:

> We also believe, and confess a visible Church of God, namely of those who, as explained above truly repent, believe rightly and receive true baptism. They are united with God in heaven and incorporated into the fellowship of the saints on earth. These persons we hold to be the chosen race, the royal priesthood, the holy people, who have the witness that they are the spouse and bride of Christ. Indeed they are children and heirs of eternal life. A tent, a tabernacle, and a house of God in the Spirit, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets – Christ being the chief cornerstone. This Church of the living God he bought and redeemed with his own precious blood. According to his promise, he will always stand by this church: to comfort and protect her even to the end of the world. He will dwell and walk with her and keep her so that neither floods nor tempests nor even gates of hell shall ever move or conquer her. This church is to be known by her Scriptural faith, doctrine, love and godly life; also by a fruitful living up to, use, and observance of the ordinances of Christ, which He so highly commended and enjoined upon his followers.
>
> (Pelikan and Hotchkiss, 2003:778)

While Free Churches may not all embrace it, this confession remains a classical document that ties the English Free Churches to a common heritage. "Nowhere is the

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[9] "*The Dordrecht Confession* is the central statement of faith of most Mennonites. It was adopted in 1632 as a union document between the conservative Old Flemish and the more liberal Young Flemish congregations. *The Dordrecht Confession* was adopted by some Mennonite groups, including the Alsatian Mennonites, some of the Swiss Brethren, German Mennonites, and Mennonites of Pennsylvania. Theologically, the confession reflects more traditionalist views, with emphasis on the ban and shunning. Other defining doctrines include baptism of believers, a sacramentarian view of the eucharist, foot washing, strict pacifism, a proscription on oath swearing, and an insistence on marriage within the faith community." (Pelikan and Hotchkiss, 2003: 768). These were Mennonite groups that were apparently separated on account of doctrinal interpretation. An agreement was reached at Dordrecht between these Mennonites called the Flemish. See (Pelikan and Hotchkiss, 2003:769). It would appear that there is a difference between the peace agreement between the antagonizing Flemish groups and the Confession which was adopted in 1632 by the rest of the Mennonite groups. See (Pelikan and Hotchkiss, 2003:768,769). The Mennonites are part of the Free Church tradition, see (Littell, 1957: 1).

Anabaptist/Mennonite testimony more valuable than in its clear statement and open witness as to the nature of the Church itself…In many confessions today the role of the laity is still disputed; the Mennonites have always been clear that the Church is the People of God, and the People is the Church…An understanding of the Anabaptist/Mennonite tradition is basic to Christian reform today. A studied referral to the classical testimonies of the Free Church movement can be illuminating both for the Church and for the political society at large" (Littell, 1957:xii, xiii). It is further claimed that "the rediscovery of the genius of Free Churchmanship, so useful both for Christian Reform and democratic renewal, requires some review of its classical – i.e., Anabaptist/Mennonite – period" (Littell, 1957:1). The Dordrecht Confession has a number of ecclesiological and theological links with the Seventh-day Adventist Church. While the Seventh-day Adventist Church never adopted the confession, it shares the same heritage embraced by the Mennonites derived from Scripture. For example while foot washing is not practiced in many Christian Churches as part of the Lord's Supper, the Seventh-day Adventists still have this practice in place "just as the Lord Christ instituted and commanded."[10]

Among the Free Churches for the purpose of this research the Baptist and the Methodist Churches have been selected and they are linked together with the Seventh-day Adventist Church as churches with a common heritage. These three churches are linked both ecclesiologically and theologically to a certain extent. John Wesley's theology stemmed from Arminianism, and that separated him from Calvinism[11] (Heitzenrater, 1995:141).

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[10] See Article 11 of the Dordrecht Confession for comparison (Pelikan J. And Valerie Hotchkiss 2003: 780)

[11] Wesley's doctrine of perfection also differentiated him from many of the evangelical clergy within the church who saw this teaching as a form of enthusiasm (Heitzenrater, 1995:141). "The clergy of the Church of England, at the period of the Reformation, were generally like most of the other Reformers, Calvinists,

Historically, Knight examines the "religious impulse in early nineteenth century America, identifies the Episcopalian, Congregationals, and Presbyterians as the powerful churches but this would change because of the rise of the people's (democratic) churches – especially the Methodist and the Baptists"[12] (Knight, 1998:53). This research endeavours to establish among other things whether there is a connection between the Mennonites/ Anabaptists and the English Free Church. The link between these Free Churches will be examined in stages: first historically in chapter 3 then theologically in chapter 4 and finally ecclesiologically in chapter 5. In chapter 6 only can we state whether this link warrants these churches to fall in the same heritage. While the Seventh-day Adventist Church does not subscribe to this confession, there are striking similarities in their ecclesiology that suggest a common heritage. For that reason this research aims at finding links between the Seventh-day Adventist Church, the Baptist and Methodist churches in ecclesiological development. It is most relevant at this stage of the research to give a brief historical background of the Baptist, Methodist, and Seventh-day Adventist Church.

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and continued to be so during the whole reign of Queen Elizabeth and the greater part of that of James VI. Since about the earlier part of the reign of Charles I, the great majority of them have ceased to be Calvinists, ... Calvinists and Arminians had equally to show that their views were accordant with the Thirty-nine Articles; ...Some have contended that the Articles admitted only of a Calvinistic, others only of an Arminian sense"(Cunnigham, 1967:413-470). This gives a brief background to the tension between Arminianism and Calvinism, certainly Wesley who died an Anglican while Armenian in his theology was caught up in this tension.

Hilderbrandt (1951:98), expresses a view that "Arminianism on the part of Wesley must therefore primarily be understood as a corrective, an antidote, to the ill-effects of predestinarian and antinomian teaching." Any Arminian reading of Wesley must be confined to this particular understanding...we may take notice of the significant fact that in one of the chief controversial issues between Lutheranism and Calvinism - the doctrine of the Sacrament is another – Wesley , though ' on the very edge' does not come down on the side of Calvin. His brother's hymns against the Calvinist 'Moloch' would, both for their contents and tenor, find unqualified applause (and quite a few parallels) in the Lutheran camp" (Hilderbrandt, 1951:98,99).

[12] "Restorationism, along with Methodism and Baptist movement are important in understanding Adventism. The pioneers of the Seventh-day Adventist Church came from mainly the restorationists, Methodists and Baptists. The priesthood of all believers and private interpretation of the Bible formed the core of the restorationist movement. For the restorationists these concepts stood at the centre of the Gospel of Liberty"(Knight, 1993:54). According to Littell (1957:20) "The Radical Reformation, the 'root-and-branch' Reformation, was in fact intended to be a restitution rather than a reformation. The primitive form and style of the Early Church were to be restored."

Describing the political and religious temperature in England, Heitzenrater (1995:12, 13) starts with a "gradual slip of James and his son, Charles I, into a more Roman Catholic religious sensitivity," which led to an intense opposition among the Protestants that stem from the radical tradition. Charles I was at the receiving end of a volatile situation that erupted out of the tensions that disturbed the tranquillity that the *via media* of Elizabeth had established. "Presbyterians, Baptists, Congregationalists, Quakers…all in their tendencies toward singularity of religious expression, quite foreign to the mediating tendencies of the by then traditional English mindset" flourished during the vacuum in the monarchy between the reign of Charles I and Charles II. The latter restored the monarchy later (Heitzenrater, 1995:13).

1.3.1   The Baptist Church

John Smyth is a pioneer of the English Baptist church. He began, as a minister of the Church of England, became a Congregationalist and eventually a Baptist. Smyth founded the first Baptist Church on English soil at Spitalfields, outside the walls of the city of London, in 1612. There is no evidence that connects him with the Anabaptists before he became a Baptist (Davies, 1952:58, 9). He rented a bakehouse from a Mennonite and this was the beginning of an influence from the Dutch Anabaptism that was going to last a long time. Within a few months they began to embrace the teachings of the Mennonites on the free will. The English Baptists had separatism as their point of departure (Pearse, 1998:195).

1.3.2   The Methodist Church

The rise of Methodism in England begins with John Wesley around 1725. His reading during this year particularly drew his attention to the pietists of the holy living tradition. It may be noted that in 1725 John Wesley displayed a conviction that holy living is the core of Christian life. The seed planted by this new direction bore fruit to the essence of Methodism (Heitzenrater, 1995:36). With the arrival of the Wesleys in Georgia the organization of Methodism in America began to evolve. "In 1739 Wesley drew up a set of general rules and conduct. A Deed of Declaration in 1784 gave legal status to the yearly Methodist conference. But John Wesley was dead in 1791, before the Methodism in England became a recognized Church. Meanwhile, the movement had invaded Ireland and the American colonies (Mead, 1985:159, 160).

1.3.3   The Seventh-day Adventist Church

During the revivals of round about the mid-nineteenth century, William Miller (1782-1849) of Low Hapmton New York who later became a Baptist in 1816, started preaching the second coming of Christ and an inter-denominational movement developed as a result of his preaching. Among those that formed part of this movement were Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, and Congregationalists. William Miller's teaching and preaching culminated in a particular interpretation of Daniel 8:14, that the coming of Christ was calculated prophetically to fall on October 22, 1844. After the disappointment of a misunderstood prophecy there were many groups of Adventists that developed. The Seventh-day Adventist Church arose out of this inter-denominational group (Mead, 1985:19, 22).   This research traces the view on the priesthood of believers to this cluster

of Free Churches that share a common heritage. A further elaboration of the Church will be given in Chapter 3 in the historical section of this research.

Having examined in brief the origin of the Methodist, Baptist and Seventh-day Adventist Churches, it is noteworthy to highlight the fact that this research will focus on these three churches. Their relationship will be clarified further in chapter 3 historically, chapter 4 theologically and chapter 5 ecclesiologically.

It is equally important to give a brief background of the historical roots of the Free Church tradition in England. According to Payne (1944:11), the English Free Churches trace their roots from Western Europe, particularly from Britain. They were products of the Continental Reformation with Luther and Calvin as their progenitors. The Anabaptists also influenced them. In the eighteenth century the Methodist movement was a strong force behind the spread of Free Churches. "They had already spread to the American colonies and through their part in the American Revolution and in the nineteenth century, the opening up of the Middle and Far West gained the religious allegiance of probably the majority of the citizens of the United States" (Payne, 1944:11).

1.4   Motivation

The development of the teaching on the priesthood of believers has been seen from a number of variant perspectives in the Seventh-day Adventist Church and other church traditions. This study is motivated by a need to have the priesthood of believers clearly expressed in the doctrine of Seventh-day Adventist ecclesiology.

1.4.1   Various Views and Spheres of Influence on Priesthood of Believers

Reading the writings of Martin Luther triggered the researcher's interest in the subject of the priesthood of believers.[13] Luther wrote extensively on the priesthood of believers. The impact of Luther's ideas is still a subject of debate today.[14] This is the main reason why the researcher has chosen to include a focus on the Reformation in this research. The debate still goes on concerning what Luther taught, what he meant by the priesthood of believers and its implications for the church and community (Sokupa, 2004).

The available literature on the priesthood of believers from the Seventh-day Adventist Church perspective is mostly from the pragmatic point of view.[15] New perspectives began to open up and conflicting or complementary views (depending how one views them) began to surface.[16] The Seventh-day Adventist scholarship has not reflected enough on the implications of this doctrine for the Church and community. This also motivated the researcher to study the priesthood of believers from a different perspective than it was studied in previous studies. This motivated the researcher to go even further and seek to understand the teaching from theological and ecclesiological perspectives. It is the researcher's contention that there are some issues that would be understood better,

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[13] Luther based his teaching on the doctrine of the priesthood of believers on such passages as I Peter 2:5,9; Rev. 1:6; 5:10; 20:6; Gal.3:28; John 6:45. Neil and Weber, (1963:139). Luther's understanding of ministry and the church was based on the word of God. (LW,39,xviii) For Luther to be a priest means to "intercede for the other before God, to proclaim the word of forgiveness, to hold the power of the keys, to celebrate the sacrament, in short to participate with faith in the salvation of God provided in Christ. The priesthood of Christ and the priesthood of Christians belong together (LW 39:xvi, xvii). For further discussion see (Sokupa, 2004).

[14] There are at least four different views on the subject of the priesthood of believers. The following reflect some of the views: (1) a pragmatic point of view, Edwards (1995:20) and Cloete (1998:8); (2) church political view, see Olsen (1990:49), Russell (1986:56)   and Randall (1998:48,49); (3) Political view, Scribner (1986:39) and (4) hermeneutical, "While Baptists have seen the priesthood of all believers as a key principle of Protestant Christianity, the fiery debate in San Antonio showed that it is one principle that is far from being well understood" (Guelzo 1991:35; Sokupa 2004).

[15] See Edwards (1995); he captures most of the literature up to 1995.

[16] Olsen comes with a different perspective on the priesthood of believers. His approach seems to be more biblical and theological than pragmatic.

if the priesthood of believers were to be understood from the theological and ecclesiological perspectives. There are issues like racism, ordination of women, relationship between clergy and laity that continually challenge the Christian Church.

One of the results of the sixteenth-century Reformation is that the Christian Church has influenced democratisation of countries in the Western world as well as in Africa and other former countries that were colonised. What role then should the church play in politics? This has been an interesting question that is relevant to this research on the priesthood of believers, especially when one links it up with Martin Luther and the German Peasant's revolt in 1525. This question continues to challenge every ecclesiological reflection and writing particularly as it relates to the priesthood of believers.

This study therefore traces briefly the history of the priesthood of believers from a Free Church Ecclesiological perspective and through the 'Arminian'[17] Methodism, with possible connection to the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The Free Church Ecclesiology finds its roots in the Radical Reformation; it is therefore of interest to this research that the churches that have this as their taproot are part of the history of the formation of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

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[17] There were Methodists who were considered to be Arminian in their theology as opposed to being Calvinist. This discussions will be picked up later when we deal with the theology aspect of this research. It suffices to say that these were ideas that came from Jacob Arminius (1560-1609) who challenged the Calvinist theology that emphaszed divine determinism. His views were not accepted by the Synod of Dort (1619) (Heitzenrater 1995:11) Within Methodism there were differences later some adopted the Calvinistic views others the Arminian views.

1.4.2   A Gap in literature on the priesthood of believers

It is the observation of the researcher that according to the literature review outlined in this research, while there is a profusion of literature on the priesthood of believers within the Free Church traditions, not enough evaluation and critical study has been done on how this teaching influenced or should influence developments in ecclesiology. This is particularly true of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.   Oliver's dissertation on *Organizational Structure past, present and Future* touches on ecclesiological, theological and historical subjects with the focus on the structure and how the debate from all these areas has affected the structure and effected changes namely the reorganization of 1901. For me this is a standard work that seeks to clarify Seventh-day Adventist ecclesiology. The work however fails to even touch on the question of the priesthood of believers, while it promises not only to deal with the past but also the present and the future of Seventh-day Adventist Church polity. Makapela, (1995:36, 37) in his two-volume study, *The Problem of Africanity in the Seventh-day Adventist Church* asks a pertinent question "what are the historical reasons that account for a church having a theological doctrine of inclusion and yet practicing the cultural exclusion of Africans?" Makapela acknowledges personal freedom, personal choice and personal identity as values that had become important for the Church. He also claims that "these and many other ideas had democratised the Protestant churches and above all had also made it possible for the American Constitution and the Bill of Rights to be framed." However Makapela comes short of acknowledging the role of the priesthood of believers as an important key to the democratisation of the Protestant churches, along with society in general and its impact on the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

It is evident that there are diverse views on what the priesthood of believers, means in the ecclesiology of different Free Churches. The ecclesiology that has been chosen closely parallels the Free Church tradition namely the Seventh-day Adventist Church, which has been enriched by views from different denominations within the Free Church heritage. This study may also help to evaluate the Seventh-day Adventist Church Ecclesiology within the Biblical framework and in comparison to the English Free Church heritage.[18] It is interesting to note that Seventh-day Adventists are omitted completely from the most recent volume: *A History of Christianity in South Africa* by Hofmeyr and Pillay eds. This may mean that historically it has been marginalized in some parts of the world or it has not made an impact to be recognized historically. The Free Churches are characterized among other things by the emphasis on the priesthood of believers (Durnbaugh, 1999:496). Mouw (1994:ix), writing as a Dutch Calvinist on Yoder who writes from a Free Church perspective, confesses that the book "forces us to retrace our historical and theological steps as we take an honest look at questions that have long been ignored – yes, even suppressed – by those of us who have found it easy to marginalize the 'free church tradition.'" It may appear that there was and still is a certain level of marginalization of the Free Church tradition. This study will open opportunity for common interest on the priesthood of believers and ecclesiology.

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[18] The lingering question that needs to be settled is: why the focus on the English Free Church heritage? "There were Protestant, Puritan and Free Church movements, prior to, or contemporary with, the Continental Reformation of the sixteenth century, but important as they were, they did not survive to affect history as did the Fee Churches of Britain." (Townsend, 1949:21) Since this study analyzes among other things the impact of the priesthood of believers, the English Free Church heritage seems to offer fertile ground for this investigation. Athough Eastwood (1960, 1963) in his standard works, accounts for the development of the priesthood of believers, he does not give sufficient historical background. This study hopes to put the priesthood of believers in a historical context.

1.4.3   The Priesthood of Believers As Very Important in Ecclesiology

The priesthood of believers could be considered as very important in the development of every ecclesiology. Concerning the Baptist Church view, "the priesthood of all believers is not incidental but central in Baptist Theology. It was stated at the beginning of the seventeenth century by John Smyth and it has been expounded, confirmed, and implemented by his followers ever since" (Eastwood, 1960:160). Further with reference to the Methodist and Lutheran Churches on the subject of the priesthood of believers and its place Eastwood (1960:193) states: "For Luther and Wesley the ground of the priesthood of believers is the primary authority of faith, not as excluding all other authority but as transcending it. It may be said that while Lutheranism has relaxed her hold upon this vital truth, Methodism has reaffirmed it both in doctrine and practice. Hildebrandt himself, of Lutheran origin supports this view."[19]   Edwards laments concerning the Seventh-day Adventist Church: "Throughout our history Seventh-day Adventists have held the doctrine of the priesthood of believers as one of our cardinal beliefs and most cherished distinctives. Yet in spite of our profession we have seriously misunderstood and certainly inadequately expressed the full meaning of this doctrine" (Edwards, 1995:63). This gives a view of how this particular cluster of Free Churches sees the priesthood of believers. Tracing the teaching from the Reformation era we discover that "while Luther elected to secure the Reformation by consolidating the territorial church in concert with the prince and other governing authorities, other Christians in Europe and elsewhere sought to establish free churches i.e. churches not sponsored by the state. As Donald Durnbaugh and other historians have shown, over the past four centuries various groups ranging from Separatist Puritans in the seventeenth

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[19] See Hilderbrandt 1951 *From Luther to Wesley* pp 130,131.

century to Lutheran Pietists and Wesleyan Methodists in eighteenth century England to Disciples of Christ in Germany and Pentecostal churches in Latin America in the twentieth century have displayed the believer's church pattern that Luther himself articulated but did not strictly speaking attempt to put into practice" (Cartwright, 1994:24). It is therefore relevant to trace the teaching of the priesthood of believers and evaluate its impact within this heritage particularly in the ecclesiology of the Church. Hence this research focuses on the priesthood of believers as one of the key factors to understanding Seventh-day Adventist ecclesiology. A pertinent question follows that addresses the value of this research for the twenty first century Free Churches.

1.4.4   Priesthood of believers and Its Importance for the 21st Century

There are a number of issues that the church is still grappling with in the twenty first century. Pluralism is one of the challenges that have always been there, but it remains a challenge that is here to stay. There will always be diverse views, but we need to keep on reflecting on the meaning of this doctrine today. While some churches are still grappling with the involvement of laity in ministry others are debating issues like the ordination of women into the ministry. These are just a few contemporary issues that confront the church of the twenty first century. It is then hoped that as we explore the meaning of the priesthood of believers both historically and in contemporary ecclesiology of the Free Church tradition we may learn some lessons from the past for both the present and the future. The evaluation of the impact will help to assess where we are in the midst of the debate within the Free Church ecclesiology. The next section takes us through the literature relevant to the subject by way of a review.

1.5   Literature Review

Within the profusion of literature on the priesthood of believers, one finds an interesting phenomenon that the literature on this subject can, to a large extent, be categorized into four approaches: political, hermeneutical, church political and pragmatic. These approaches are given a more in depth treatment in chapter 5 of this research. Although these approaches are in no way conclusive they are very helpful. The last three of the categories listed above are derived by the researcher from the works of writers on the priesthood of believers while the political approach seems to emerge in more recent literature as another attempt to trace the understanding of the priesthood of believers.[20]

1.5.1   Political

Baylor (1991:vii) states in no uncertain terms "politics for the radical reformers was inseparable from religion as it was for the vast majority of the sixteenth-century Europeans." In recent studies on political theologies like that of Scott and Cavanaugh (2004:2) we discover the following: "political theologies vary in the extent to which social sciences and other secular discourses are employed; the extent to which they are contextualized or rooted in a particular people's experience; the extent to which the state is seen as the locus of politics; and the ways in which theological resources – Scripture,

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[20] The researcher has discovered through the reading of Martin Luther's writings and secondary literature that there are various perspectives in contemporary literature concerning what Martin Luther meant and taught concerning the priesthood of believers. Among the different ways to organize the literature review Mouton (2001:91,95) suggests, method as one way, that can be used. He states: "Although not very common, studies that focus on the different methods used to investigate a specific phenomenon may use the different methods or techniques as the organizing principle." By looking at the teaching of the priesthood of believers from the different perspectives or methods, the researcher intends to show how each approach has a different impact and perhaps even a combination of the different approaches on ecclesiology. These approaches help in the understanding of the priesthood of believers. Although they do not form a methodologial system per se, they are certainly helpful in organizing this research towards a clearer understanding of the meaning and impact of the priesthood of believers.

liturgy, doctrine – are employed. What distinguishes all political theology from other types of theology or political discourse is the explicit attempt to relate discourse about God to the organization of bodies in space and time." Stewart (1988:193) is among the many voices that call for a political emphasis of the priesthood of believers. She poses a question and immediately gives the solution. "How is the priesthood of all believers recognized today? Timeless ministries of learning, service, support, worship and witness recognize the priesthood. Integrity and justice, humility, empowerment, and self-development are words which describe the attributes of this priesthood." Having defined her terms of reference, she goes further and states: "Black brothers and sisters are equally part of God's created people… Each human being relates to others as priest, and as a consequence carries the church wherever he/she is. The historical black church triggers in us the memories of pain, of struggle, of sacrifice, of survival against the odds, of love and acceptance when self-worth and self-esteem could not be found in society." Eastwood (1963:241),[21] on the priesthood of believers and the gospel is convinced that Stewart himself was not fully aware of what he was saying. Stewart further contends that "African Americans today must go back to the gospel in its universal context of the priesthood of believers in order to erase the mark left on our spirit by chattel slavery and slavery's unholy progeny: white racism" (Stewart, 1988:185). A striking observation may be made at this point that the theme of the priesthood of believers finds its way into many documents on political theology.

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[21] "Why must the Gospel be proclaimed to all nations and what lies behind this sense of compulsion which has existed in every age? It is not now sufficient to present the Gospel of love merely as an antidote to the threat of eternal damnation nor is it with the accomanying implication that this type of civilization is the panacea for all ills." Eastwood here is dealing with the issues around the priestly mission of the believers to the world. The researcher supposes that Steward's contention here is that the implications of the statement that Eastwood makes are far beyond what even he could understand at that time. Hence her call is for going back to the "gospel in its universal context of the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers" (Stewart, 1988:185)

1.5.2   Hermeneutical

There are scholars who begin and end with the biblical view of the priesthood of believers. Eastwood (1963:232) contends that "the Christian's priesthood begins when he recognizes his part in the redemptive purposes of the Body. It is when he has become capable of service that he becomes priestly. He will then be less concerned about rights and dues and more concerned about self-offering and self-giving" (cf Olsen, 1990:49). This may seem clear and understandable as a theological basis, yet there is a war of ideas raging. "While the Baptists (and almost all evangelicals) have seen the priesthood of all believers as a key principle of Protestant Christianity, the fiery debate in San Antonio (a Baptist Conference) showed that it is one principle that is far from being well understood" (Guelzo, 1991:35). Guelzo (1991:38) goes further to state: "those who emphasize either politics or polity have not captured the purpose of the New Testament idea of the priesthood of all believers." This research does also look at the political and church political approaches with reference to the Seventh-day Adventist Church within the framework of the English Free Church Heritage. One can see from the foregoing quotations that hermeneutics play an important role in the debate on the priesthood of believers.

1.5.3   Church Polity

Russell (1986:56), traces the root of the problem from the Reformation period. He clearly sees the priesthood of believers as "attractive to common people because it gave them a long-denied role in the government of the church, in its active life and work… Luther

encouraged the laity to take charge of the church reform in his address *To The Christian Nobility of the German Nation.*"

Philip Schaff in Olsen, sees the priesthood of believers as a principle that will "raise the laity to active cooperation in the government and administration of the church; it gives them a voice and a vote in the election of the pastor; it makes every member of the congregation useful, according to his particular gift, for the general good" (Olsen, 1990:49).

1.5.4   Pragmatic

Some Protestants have held a view that a "functional rather than a sarcerdotal-hierarchical view of the church office based on what all baptized believers have in common as members of the universal priesthood. Catholics have thus charged Protestants with injecting democratic principles into the Church, rejecting the special priesthood of Christ and making the pastor a mere functionary of the people" (Ackley, 1993:278). A recent dissertation by Cloete (1998:8), focusing within the Dutch Reformed church aimed at bringing out the practical implications of the priesthood of believers. His findings will be taken note of in chapter 3. Van der Ven (1996:xi) aims at developing a contextual understanding of ecclesiology. "In this the emphasis is placed on the praxis of the church. The praxis of the church is not identical to its practice. The praxis can be described as the practice in which a transformatory orientation is active. This orientation can be distinguished by two aspects, a cultural and a structural aspect." There is an abundance of literature with this focus for the priesthood of believers.

This plurality of approaches clearly demonstrates a lack of consensus among scholars within the Free Church tradition about the meaning of the priesthood of believers. This therefore calls for a critical –analytical study of the doctrine of the priesthood of believers. How do the Free Churches understand the doctrine of the priesthood of believers in the light of these different approaches?   Of these four approaches the pragmatic is more dominant within the Seventh-day Adventist Church.[22]

1.6   Research Methodology and Design

This research will be designed according to the integral or organic method of research, also called the synchronic method that Bradley and Muller (1995:31) advocate as the best. It will be used in conjunction with the specialized methods and techniques of conceptual analysis (Mouton, 2001:175), critical evaluation, comparison and synthesis or the drawing of conclusions. Different methodological grids i.e. the topical grid and the grid of periodization will also be used to trace the development of the concept of the priesthood of believers from the time of the Reformation especially from the time of the origins and development of the English Free Church heritage. It is within this historical context that the developments in Seventh-day Adventist ecclesiology will be traced. In general the integral, organic or synchronic method attempts a synchronous understanding of the developments of ideas in Christianity. Bradley and Muller write: "While it was developed primarily by historians of doctrine, it offers the greatest potential for bridging the sub-disciplines of church history and embracing the actual complexity of the past. The location of meaning lies in the interaction of ideas, in a particular period as

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[22] Edwards (1995) *Every Believer a Minister*. Is a typical example of the pragmatic approach, following pioneers like A.G. Daniels. However there are other views and approaches that are less popular. This study brings them out for their value in the debate.

understood by particular individuals, but always as contributory to the larger development" (Bradley and Muller, 1995: 31, 32).   The priesthood of believers as a concept derives its meaning from this interaction of ideas within the biblical, theological and ecclesiological perspectives. The research will investigate the priesthood of believers as a key concept to understanding the development of ecclesiology within the Seventh-day Adventist Church and the impact of the concept on its theology.   The different approaches that will be analysed are the political, church polity, hermeneutical, and pragmatic approaches. The value of this methodological design is that it brings conceptual clarity by making conceptual categories clear, by explicating theoretical associations, and opening up possibilities of conceptual implications of different perspectives (Mouton 2001:175). This brings us to the scope of this research.

1.7   Delimitation

It is beyond the scope of this research to give a comprehensive study of each denomination within the Free Church tradition. The main focus of this study is on the developments in Seventh-day Adventist ecclesiology. As a framework this study clusters two churches within the Free Church tradition namely, Methodist and Baptist with the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The reason for this choice is the commonality that is evident in terms of theology and ecclesiology to a certain extent. The historical roots of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in which among the pioneers were Baptist ministers and Methodist ministers, evidence this common origin. Another challenge that comes to the fore is that of selecting theological and ecclesiological concepts that are related to the priesthood of believers. Since this is the concept that lands itself in a broad scope and

impacts on a number of ecclesiological issues we will only take those issues and concepts that can be dealt with, within the scope of this research. Further recommendations will be made for future studies. Facing a similar task Bronowski and Mazlish (1960:xiii) state: "the central difficulty is to keep so large an undertaking in a manageable frame. There is a limit to the detail which a book can hold in focus, and this limit is strained when the book presents ideas and events together." With reference to this research, it is recognized that persons, some ecclesiological models and movements may be omitted that some may feel ought to be included. This also goes for ideas and events, which some may feel are relevant may be excluded because of the scope of this research. Therefore with the Free Church having such a wide variety of ecclesiologies, this research focuses on the cluster of the Baptist, Methodist for historical and trialogue purposes and a focused study of the Seventh-day Adventist ecclesiology.

In looking at the priesthood of believers from the biblical, historical, theological and ecclesiological within the Seventh-day Adventist Church, this study will suggest a biblical and theological foundation and criteria for application rather than offering a model for the function of the priesthood of believers within the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

1.8   A Summary of Each Chapter

1.8.1   Chapter 1: Introduction

This is the introductory chapter to the dissertation in which the motivation, the research problem, the hypothesis, methodology and all other preliminary research steps will be discussed.

1.8.2   Chapter 2: Scripture on the Priesthood of Believers

The meaning of the priesthood of believers within the canonical context and Biblical history is important for the development of ecclesiology in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Through intertextual studies this research demonstrates that there are echoes and allusions to this teaching that have not been explored. The main contribution of this chapter is the proposal that the book of Hosea is important for understanding the priesthood of believers.

1.8.3   Chapter 3: The Priesthood of Believers in History.

The background to the priesthood of believers goes back to Biblical times. For the purposes of this research we have chosen to sketch the historical background with a bird's eye-view. The starting point will be the early church, Reformation, and the terminus point will be the present. This chapter also gives a background on the other traditions and what they taught in broad strokes. This also helps to put the Free Churches and the Seventh-day Adventist Church in its proper context along side other traditions. The spotlight will be on the Seventh-day Adventist ecclesiology and the history of how the 'priesthood of believers' doctrine applies to the developments in its ecclesiology.

1.8.4   Chapter 4: The Priesthood of Believers in Seventh-day Adventist Theology

This chapter focuses on the development of the teaching of the priesthood of believers in Seventh-day Adventist Theology. There were already discussions among the Free Churches on the priesthood of believers in the nineteenth century and onward. The Seventh-day Adventist Church theology of the priesthood of believers is analyzed and

evaluated in light of the developments in Seventh-day Adventist ecclesiology. An assessment is made of the writings of theologians who write on the priesthood of believers. Conclusions will be drawn based on the analysis and evaluation of various theological works within the Seventh-day Adventist theological context.

1.8.5   Chapter 5: The Priesthood of Believers in Ecclesiology.

In this chapter, the priesthood of believers is discussed from various approaches. The political, hermeneutical, polity and pragmatic approaches are reviewed with the ecclesiologies of the Free Churches. The Methodist, Baptist and Seventh-day Adventist Churches are particularly highlighted. A closer examination is given to the ecclesiology of the church after the different views have been surveyed.

1.8.6   Chapter 6: Conclusion

This chapter summarizes the findings of the research in the biblical, historical, theological and ecclesiological areas of investigation. From the findings a conclusion is drawn on the priesthood of believers and its application in Seventh-day Adventist ecclesiology. Some suggestions for future research are given.

1.9 Definition of Key Terms

Priesthood of Believers: This phrase is derived from the Bible (Exodus19:6, I Pet. 2:9 and Rev. 5:10). From the Early Church Fathers to the Reformation there were different views in understanding this phrase. The understanding in this research is according to the Free Church Perspective. This Biblical phrase means that each believer who is a member

of the body of Christ is a priest. There is a variety of ways in which this phrase appears in different traditions. Generally the Free churches it appears, are using the phrase as it is chosen for the purpose of this research, however there are exceptions. It is because of its apparent plausibility that it has been captured as such and for consistency throughout the research except for the direct quotations it will be reflected as such.

Ecclesiology: The understanding of this term has changed in recent history; this research understands this term to mean the study of the nature of the church.

Free Church: This term also has a variety of meanings since there are a number of Free Church Traditions. This study focuses its attention on the English Free Church tradition, which came from nonconforming churches. A Free Church tradition amongst others therefore is a tradition that believes in the separation of Church and State.

CHAPTER 2

SCRIPTURE ON THE PRIESTHOOD OF BELIEVERS

2.1   Introduction

Following, an overview of the entire research given in chapter 1, this chapter focuses on the meaning of the doctrine of the priesthood of believers. First, the meaning of the priesthood of believers is explicated from selected passages of Scripture with a special consideration of the context in which they are couched. Some of the challenges that emanate from exegetical studies on the selected passages will be highlighted. Second, a survey of the English Free Church interpretation of the priesthood of believers is given. This becomes an indicator of how the Free Churches generally understand the meaning of the priesthood of believers. Third, a bird's eye-view of biblical scholars in general and their interpretation of the priesthood of believers is explored. Fourth, some categories of meaning stemming from various approaches to the subject are highlighted, such as: the political, hermeneutical, church political and pragmatic approaches. By putting these approaches under a spotlight this study seeks to reveal the complexity of understanding the meaning of the priesthood of believers.[23]

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[23] This study fills a gap in the literature dealing with the priesthood of all believers that Davies has identified. Refering to the limitations of his own study he gives a critical coment to discussions on the priesthood of all believers that lack exegetical foundation. But points out that he cannot interact with them in his book (Davies, 3). Davies also points out that his study does not purport nor intend to touch on issues relating to ecclesiastical structures and practice. This study seeks to relate the biblical meaning of the priesthood of all believers with the ecclesiastical structures and polity of the English Free Churches (Ibid).

2.1.1 Methodology

The meaning of the priesthood of believers will be explicated from selected passages of Scripture. The method that will be followed in examining the Biblical meaning of the priesthood of believers will be a Biblical theological method as outlined by Gerhard Hasel, Seventh-day Adventist scholar. He defines this method as both historical and theological. This means that when an Old Testament passage is examined this method engages the Old Testament using primarily the text of the Old Testament. This method also recognizes the diversity of Old Testament writings. The text is taken in its final form (Hasel, 1972: 171).[24] Elaborating further on how this method engages the text Hasel states:

> Introduction to the OT seeks to throw light on the pre-literary and literary stages and forms of the OT books by tracing their history of transmission and formation as well as the text-forms and the canonization of the OT. The history of Israel is studied in the context of the history of antiquity with special emphasis on the ancient Near East, where archaeology has been invaluable in providing the historical, cultural and social setting of the Bible. Exegesis has the task to disclose the full meaning of the individual texts…verbal structure of an integral part of a literary whole… as verbal structures of literary wholes have the distinct advantage of recognizing the similarities and differences between the various books or blocks of writings… no systematic scheme, pattern of thought, or extrapolated abstraction is superimposed upon the Biblical materials.
> (Hasel, 1972: 177-179)

Richard Davidson observes that the passage under study (Exodus 19:4-6) has a prophetic element that is predictive. "Predictive prophecy was not given simply to satisfy curiosity about future events but for moral purposes, such as the establishment of faith in God (Isa. 45:21; 46:9-11; cf. John 14:29) and

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[24] For his study of Exodus 19:6, Davies also applies a final form approach to the text, his approach is also open to textual criticism (28,29).

motivation to holy living (Gen 17:7-8; Exod 19:4-6). In outlining the method used in interpreting a passage that has predictive prophecy he states:

> The same steps of careful analysis followed in interpreting any biblical passage must be taken when interpreting a predictive prophecy, including attention to the historical setting, literary structure and other literary features, grammatical and syntactical elements, meaning of words within the immediate context and theological messages.

> (Davidson, 2006:183)

Ekkehardt Müller (2006:113), also outlines the same method with a different emphasis. He calls it the historical-biblical method. This eight-step approach includes (1) Turning to God in prayer; (2) Reading the text; (3) Using the best possible reading; (4) Translating the text; (5) Investigating the context; (6) Analyzing the text; (7) Performing theological analysis; (8) Applying the text.

Robert Ray Ellis, a Baptist scholar, in his doctoral dissertation examines Exodus 19:5-6 using a similar approach that this study proposes for the interpretation of the Biblical text. His method includes critical, exegetical and theological considerations (Ellis, 1988:1).[25]

For the purposes of this research, Exodus 19:6 and 1Peter 2:9 will be examined in detail and reference will be made to other Biblical texts that deal with the subject of the priesthood of believers.

2.1.2   Priesthood of Believers in the Old Testament Before the Eighth Century B.C.

This section examines Biblical passages that relate to the teaching of the priesthood of believers in the Old Testament before the 8th Century. The main passage for investigation is Exodus19:6.

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[25] Ellis chooses his method from a host of methods : literary critical approach, traditio-historical approach and the harmonization approach. After his evaluation of these methods he concludes that all of them without exception are unable to account fully for the literary structure of Exodus 19.

2.2   An Interpretation of Exodus 19:6

The first step will be to examine the translation of the verse, from different versions, and

evaluate the variation in translation. The next step will be focused on the meaning of the

phrase מַמְלֶכֶת כֹּהֲנִים (kingdom of priests) within the context of Exodus 19. The final

step for this sub-section will give a bird's eye-view of Exodus 19.

2.2.1   Various Translations of Exodus 19:6

Masoretic Text Version

Exodus 19:6

וְאַתֶּם תִּהְיוּ־לִי מַמְלֶכֶת כֹּהֲנִים וְגוֹי קָדוֹשׁ אֵלֶּה הַדְּבָרִים
אֲשֶׁר תְּדַבֵּר אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל׃

Translation:
And you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation these are the words you
shall speak to the sons of Israel.

Targum Version

Exodus 19:6

⁶וְאַתּוּן תְּהוֹן קֳדָמַי מַלְכִין כָּהֲנִין וְעַם קַדִּישׁ אֵלֵין פִּתְגָמַיָּא
דְּתִמַלֵּיל עִם בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל׃

Translation:
And you shall be to me kings and priests a holy people these are the words you shall
speak to the people the sons of Israel.

Septuagint Version

Exodus 19:6 ὑμεῖς δὲ ἔσεσθέ μοι βασίλειον ἱεράτευμα καὶ ἔθνος ἅγιον ταῦτα τὰ

ῥήματα ἐρεῖς τοῖς υἱοῖς Ισραηλ

Translation:

And you shall be to me a royal priesthood and a holy nation, these are the words you shall speak to the sons of Israel.

The Masoretic text is the earliest version. However it is important to note any variations with other earlier versions. The critical apparatus of the Masoretic text 4th edition has not revealed any variant readings from earlier manuscripts. Therefore the text will be taken as it stands. The word מלכין (kingdom) in the Targum version is a common noun. Whereas the Masoretic text has the word מַמְלֶכֶת (kingdom) as a noun in construct state (Brown, Driver and Briggs, 1980). The Septuagint on the other hand has the word βασίλειον which is an adjective. The significance of this difference is seen in the variation of the phrase in the New Testament. In I Peter 2:9 we see a similarity that resembles the Septuagint, whereas in Revelation we see resemblance closer to the Masoretic text. The value of this find may not go beyond the notion that there seems to be an influence of the Septuagint in I Peter 2:9. The meaning of the phrase however has to be explored within the literary and historical context. Since the earlier manuscripts do not show any variation, the earlier versions do not have a strong case for an investigation of the differences. We will therefore for the purposes of this research go along with the Masoretic text for the interpretation of Exodus 19:6.[26]

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[26] See John Davies for a more comprehensive analysis of different versions. He concludes that "the case for the MT reading is strong" (Davies, 63-68).

2.2.2   An Interpretation of the Phrase מַמְלֶכֶת כֹּהֲנִים in Exodus 19:6

This verse is generally accepted as a background to the New Testament texts that are attributed the basis for the teaching of the priesthood of believers.

The clause used in Exodus 19:6   מַמְלֶכֶת כֹּהֲנִים   is composed of two nouns in a construct relationship to each other.[27] Literally it means 'a kingdom of priests'.

There is "no special ritual connotation here…if God was king, then Israel were the peers and paladins of His court, closest to His throne and His person. As He was a holy God, His faithful followers must be holy people, for the profane could not stand before Him" (Jacob, 1992:528). God wanted to give them the assurance that, "as the children of Abraham His friend, they were peculiarly dear to Him. They were to be a peculiar treasure among all peoples, a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation" (Meyer, 1978:219). "The theology of the priesthood of believers did not start with the New Testament. At Sinai, God promised that Israel would be a kingdom of priests to mediate the power and presence of God to others" (Dybdahl, 1994:174). Dybdahl drives the point home about the importance of examining Exodus 19:6 within the Old Testament context first and then consider its implications for the New Testament application. Therefore in the context of Exodus the royal priesthood "represents an ideal in which the priesthood is of kingly stock, and in which all Israel constitutes such an ideal' (Wevers, 1990:295). This is not merely a status token 'this concept of priesthood provides the model for Israel's self-image and for its role among the nations of the world" (Sarna, 1986:131). This is a privilege and not a right they can claim, "to be allowed to draw near to God, and to do

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[27] Viewed as a construct noun the word מַמְלֶכֶת may mean either a kingdom (Num. 32:33 and Deut. 3:4,10,13) or a sovereignty or dominion (I Sam. 13:14; 24:20; Jer. 27:1; 28:1).

service for all the world" (Noth, 1962:157). This does not signify exclusivity 'Yahweh does not say that Israel alone is to worship and serve Him, for its own selfish sake; Israel is to be a kingdom of priests, whose calling is to minister on behalf of others. It is to be a holy nation in the proper sense of the word holy: consecrated or set apart for the service of God. To be chosen means to be chosen for others (Meyer, 1983:114). The construct relationship between the two words in the phrase מַמְלֶכֶת כֹּהֲנִים 'describes what Israel was always supposed to be: a kingdom run not by politicians depending upon strength and connivance but by priests depending on faith in Yahweh, a servant nation instead of a ruling nation…a display-people, a showcase to the world of how being in covenant with Yahweh changes a people' (Durham, 1987:263). According to Ellis (1988:51) the nuance of a political power derived from the word מַמְלֶכֶת is not supported by the context of Exodus 19. As for the word כֹּהֲנִים (priests), Davies observes a reluctance from some scholars that this word may be taken in the similar vein as its regular use in the Old Testament. Arguing against this view Davies settles for a secondary meaning or at best an extended or metaphoric meaning. This resonates well with the word מַמְלֶכֶת and also with the context of Exodus 19.

There are at least five options for the meaning of מַמְלֶכֶת כֹּהֲנִים.

(1) a kingdom composed of priests who individually have access to God…

(2) a kingdom possessing a legitimate priesthood

(3) a kingdom with a collective priestly responsibility on behalf of all peoples

(4) a kingdom ruled by priests

(5) a kingdom set apart and possessing collectively, alone among all peoples, the right to approach the altar of Yahweh (Davies, 2004: 69)

Davies, a Presbyterian scholar further narrows down the categories of these alternative meanings into three: the passive interpretation, the active-elite interpretation and the active-corporate interpretation.

(1) The passive interpretation simply retains the meaning of 'kingdom' which connotes a passive entity either the territory or the citizens of a king.

(2) The active-elite meaning kingship, royalty emphasizing the exercise of governance.

(3) The active-corporate interpretation denotes a priesthood of the entire nation. (Davies, 2004:70-75).

Davies seems to favour the last option because "it characterizes the most ancient readings and was the common view within the Jewish and Christian traditions until comparatively recent times" (Davies, 2004:82). This interpretation seems to resonate well with the covenant theme. Davies has literary and thematic approaches as a basis for his methodology. He dedicates chapter seven of his book on the Sinatic covenant as a theological theme (Davies, 2004:170-187).

2.2.3 An Interpretation of the Phrase מַמְלֶכֶת כֹּהֲנִים within its Literary Context

The literary critical problems in Exodus 19 stem from the fact that there are differing opinions among scholars regarding the literary structure and composition of this

section.[28]   Source criticism has limitations in determining the literary context of Exodus 19 (Childs, 1974:349). The overemphasis on literary criticism tended to eclipse differences that may not be classified under source criticism (Childs, 1974:350). Other attempts that have been made to understand the literary construction of the Sinaitic *pericope* (Ex. 19-24) include the literary-critical approach, traditio-historical approach and the Sinai tradition (Childs, 1974:344-351). After this survey of approaches, Childs comes back to the literary problems that remain unresolved by these approaches. Exodus 19:3b-8 serves as an introduction to the entire chapter. Childs in his assessment of this unit ends up with a hybrid form shared between the E source and the Deuteronomic redactor. This comes nowhere near solving the literary problems of this section. Childs, recognizing the problems that cloud the understanding of Exodus 19, proposes an outline whose basis is the final form of the narrative. This means that all critical considerations cited above are laid aside (Childs, 1974:365). Hasel in the same vein points to the procedure of explicating the "theology of the OT books or blocks of writings in the final form as verbal structures of literary wholes" as an approach that has benefit for interpreting Scripture because it highlights the common elements and diversity within Scripture. Another advantage of this approach according to Hasel is that it allows the Biblical materials to speak for themselves without an external structure that is superimposed on them (Hasel, 1972:178, 9).   In the same pattern of thought Ellis observes: "because of the questions which Exod. 19:5-6 raises, a significant number of works have appeared which contain discussions of the passage. However, the available literature tends to focus on critical matters at the expense of theological considerations" (Ellis, 1988:3). Therefore Ellis raises some issues from the text that hinge primarily on

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[28] See (Davies, 2004: 17; Propp, 2006: 141-154)

the interpretation of the passage and then he brings out a theological application. For example, the notion of a kingdom of priests according to Ellis, points to God as Israel's King (Ex. 19:6a). This is buttressed by the dative object לִי (Exodus 19:6).[29] He also brings up another suggestion that the "kingdom of priests" refers to the priesthood of individuals who have a direct access to God. Ellis (1988:138), recognizes the limitation of this view, that it is also not supported by the context. However he points out that this does not rule out the individual responsibility to live in a way that upholds this status. Another important issue that Ellis (1988:139, 142) highlights is the nature of this priesthood. Is this a priestly status or function or is it both? Ellis dispels the notion that the function of the priests in Exodus 19:6 implies a missionary role of the Israelites. The basis for this position is lack of support from the immediate context (Ellis, 1988:146). At best for Ellis the concept of the "kingdom of priests" and the promises made implied a future missionary role that Israel would play (Ellis, 1988:147). Therefore for Ellis (1988:148), the meaning of the kingdom of priests is "simply that Israel was to be God's servant nation." These issues raised by Ellis demand a deeper study of the context.

An outline of the Sinai *pericope* is given by Childs as follows:

1. Israel's arrival at Sinai and encampment, 19:1-2
2. God's covenant with Israel announced
   a. Conditions of the covenant, 3-6
   b. Israel's response of acceptance, 7-8
   c. Moses' special role defined, 9
3. Preparations prior to the third day
   a. Instructions for purification for two days, 10-11
   b. Guarding the people from the mountain, 12-13a
   c. The signal for approaching the mountain is set, 13b

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[29] The idea of God as the king is not a very strong argument that is explicitly evidenced in the context of Exodus 19. At best is a mere inference and Ellis acknowledges this stating that "it is not incompatible with his nature" (Ellis, 1988:135,136); see also Martin Buber (1967: 129). Buber (1967:106), also interpretes the phrase "kingdom of priests" to mean Israel functioning as a secular entity. This however does not have any biblical support.

d. Commands executed by Moses, 14-15
4. Preparations on the third day
    a. The beginning of signs and the people's reaction, 16
    b. Moses leads the people out to the foot of the mountain, 17
    c. Further signs increasing, 18
    d. Moses speaking with God, 19
    e. Moses summoned for further instructions, 20-24
    f. Instructions reported to the people, 25

5. Proclamation of the Decalogue, 20:1-17
6. Establishment of Moses' covenant office
    a. The people's reaction of fear, 18
    b. The request for intercession addressed to Moses, 19
    c. Moses explains the manner of revelation:
        i. Do not fear, 20aa
        ii. God comes in order to test, 20 ab
        iii. God comes in order to establish obedience, 20b
    d. Moses accepts mediatorship for the people, 21
7. Further stipulations of the covenant, 20:22-23:33
8. Sealing of the covenant, 24:1-18

(Childs, 1974: 365)

Childs' outline reveals that there is a covenant theme running through the passage. Ellis examines "the covenant promises of Exodus 19:5-6 and their theological significance for Israel…in addition this study gives special consideration to the theological impact which the promises had on Israel of the Old Testament" (Ellis, 1988: vi).

In this study Exodus 19 is therefore examined in the context of a covenant between God and Israel. God reminds them by using covenantal language of how he brought them out of the land of Egypt 'upon eagle's wings' (Exodus19:4). The terms of the covenant are clearly laid in verse 5a, obedience and faithfulness to the covenant. Ellis' focus seems to be on the covenantal promises, along the same trajectory with Childs their focus is theological. Wevers (1990:294), also observes that obedience and faithfulness to the covenant mean the same thing. He further states that "these covenantal conditions are outlined in the so-called Ten Words of 20:1-17." In verse 5b a promise is given, 'you

shall be My treasured possession among all the peoples'. Further more "the covenantal promise to Israel is that it will be to God a royal priesthood, and a holy nation." (Wevers, (1990:295). Durham also finds relevance in viewing Exodus 19 as couched in covenantal language. He notes that "the heart of which is the famous 'Eagle's Wings' speech of Yahweh, serves as a general prologue to the entire Sinai narrative sequence: thus it quite appropriately makes reference to the covenant and to Israel's role as Yahweh's special people in advance of the events of Exod 20-24" (Durham, 1987:260). Therefore the concept of the 'kingdom of priests' seen in this context, relates to Gods covenantal promise to Israel that they will have a special relationship with Him. "Priests are mediators between God and humanity. Priests have both status and responsibility. All Israel will be priests in a sense…God promised that Israel would be a kingdom of priests to mediate the power and presence of God to others" (Dybdahl, 1994:174). This relationship denotes a special access that other nations do not have although it was mediated through the priestly agencies. This relationship also pointed to the responsibility that Israel had to be God's witnesses to other nations. The covenant did not only affect the priests but every member of the community.

As early as the 1960s, there was a call for an exegetical approach to the study of Exodus 19:6. Faley, a Roman Catholic scholar observed:

> "An exegesis of this verse is particularly difficult in view of the fact that the phrase 'kingdom of priests' makes its sole appearance in the Old Testament in this verse, thus making it impossible the determination of its sense from parallel usage. In addition, the general context contributes little to precise understanding of the phrase's meaning. As a result, exegetes have been forced to follow the somewhat precarious procedure of considering the verse as an isolated entity, deducing its probable sense, and then referring the deduction to

other O.T. passages which seem to confirm their conclusion."

(Faley, 1960: 38)

The works of Eastwood *The Priesthood of Believers* and *The Royal Priesthood of the Faithful* were published in 1960 and 1963 respectively, about the same time that Faley's critical comment cited above was made. Eastwood writes about the priesthood of believers as a theology of the church, he states: "It is time that the doctrine was taken out of the slogan category and set in its true context as an essential and determinative element in the theology of the Church" (Eastwood, 1960:ix). Eastwood does not refer to Exodus 19:6 at all in his introduction of his historical treatise. All the New Testament texts on the priesthood of believers are given reference to very briefly. Although the purpose of Eastwood's work seems to be focused on the historical development of the doctrine, the glossing over the biblical texts is very glaring. He states: "Biblical evidence, therefore, shows that the doctrine of the universal priesthood is closely related to Election, Christology, and Eschatology, and that it can be properly interpreted in the light of these doctrines" (Eastwood, 1960:ix).

Olsen makes mention of the context of Exodus19:6 in his discussion of the priesthood of believers only in passing, as a result the consideration of the Old Testament in his study is limited because he has a number of themes that he is dealing with in one book, therefore the biblical meaning of the priesthood of believers does not take priority focus in the book. Further Olsen seems to focus on the New Testament evidence. In his introduction he states: "This present study will attempt to look at the New Testament evidence" (Olsen, 1990:4).

Cloete, in his dissertation on the priesthood of believers has his focus on the Dutch Reformed Church. He touches on all the relevant aspects of the priesthood of believers, the biblical meaning of the priesthood of believers throughout Scripture, and the historical view from the second century to the present. His focus is on the Magisterial reformation and the Catholic reformation, the so called Radical reformation is not given consideration. The rest of the dissertation deals with the ecclesiological model that he proposes. Cloete does not focus on the arguments and problems of interpretation of the biblical material that are froth around the interpretation of the priesthood of believers. He simply appropriates Scripture as a basis for his model. Cloete takes the following position on the biblical meaning of the priesthood of believers, which demonstrates his awareness of the issues around the interpretation of the biblical texts:

> God promised His chosen nation which He wanted to prepare for a special purpose: 'now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and an holy nation.' The significance of this promise to Israel is that God invited them to stand before Him, the Holy One, as priests. Only in that way could the Divine Covenant with Abraham be realized in his seed; in other words, the whole community is regarded as 'a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation,' and not as some would argue, only a people with priests.

(Cloete, 1998: 46)

The present study reviews the commentaries starting with the free churches extending the investigation to a wide spectrum of scholars on the key texts that form the basis of the priesthood of believers. An exegetical study of the biblical text is done for the purpose of discovering the biblical meaning. From this study an evaluation of the free churches will

be made based on the exegetical study. The theology and ecclesiology in the chapters that follow will also be evaluated according to the results of the exegetical study.

2.2.4   A brief Overview of Exodus 19

The purpose of this short section is to give a bird's eye-view of the flow of events in Exodus 19. This will give a glimpse of the historical context around Exodus 19:6.

2.2.4.1 An Examination of Verse 1-2

This *pericope* starts with a narrative introduction, indicating the place and time of Israel's journey from Egypt (vv. 1, 2). They were entering the wilderness of Sanai coming from Rephidim. Moses was visited by Jetro his father in law at Rephidim (Exodus18:1-27). They moved from there and camped in front of a mountain in the Sinai desert.

2.2.4.2 An Examination of Verses 3-8

The covenant between God and Israel may be traced from this *pericope*. Here we find an interesting shift in the verbal pattern from the narrative of verse 1 and 2. The first person is used 9 times in the entire chapter. The second person is used twelve times, and out of the twelve times three times it is singular and nine times it is plural referring to Israel. The second person plural is used seven times in the *pericope*, and two times in singular (v 3-8). The shift in the verbal pattern buttresses the presence of a covenantal speech between God and His people Israel.

"It has become common place with scholars, since the middle of the nineteenth century, to interpret the various covenants and the idea of covenant itself in the light of numerous

ancient Near Eastern treaties of vassalage from the second and first millennia B.C. Especially paradigmatic were the treaties between the great Hittite king and his vassals during the firteenth to the thirteenth centuries (1450 B.C. to 1200 B.C.). This comparison was first made by George E. Mendenhall, who was followed by Klaus Baltzer, Meredith G. Kline, and Kenneth A Kitchen. The same comparison that the Hittite treaties exhibited was soon refined and extended to include other treaties being discovered in Syria and Mesopotamia, but now covering a period from the seventeenth to the thirteenth centuries B.C. The argument was that these forms would have been known to the Israelites and therefore used by them to express the relationships between God and his people" (Kaiser, 1998:117-118). The Sinatic covenant does not parallel these covenants in all their elements. According to Kaiser "little will be gained by trying to analyze *berit* etymologically, for its origins are obscure, and comparisons with Akkadian and other languages have yielded very few tangible results" (Kaiser, 1998:120). Comparing the Abrahamic and the Davidic covenant with the Sinai Covenant, Kaiser observes that in the "Sinai covenant there were obligations to obey; no such conditions were attached to the Abrahamic or Davidic Covenants" (Kaiser, 1998:120, 121).

These conditions to obey help to clarify the meaning of the 'kingdom of priests' (Exodus19:6). The use of the word שְׁמַרְתֶּם (you have kept) is the condition for the status that God gives to Israel. This word appears 24 times in the Old Testament, and 21 times it occurs in the Pentateuch. It is used in cultic context, Exodus 12:17, 24,25 (Feast of Unleavened Bread); Lev 8:35; 22:31. The Covenant context, Deuteronomy 4:6; 5:1, 32; 7:12; 29:8; in many other contexts it is used generally to depict the keeping of the will of God as it is revealed in His laws and ordinances. God's laws concerning the

rituals were not given only to the official priesthood, the people were commanded by God to keep His laws and ordinances that were in the cultic context. In Deuteronomy 4:6 the people are instructed regarding the laws to "observe them faithfully, for that will be proof of your wisdom and discernment to other peoples, who on hearing of all these laws will say, 'surely, that great nation is wise and discerning people'". This emphasizes the dimension of Israel being a witness for God in the nations around them. That was the purpose of God's election of them as a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. Davidson buttresses this point and traces the universal mission of Israel from Abraham to whom God promised "I will make you a great nation, I will bless you, and make your name great, and you shall be a blessing...In you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Gen 12:2-3). At Sinai "God reiterated the plan by promising to make His people a 'kingdom of priests' (Exod 19:6), mediating the covenant blessing to the world" (Davidson, 2006: 193). Therefore the kingdom of priests is a collective phrase used in the covenantal and cultic context to define the role of Israel among the nations. The discussion of the kingdom of priests in the New Testament derives from this background, and should be understood within the context of the covenant of obedience to God and His ordinances. The people's response confirms the covenant "all the people answered as one, saying, 'all that the Lord has spoken we will do' and Moses brought back the people's words to the Lord" (Ex. 19:8). This marks the end of the terms of the covenant.

2.2.4.3 An Examination of Verses 9-25

This is the theophanic *pericope*, where God appears to Moses and comes down to the mountain to address Moses. It is interesting to note in Exodus 19:24 that the priests and the people are given the same restriction, "but let not the priests or the people break through to come up to the Lord…" The role of the priests "who come near the Lord" Exodus 19:22 does not give them a special access to God. Having looked at the literary structure and the exegesis of Exodus 19 there still remains another task, to explicate the theological understanding from the exegetical study. This requires that Exodus 19 be placed in the context of the entire Old Testament. This will be the task of the next chapter. It is in the next chapter also that we will look at the connection between Exodus 19 and 24.

It appears that tentatively we may conclude that the meaning of the kingdom of priests in Exodus 19 is connected with the covenant. The phrase has its impetus on God's people as a holy nation (19:5) who are called to minister to God as His priests in a corporate sense. We have established that the missionary aspect is not explicitly in view in the context. The individual and special group nuances are also not supported by the text.

At this point consideration is given to the selected passage of the New Testament.

2.2.5 The Covenant Theme in Exodus 19 and 24

The covenant theme is a very important Old Testament motif.[30] "When Yhwh talks about 'covenant' in Exodus 19, we are reminded of the words to Noah before and after the flood and to Abram in Genesis 15 and Genesis 17, but the words have new features" (Goldingay, 2003:370). While Goldingay rightly points to these parallel covenant passages, he also notes the difference that is very significant for the claim of Exodus 19 as a covenant passage. In the cited earlier passages there is a clearly defined intention and evidence that a covenant was made. However in Exodus 19 it is not so pointed, that there was a covenant made between God and Israel. On the other hand there is an indication of Israel breaking the covenant in Exodus 34. Goldingay's explanation is that "the paucity of use of this language points us to the fact that a covenant between Yhwh and this people already exists. God's covenant commitment to Abram was the basis for the people's deliverance from Egypt (cf. Exodus2:24; 6:4-5). Exodus 19-24 is not an account of a covenant making, but of the sealing or reconfirming or renegotiating of a covenant" (Goldingay, 2003:370). While the covenant is done with the people as a corporate body the individual freedom is not compromised. This understanding of the covenant is particularly relevant to the study of the priesthood of believers because the priesthood of believers embraces both elements. McCathy seems to capture this thought well:

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[30] Some scholars have even seen it to be the center of the entire Old Testament. Eichrodt who developed this idea drawing from E Mendenhall, was to face opposition for his center idea from Fohrer who noted that the covenant did not play an important role between the 13th century and the 7th century. Hasel (1972:117-119), captures this debate very well in his *Old Testament Theology.* For Eichrodt "the very form of the divine covenant created especially favourable conditions not only for understanding of God's prevenient grace but also for the insight that right conduct toward one's neighbour was inseparable from the receiving of this grace. As a member of the covenant people each citizen was given an incontestable dignity; and therefore the pressure to treat him as a person, and not as an impersonal means to an end" (Eichrodt 1967:369).

A further theological topic upon which the covenant concept has been asked to cast light is the problem of human freedom and responsibility. God does not force himself and his covenant on the people. Rather he presents them with a choice and persuades them to accept freely a special relation to himself....*one finds a* classic proposition placing the choice before Israel of a covenant with Yahweh or another god in Exod 19:3-8, the conclusion of the chosen covenant in Exod. 24:3-8, and an example of renewal in Josh. 24. However, not only the first proposition but all these texts and the others concerned with covenant are shot through with persuasion; the people are asked, never compelled to enter into the relationship.

(McCathy, 1972: 55).

Another important element on the idea of the covenant in Exodus 19 is the presence of God. The covenant has to be between at least two parties. We have the people and Yahweh. Christiansen has a significant observation on this passage: "of prime interest here is the way God's presence points to God as guarantor of the covenant relationship as told in the two theophany stories (*Exod* 19-31 and 33-34)" (Christiansen, 1995:33).

The blood rite in Exodus 24:3-8 is not only connected with Exodus 19:3-8 but it also connects the two passages under the covenant theme. Nicholson demonstrates this significant connection in a brief but comprehensive manner: "Chapter 24 brings to completion the sealing of the covenant which had been first announced in 19:3. The repetition of the same response (19:8 and 24:3,7) marks the beginning and end of one great covenant event" (Nicholson, 1986:172).[31] After demonstrating the key markers that

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[31] Burns also finds this connection between Exodus 19 and Exodus 24. For her "Exodus 19:3-8 hasten to tell the whole covenant story from start to finish whereas the rest of the narrative moves very slowly and cautiously as if on sacred ground" (1983:144). She also sees the need for further study of this passage and states that "the compact unit of Exod 19:3-8 deserves special attention.. Scholars generally view it as an editorial insertion contributed by a writer from the Deuteronomic School" (Ibid, 145). She also observes that "Exodus 24:3-8 contain an alternative tradition regarding the conclusion of the covenant at Sinai" (Ibid 158).

exhibit the covenantal nature of these passages Nicholson brings the subject closer home

and connects the covenant idea with the priesthood, he continues:

> If Exodus 19:3b-8 as a whole is an anticipatory summary and interpretation of the nature and basis of the covenant, it may be suggested that the statement in 19:6a was intended by its author as an interpretation of Exodus 24:3-8; that is the author of 19:6b-8 understood Israel's status among the nations in a similar way to that of Isaiah 61:6 ('you shall be named priests of the Lord and ministers of our God') and saw Exodus 24:3-8 as a record of Israel's consecration and commissioning as such. Thus what is set out in programmatic manner in Exodus 19:3b-8 is finally completed in 24:3-8 where Israel gives its pledge of obedience to the words of the covenant and is then, as the author of Exodus 19:3b-8 took it constituted as Yahweh's 'kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' and saw Exodus 24:3-8 as a record of Israel's consecration and commissioning as such.

> (Nicholson, 1986: 173)

Another relevant point made by Nicholson touches on the function of Israel among the

nations. He connects this with Exodus 19 and the covenant theme in a relevant manner

for this study.

> By such means Exodus 24:3-8 has been interpreted as a solemn commissioning of Israel as a holy nation, obedient to God's will and functioning among the nations in the manner that a priesthood functions in a society – a theologically striking understanding and extension of the ritual described in 24:3-8.[32]

> (Nicholson, 1986:173)

So far we have looked at textual evidence that points to the covenant between YHWH

and Israel. However the indictment given by Faley in chapter 3 section 3.3.1 is too

serious to be taken lightly. There is a need for a deeper theological study of this text to

buttress these exegetical findings. Nicholson makes an interesting point that gives a lead

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[32] Burns commenting on the ritual in Exodus 24:3-8 states "the structure of the solemn ceremony described in vv 3-8 almost certainly reflects covenant renewal ceremonies in later Israel's cultic rehearsal of the Sinai event. The variant traditions regarding the sealing of the covenant at Mount Sinai appear to represent two attempts at capturing the meaning of the bond between Yahweh and Israel" (1983:158).

to the direction that this study would like to go by way of contribution to the debate on this subject. He points to the commissioning of Israel and the ritual described in 24:3-8. Unfortunately no elaboration is given on this significant point.

2.2.6   The Implications of the Commissioning of Israel in Exodus 24:3-8

It has been established that Exodus 24:3-8 is connected with Exodus 19:3-8. The theological import of this connection has already been identified in the concept of the covenant. The analysis of Exodus 24:3-8 will help to confirm the commissioning of Israel. First this is a ritual text, and in such texts there are omissions often times. It is therefore important to compare the ritual with other rituals. But first the activities of Exodus 24:3-8 must be analyzed.

Klingbeil after taking a survey on the attitude of Old Testament scholars toward cult and ritual in the Old Testament gives some helpful suggestions on how a new direction can be forged towards the recognition of the importance of understanding ritual in doing theology of the Old Testament. Firstly "ritual needs to be broken down into its smallest building blocks in order to be understood" (Klingbeil, 2004:503). Secondly a focus on practice instead of abstract concepts in ritual studies is important. These are two main guidelines that we will attempt to follow to analyze the ritual of Exodus 24:3-8.

2.2.7   The Significance of Exodus 24:3-8

Moses speaks, the goal is the sealing of the covenant the people accept the words of the Lord which are the terms of His covenant. The people respond in acceptance and the covenant is confirmed (v. 3).

Moses writes all the words of the Lord, the goal is that they should be read even in the future, and the result is that there is a record of Gods words. Then Moses rises up early in the morning during the time of morning sacrifice presumably. He builds an altar and the goal is to sacrifice. In addition to an indication of time, there is also an indication of the place where this takes place under the hill. This is not just any hill, but one to which the Lord descends to meet His people. The goal of this seems to be preparatory for the coming event (v.4).

Moses instructs the sons of Israel (young priests) to offer burnt offerings and peace offerings. The goal here is the purification of the people. The result is that the people are purified (v. 5).

Moses took half of the blood and put it in basins. The goal was that this was to be used later to sprinkle the people. He then took the other half and sprinkled it on the altar. This was to transfer the sins of the people to the altar (v. 6).

Moses took the book of the covenant where he had recorded the words of the Lord and read it in the hearing of the people. This precedes the ritual of sprinkling the blood on the people. This prepares the people for a special consecration. The people accepted the terms that God set out in their response to the reading of the words of the Lord (v. 7).

Moses took the blood that was put in basins (v.6) and sprinkled it on the people. Moses' speech 'Behold the blood of the covenant…' ends the ritual. What was to be (19:5, 6) now is, and what was promised is now confirmed. The future has become a present reality. This ritual seals the promise of setting Israel apart as a 'peculiar treasure unto me (YHWH) above all people' (v. 5).

2.2.8   The Theological Implications of Exodus24:3-8

There are at least three occasions when blood is applied to persons.

(1) When the covenant between YHWH and Israel was established (Exod 24:5-8)

(2) An ordination sacrifice for the priests (Lev 8:22-24)

(3) A reparation offering for a person who has been healed of scaly skin disease. (Lev 14:12-14:25) (Gane, 2005:164).

In his comparative study Gane concludes that "It is clear why the covenant and priestly ordination sacrifices include application of blood to persons. In these cases the blood is also applied to an altar of YHWH. Thus the rituals establish a blood connection, with life or death consequences, between the human parties and YHWH" (Gane, 2005:164).   If Gane is correct in his conclusion that the ritual of ordination in Leviticus 8:22-24 and the covenant ritual in Exodus 24:5-8 have the same goal, the logical conclusion is therefore that the people are also in some sense commissioned in a similar way at a different capacity. God sets the people apart from the rest of the nations through this ritual of the covenant. In the same way God sets apart the priests from the people by a blood ritual of ordination. Buttressed by textual and theological evidence the 'kingdom of priest within its literary context therefore connotes a people separated from the nations of the world, specially consecrated to YHWH and commissioned for service to the nations from which they are separated.[33]   Payne also captures this idea of God's people being separated "God shares His holiness with those who inherit the testament *covenant* they too are separated unto God (Ex. 19:10, 14; Lev. 20:24) (Payne, 1962:124). Furthermore "the demonstration of their faith by their obedience is summarized in Israel's description as a holy [separated, Lev. 20:26] nation" (Ex. 19:6) (Payne, 1962:101).

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[33] This brings the peculiarity of Israel and their designation as the kingdom of priests together.

Alexander also captures this idea of the setting apart of Israel, and makes the following observations:

> The process of creating a nation out of fleeing slaves took an important step forward when, under Moses' leadership, the Israelites came to Mount Sinai. Here they were invited by God to enter into a special covenant relationship with him, a covenant based on another divine promise[34].... The events associated with Mount Sinai introduced an important new development that set the Israelites apart from other nations. With the sealing of the covenant....the Israelites eventually proceeded to construct the tabernacle. Here God would dwell among the people and, by so doing, confer on them the status of 'holy nation.' By coming to live in their midst, God set the Israelites apart from every other nation; his presence made them unique among the nations. However this privilege came at a cost, for the Israelites now had to ensure that their lifestyle was compatible with that of the Holy One. The importance of this is stressed through the instructions and regulations set out in the book of Leviticus.
>
> (Alexander, 2003:660)

While Alexander does not connect Exodus 19:5, 6 with Exodus 24:3-8 his emphasis on the idea of separation of Israel and what that separation entails is correct. Observations have been made by Aelred Cody (1969:43), a Roman Catholic scholar on Exodus 24:3-8:

> The blood-rite is unique in the Old Testament for its similarity to ancient Arabian blood-rites. If the tradition were a recent one, Moses might be said to appear as a priest, for he builds an altar and he engages in blood manipulation, which in later Israelite ritual was reserved to priests....This text is clearly a text having to do with covenant-making rather than sacrifice, and although the sacrifices described are real sacrifices – and covenant-sacrifices at that – the blood-rite seems rather to be inspired by the non-sacrificial blood-rites of ancient Semitic region amalgamated here with the covenant-sacrifices, and such blood-rites were performed not by priests but by kings and chieftains.

Cody here argues against the notion of Moses as a Priest. Caution needs to be exercised on any complete denial of Moses performing priestly acts. After all he was from the same

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[34] Exodus 19:5,6.

lineage with Aaron. But the main issue that deserves attention here is the observation that Cody makes that this blood rite had to do with the covenant. While the researcher goes along with him so far as the goal of the ritual is concerned, the evidence of his support comes only from external sources. Since there are two other evidences of a similar ritual within the immediate context namely the Pentateuch as demonstrated earlier in this chapter, The researcher does not think that this omission can be taken lightly.

It is important at this stage to give consideration to the proposal that Klingbeil is making that "there must be an interaction between the disciplines of biblical theology and ritualistics" (Klingbeil, 2004:495). In his published dissertation, Klingbeil suggests nine categories of analysis for ritual texts (Klingbeil, 1998:48-51). For the purpose of our study we shall appropriate these categories in a schematic form for comparison between the ritual of covenant and the ritual of ordination in Exodus 24 and Leviticus 8 respectively.

A Compare between the ordination ritual and the covenant ritual Ex. 24 and Lev. 8

Ritual Category	Exodus 24	Leviticus 8
Structure	Direct communication with God, and ritual activities	Direct communication with God and ritual activities
Order and sequence	Successive action and listing order syntactical logical use of *Wayyqtl*	Successive action logical use of *Wayyqtl*
Situation and context	The giving of the law Ex. 19-23	The giving of laws of the cult Lev. 1-8
Ritual space	At the foot of Mt. Sinai, on which God descended to meet his people Ex. 24:4	At the tabernacle – a place of meeting where God's presence was seen symbolically Lev. 8:3
Ritual time	No time element	No time element
Objects involved	Altar and twelve pillars v.4	Garments, anointing oil, bullock, two rams, basket of unleavened bread, v. 11
Ritual roles	Moses – explicit Congregation – acted upon Animals - implicit	Moses explicit action Aaron and sons –acted upon Animals – implicit

Ritual actions	Sprinkling of blood on the congregation	Sprinkling of blood on Aaron
Ritual sounds and language	People respond (spoken word)	No sound is explicit

Fig. 1

The above figure clearly indicates the striking similarities between the ritual of ordination in Leviticus 8 and the ritual of covenant in Exodus 24. The analysis of the ritual categories of each ritual indicates a very close connection. The researcher proposes that this connection is that of ordination of both the people and the priests in their respective categories.[35] It is not accidental that in the New Testament when the priesthood of the order of Aaron fades away and Christ's superior ministry takes its place the priesthood of the people of God is confirmed.

In Goldingay's *Old Testament Theology*, the nature of Israel as a kingdom of priests comes across clearly as a theological construct grounded in Old Testament understanding of who God is, and how He deals with His people Israel. This starts with the conditionality of their distinctive status as "a possession distinct from all the peoples, a special possession or personal possession…. While the whole world belongs to Yhwh, in Yhwh's mind special status will attach to Israel. It will be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Goldingay, 2003:373). This promise is an echo of Genesis 12:2 and Exodus 15:18 where a nation is promised to Abraham and Yhwh's Kingship is envisaged (Goldingay, 2003:373). With this background Goldingay makes a point that is pregnant with meaning that the meaning of Israel as a kingdom of priests is that they have been "brought out of Egypt to serve Yhwh, and it will do so by its worship (e.g., Exodus3:12;

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[35] The notion of the ordination for the entire congregation finds support in John Davies. The application of blood to the alter and the sprinkling on the people is a form of ordination. This is compared with the sequence of events as outlined in Exodus 29 and implemented in Leviticus 8. (Davies, 2003:121,122).

10:8, 11, 24, 26)   In origin, priesthood belonged to humanity as a whole (Gen 4:3-4)…Here in keeping with God's original purpose, the whole people is a priesthood…" (Goldingay, 2003:373). Goldingay (2003:374), hastens to reduce the risk of being misunderstood and gives a balancing statement "As Yhwh's priesthood, Israel is no ordinary nation, but a holy nation – a nation distinctively called to serve Yhwh in this way, as well as in other ways. Describing Israel as a priesthood does not attribute to it a priestly role on behalf of the world or between God and the world." Goldingay however fails to recapture this thought at the end in his models of peoplehood. All the theological constructs or models of peoplehood that he enumerates do not seem to relate to this theme. He for example features the family, assembly, organization, army, congregation, hierocracy, cult, a whole, and a movement but also a settlement. Even in his discussion of the people as a cult his focus is on the Levites. There is much more that can be said about the kingdom of priests as a worshiping community in the Old Testament. This will be the focus of the next section.

2.2.9   The Priesthood of Believers and the OT Festivals

In Leviticus 23 and Numbers 28 and 29 YHWH instructs Moses to speak to the children of Israel. It is not Aaron and his sons this time that are being addressed but the whole congregation. The feasts of the Lord and the holy convocations are to be observed by the entire congregation (see Lev. 23:2). An analysis of the ritual activities in these festival calendars reveals that there are specific elements that form a prescriptive ritual pattern. There is a time element, occasion, procedure and or prohibition. It is not surprising that the "shortest regulation on the festivals is given in Exodus 23:14-17, where they are listed

as the feast of unleavened bread, harvest, and ingathering", because the festivals are linked to the covenant terms with Israel (Elwell, 1984: 409). As a kingdom of priests Israel had to maintain these festivals (Ex. 23) along with the commandments (Exod 20) and judgments (Ex21-23). [36] The relevance of this connection between the festivals and the covenant may be seen in a number of occasions when the sacrifices are rejected because the covenant is broken.[37]

The words of Jesus are very relevant "not everyone that says to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that does the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 7:20). In Matthew 7:22 there is a scene of judgment "many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? In thy name have cast out devils? And in thy name done many wonderful works?" Knowing God becomes a key element in the idea of worship and service to God. This is illustrated in the comparison between Hosea 8:2 and Matthew 7:23 where the words with the same meaning 'to know' in both Hebrew and Greek are used within the context of the covenant with God 'Set the trumpet to they mouth. He shall come as an eagle against the house of the Lord, because they have transgressed my covenant, and trespassed against my law" (Hosea 8:1).

It has been demonstrated so far that the Festivals in the Old Testament with their sacrifices are within the context of the covenant, that the covenant takes primacy over the

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[36] "The entire section connects the giving of the law (Exodus20:1-21) with the confirmation of the covenant (Exodus24) and consists (Exodus21-22) of case laws and moral imperatives regulating human social behavior, liability in property and personal injury cases, and the like followed by a succinct resume (Ex23) of the times and seasons for rest, worship and celebration before Yahweh. The brief calendar section (Exodus23:14-19) is structured as a series of second-person singular commands; it begins and ends with the 'three times a year' formula, which with the expression 'to the house of Yahweh your God' (Exodus23:19), reminds the reader that the instructions provide for a scattered agricultural people some minimal observances to recall their communal allegiance to Yahweh and his covenant" (Armerding 2003:305). See also (Chilton 2000:372).

[37] I Samuel 15:22; Psalm 40:6-8; Psalm 51:18, 19; Isaiah 1:11-17; Jeremiah 7:22, 23; Micah 6:6-8 and also in the New Testament Matthew 12:7 and Mark 12:33

sacrifices this is confirmed by the rejection of such sacrifices in the context of a broken covenant and rebellion. New Testament parallels have been drawn in the absence of the sacrifices; any service for God is meaningless outside the covenant relationship of knowing God. Israel as a nation is identified therefore as a kingdom of priests by the covenant that consecrates them for service to God by acts of obedience to his Words, and maintaining the services that the Lord has instituted within the ambit of this covenant relationship. Faithfulness to these terms enables them to be God's showcase to the rest of the nations. God can work through this holy nation to show His mighty works to other nations that also need to know about this God who are still outside either by choice or ignorance but not excluded from the covenant relationship with YHWH. Therefore while exegetes have found difficulties in interpreting this text because the phrase 'kingdom of priests' occurs once in the Old Testament only in Exodus 19:6, we have identified not only the literary context but the covenant motif resonating with and even beyond that it under girds the 'kingdom of priests' idea throughout the Old Testament and the Bible. Another Old Testament passage deserves attention at this point.

2.3   The Kingdom of Priests From the Eighth century B.C. Biblical Context

This section examines the book of Hosea and his message to the People of God. There is no clue after the Pentateuch on how the concept of the kingdom of priests developed. Hence we have a gap up to about the eighth century on this idea.

2.3.1 The Covenant and The Kingdom of Priests in Hosea

Most of the biblical theological scholars limit the concept of the kingdom of priests within the literary context of Exodus 19:6 and I Peter 2:9 and other related texts.[38] In Dyrness the researcher finds possibilities for this concept to find expression beyond the texts that express it explicitly. Reflecting on the implications of the covenant relationship Dyrness observes that "the spirituality of this bond which is the goal of the covenant, has important implications. It embraces potentially all the people, from the least to the greatest, and makes possible a remarkable individual and group cohesion" (Dyrness, 1979:125). The researcher would like to submit that the kingdom of priests concept finds its expression within the covenant theme of the Old and New Testaments. The covenant has a bonding effect to those who willingly submit themselves under its terms. The promise 'ye shall be to me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation' (Ex. 19:6 KJV), is conditional to obedience to the terms of the covenant. Therefore this promise finds its fulfillment whenever the covenant bond is intact. In the case of the breach of the covenant this promise cannot be in force. Dyrness captures this idea when he states that "the basic demand is to know the Lord, that is, to enjoy a living and personal relationship with this God. This is of more consequence than the sacrifices and offerings which are to express this relationship (Hos.6:6). The spirituality of this bond, which is the goal of the covenant, has important implications"(Dyrness, 1979:125).[39] Nicholson in his treatment of the covenant theme recognizes the importance of the covenant texts in Hosea and in his book, he dedicates some ten pages on Hosea 6:7,8:1. From the very start he links his

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[38] The most comprehensive treatment may be found in a dissertation by Robert Ellis (1988), covering the following texts: Exodus19:5-6; Deut 7:6b;14:2, 21a; 26:18a,19b; 28:9a; Ps 135:4; Mal 3:17a; Isa 61:6; 62:12a; 63:18a; Daniel 7:27a; 8:24b; 12:7b; Titus 2:14; Rev 1:6a; 5:10a; 20:6b; I Peter 2:9.

[39] Surprisingly Ellis in his comprehensive dissertation does not give any reference to Hosea and the kingdom of priests.

discussion on Hosea to Exodus 19:3b-8; 24:3-11. His focus however is on demonstrating that the concept of the covenant existed earlier than the eighth century. He concludes that "the book of Hosea is crucially significant, for it indicates that the notion of a covenant between God and Israel was known already in the mid-eighth century BC" (Nicholson, 1986:177, 187).

We will now give consideration to the book of Hosea as a test case of how the kingdom of priests concept functions within a different genre that has its own theology.[40] This is a biblical theological study of the book of Hosea in harmony with the biblical theological principles outlined in this chapter, with the aim to discover what the book teaches about the kingdom of priesthood.

The book of Hosea is classified among the prophetic writings of the Old Testament Scriptures. The aim of this enquiry is to interpret Hosea 6:6 as referred to by Dyrness under the covenant theme, within its literary context primarily and at the same time to discover its teaching on the kingdom of priests from a biblical theological approach. The enquiry will ascertain whether this covenant theme is imposed or it flows out of the text itself. Since Biblical theology is a branch of exegetical theology[41] we will do some exegetical study to explicate the theme that Dyrness has identified in Hosea 6:6 and establish whether it has any link with the kingdom of priests. The first step in the process will be to establish the text and translate it. The second step will examine the literary context by doing a literary analysis. The third step will focus on the interpretation of the text. The fourth and final step will be an application of the text and conclusion.

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[40] The purpose is to give a sample of how other books may be explored and how the biblical theological principles apply to this book with reference to the kingdom of priests. This for me is one book from the eighth century that illustrates best the relationship between the covenant theme and the 'kingdom of priests' promise.
[41] See (Vos, 1948: 5).

2.3.2 Establishing and Translating the Text (Hosea 6:6)

No significant textual variations were found in the earlier versions (MT, LXX, and Targum) that were examined. Furthermore no critical notes in these versions pointed to any difficulties in the transmission of the text. In delimiting the text, the researcher choses to follow the MT markers because they are clearly identified and most of the time accurate. The MT marks the section in which this verse is found by a ס at the end of Hosea 5:7 and a פ at the end of Hosea 6:11. The translation from the MT is rendered as follows:

Hosea 6:6 MT

כִּי חֶסֶד חָפַצְתִּי וְלֹא־זָבַח וְדַעַת אֱלֹהִים מֵעֹלוֹת׃

For goodness I desired and not sacrifice and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.

2.3.3 A Literary Structure of the book of Hosea

Bliese divides the book of Hosea into five parts:

I	1:1-3:5
II	4:1-7:2
III	7:3-8:13
IV	8:14-11:7
V	11:8-14:9 [42]

Bliese (1994: 67)observes that the central part of the book is poetic, and the number five seems to be an organizing factor in the book of Hosea. There are five poems in the central part of the book (7:3-7; 7:8-16; 8:1-4; 8:4-8; 8:9-13) (Bliese, 1994:67). Further Bliese

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[42] For the literary structure of the book The researcher bases himself on Bliese's work because it not only divides the sections of the book of Hosea according to the internal thematic structures or chapter and verse divisions of the book, but it also pays attention to the literary genre and its structures which sometimes contradict the chapter and verse divisions (8:1-4a) (Bliese 1994: 67).

observes that the central poem (8:1-4) is composed of five lines and the central line of that poem has five words, and right at the center of the central line is the phrase "my God". The central line לִי יִזְעָקוּ אֱלֹהַי יְדַעֲנוּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל (Hos.8:2) according to Bliese sums up "God's major accusation in the book: Israel claims to know God but is not faithful to him" (Bliese, 1994: 67). Therefore the analysis of the book of Hosea gives us a view of the literary genre, that it is largely poetic, and from the analysis of the poetic structure we can get clues on the thrust of the entire book.

2.3.4 The literary Analysis of the Section Hosea 5:8-6:11

The whole section is poetic in my observation of the way the text is arranged in the MT. The lines are organized in a particular order that is different from the narrative or other types of genres. Bliese identifies a "homogeneous poem with a terrace pattern leading to the final climax"[43] in Hosea 5:12-6:3. Therefore it appears that for the section that we are dealing with in this passage (Hos 5:8-6:11), chapters 5:8-11 and 6:4-11 have a different pattern. This makes up the beginning and the end of this section. It is not strange in Hebrew poetry to find stylistic variation and a combination of several literary strategies within the same section. Examining the poetic structure of Psalm 31 Wendland observes:

> There are rhetorical devices that indicate sequence and movement within the composition, on the one hand, and shifts or breaks in thought, on the other. Among such stylistic features, he especially noted the *incusio*, metrical breaks, clusters of bicola and tricola or strophes, refrains, key-word reiteration, particles, vocatives, rhetorical questions, and general repetition.
>
> (Wendland, 1994:396, 397)

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[43] Bliese observes that this poem has twelve hexameters. Bliese, "Symmetry and Prominence…", 73.

Wendland adapts the rhetorical-critical approach as outlined above and comes up with a 'structure-functional' method which is presented as:

> the search for spans or stretches of continuity and points of discontinuity within the discourse as a whole. These two compositional principles govern the generation, organization, and operation of any literary text. However, the various stylistic techniques that realize such objectives tend to be more complexly patterned, artistically crafted, profusely manifested, and strategically positioned in texts that are more poetic than prosaic in nature.
>
> (Wendland, 1994:396, 397)

Indicating the positioning of such literary devices Wendland points out that "normally such a stylistic concentration occurs at some significant point in the structural-thematic-functional development of the discourse, that is, at the beginning('aperture'), ending('closure'), or central core" (Wendland, 1994:396, 397).

The insights gained in the analysis of the poetic structure of Psalm 31 and the general principles used for poetic analysis in Wenland's work may be applied to Hosea 5:8-6:11. This may be an explanation for a homogenous poetic meter starting from Hosea 5:12 - 6:3. We may conclude therefore that 5:8-11 is the aperture which is at the beginning marked by a different meter within a larger section (Hos. 5:8-6:11), and 6:4-11 is the closure indicated by another change of meter in the same section. Apart from the discontinuity marked by the change in meter, there is an indication of continuity in this section as well. In 5:8-11 a warning is given to Judah and Israel about an impending judgment. The words שׁוֹפָר, חֲצֹצְרָה (Hos. 5:8) and לְשַׁמָּה (Hos.5:9) point to judgment against Judah and Israel (Hos. 5:9) which is confirmed by the clause

בְּיוֹם תּוֹכֵחָה (Hos. 5:9). From 5:12-15, they turn to Assyria for help, when they are chastised by God. Their perspective of God is described by the words כָּעָשׁ and כָּרָקָב which may be translated as rot and decay respectively. God leaves an open door "In their distress, they will seek Me and beg for My favor" (Hos. 5:15, JPS). This *pericope* seems to be a pre-peak. The researcher takes 6:1-3 as a climax of the section. There is a change of person from first person singular to first person cohortative and third person in this section. This section depicts an appeal by the prophet and the line וְנָשׁוּבָה אֶל־יְהוָֹה לְכוּ (Hos. 6:1) is indicative of this appeal. In the last *pericope* (Hos. 6:4-11), God laments over Israel and Judah, this is indicated by the repetition of the phrase אֶעֱשֶׂה־לְּךָ מָה (Hos.6:4). They are not left to guess what God wants from them, because he states it emphatically in Hebrew poetic parallelism, חָפַצְתִּי וְלֹא־זָבַח וְדַעַת אֱלֹהִים מֵעֹלוֹת כִּי חֶסֶד (Hos. 6:6).

Our interest is particularly on 6:4-11 and specifically verse 6. There is an indication of a change of meter in the poetry and there seems to be no significant order in the last part of this section (Hos 6:4-11). This section therefore with its characteristics of continuity and discontinuity in its poetic structure leads to a better understanding of Hosea 6:6.

2.3.5   A Literary Analysis of Hosea 6:6

Hosea 6:6 seems to form a type of parallelism.

כִּי חֶסֶד חָפַצְתִּי וְלֹא־זָבַח וְדַעַת אֱלֹהִים מֵעֹלוֹת

כִּי חֶסֶד חָפַצְתִּי a ⟍ ⟋ b וְלֹא־זֶבַח

מֵעֹלוֹת ‏b` ⟋ ⟍ ‏a` וְדַעַת אֱלֹהִים
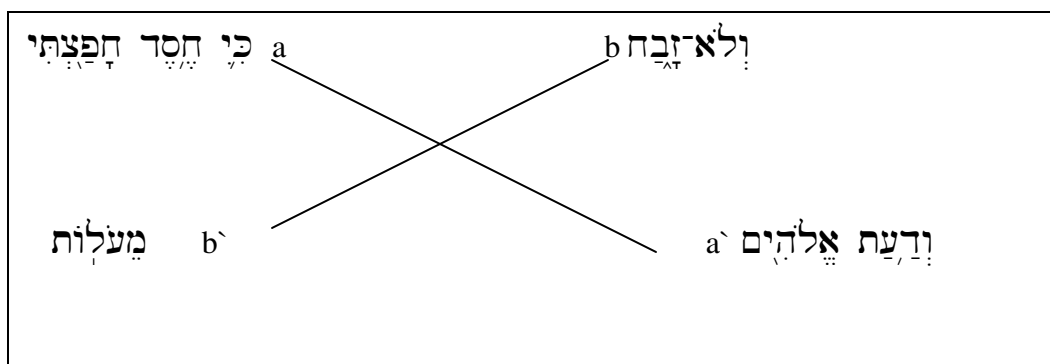
Figure 1

The parallelism points to a relationship between a and á as well as b and b́. This relationship as shown in figure 1 above deserves a special attention and will be addressed in the following section that deals with interpretation. The literary analysis of the book, the selected delimited section, and the verse that is the subject of discussion has revealed that Hosea 6:6 falls into a poetic genre. The poetic structure at the centre of the book points to what appears to be the key text for the entire book, Hosea 8:2.

2.3.6   Interpretation

The prophetic message of the book of Hosea covers the reign of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah and the reign of King Jeroboam of Israel (Hosea1:1).

It has already been noted that Hosea 6:6 within its literary context reveals that there was incongruence between worship and moral life within the community. The researcher submits that this is not a question of choice between goodness and sacrifice; knowledge

of God and burnt offering but a call for a restoration of congruence between the worship and obedience to Yahweh.[44]

2.3.7   The Covenant Context

The covenant seems to be significant for the interpretation of the book of Hosea and for understanding the priesthood of the people. The following sections examine the covenant and how it relates to the priesthood in the context of the history of God's people.

2.3.7.1 The Covenant

First this verse seems to be in the context of the covenant, a broken covenant between God and His people, both Judah and Israel. God's instruction in Hosea 1:2 'get yourself a wife of whoredom and children of whoredom for the land will stray from following the Lord' points to this fact and the living parable of Hosea's marriage to a prostitute is indicative of the double standard life that God's people lived. The people continued to sacrifice to God while they worshiped other gods. God appeals in 2:4 'And let her put away her harlotry from her face and her adultery from between her breasts' a clear indication of a broken covenant. There is an echo of covenant language from Genesis in Hosea 2:1 'the number of people of Israel shall be like the sands of the sea' this was a covenant promise to Abraham (see Gen. 13:15). There is also an element of the curses that accompany a broken covenant in Hosea 2:5 'Else will I strip her naked'; 2:7 'because she thought I will go after my lovers, who supply my bread and my water, my wool and my linen, my oil and my drink'. Covenant curses 2:11 'I will take back my new grain in its name and My new wine in its season, I will snatch away My wool and My linen that

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[44] Such a call does not put aside the sacrifices but rather prioritizes love and knowledge of God within a covenant relationship above sacrifices and burnt offerings.

serve to cover her nakedness. Now I will uncover her shame in the very sight of her lovers and none shall save her from Me.'

2.3.7.2 Promise of Covenant Renewal

There is hope for God's people, because God has not given up on them he says 'I will speak coaxingly to her and lead her through the wilderness. In that day, I will make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the creeping things of the ground; I will also banish bow, sword, and war from the land (Hos.2:16,20). God continues to give hope for the renewal of the covenant 'afterward the Israelites will turn back and will seek the Lord their God and David their king and they will thrill over the Lord and over His bounty in the days to come (Hos. 3:5). In Hosea 6:7 God speaks 'but they, to a man, have transgressed the Covenant. This is where they have been false to Me.' This verse is in the same literary context with verse 6 which is our focus point. In the last chapter there is an appeal that leaves an open door. 'Return O Israel, to the Lord your God, for you have fallen because of your sin. Take words with you and return to the Lord, say to Him: Forgive all guilt and accept what is good; Instead of bulls we will pay the offering of our lips' (Hos. 14:2,3). The clause קְחוּ עִמָּכֶם֙ דְּבָרִ֔ים suggests a response in a covenant renewal. The phrase כָּל־תִּשָּׂ֣א עָוֺן֘ וְקַח־ט֒וֹב resonates with Hosea 6:6, this is what God desires from His people. Finally the commitment should be וּנְשַׁלְּמָ֥ה פָרִ֖ים שְׂפָתֵֽינוּ this is a repetition in poetic language pointing to a response to this covenant renewal that God longs for with His people.

2.3.7.3 The Sacrifices in the Context of a Broken Covenant.

In view of the broken covenant, God says: 'and I will end all her rejoicing Her festivals, new moons, and Sabbaths all her festive seasons' (Hos. 2:13). God seems to be critical of their centers of worship He adds 'Do not come to Gilgal, do not make pilgrimages to Beth-aven and do not swear by the Lord….They shall garner shame from their sacrifices' (Hos.4:15,19). The people seem to continue to sacrifice to God even though they have broken His covenant. Hosea states: 'then they will go with their sheep and cattle to seek the Lord, but they will not find Him…He has cast them off because they have broken faith with the Lord (5:6, 7)'. Therefore sacrifices in the context of a broken covenant are meaningless and God says: 'when they present sacrifices to Me, it is but flesh for them to eat: the Lord has not accepted them. Behold he remembers their iniquity (Hos. 8:13).

2.3.7.4 The Indicators of a Broken Covenant

The broken covenant is indicated by the spiritual condition of the people of God. In Hosea 4:1, 2 it is stated 'there is no honesty and no goodness and no obedience to God in the land…searing, dishonesty, and murder, theft and adultery are rife; crime follows after crime'. In Hosea 8:3 indicates that 'Israel rejects what is good; an enemy shall pursue him and verse 11 states, 'for Ephraim has multiplied altars – for guilt; his altars have redounded his guilt'. It seems that God's people tried to compensate for the spiritual barrenness with sacrifices and they multiplied the altars. They claim in Hosea 8:2 אֱלֹהֵי יְדַעֲנוּךְ similar phrase expressing the same idea is used in Hosea 6:6 pointing to what God wants. They claim to have it all together. From God's perspective they are multiplying their guilt. The spiritual condition of Israel and Judah is also expressed in

Hosea 8:14 'Israel has ignored his Maker and built temples and Judah has fortified many cities. So I will set fire to his cities and it shall consume their fortresses' (Hos.8:14).

2.3.7.5 Historical Background

The calling of Hosea came during the reigns of "Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah of Judah, and in the reign of King Jeroboam of Israel" (Hos. 1:1). Uzziah reigned for fifty two years (792-740 BCE) (Kaiser, 1998:352). The reign of Uzziah is marked by material prosperity. This came about as a result of gaining "control over the caravan routes from Arabia to Philistia and Egypt; the principal element in Sinai, the Meunites, now share their caravaneer and caravanserai profits with him. This outside income was used to strengthen the internal prosperity of the country" (Haroni and Avi-Yonah, 2002:106). Jotham's reign, the son of Uzziah is characterized by vassalage under the Assyrians (Kaiser, 1998:369). It was during the reign of Ahaz that the spiritual condition of Israel was at its lowest level of deterioration.[45] Hezekiah turned things around after his father's reign that plunged Judah into idolatry. "He initiated a return to Yahweh and severed all ties with Assyria (2 Kings 18:3-7). Hezekiah reopened and repaired the temple his father had closed. He destroyed all the foreign cults that had been installed since the time of Ahaz's subservience to his Assyrian overlords" (Kaiser, 1998:376). On the other hand Israel also experienced a brief period of material success "during the second quarter of the eighth century B.C. …they once again dominated the major arteries of world commerce across the southern arm of the Fertile Crescent. The success of Jeroboam was

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[45] "He made images of Baal, sacrificed (presumably his oldest son) to Molech in the Valley of Hinnom, had the pagan altar he saw in Damascus copied by Uriah the priest in Jerusalem, which he then placed instead of the brazen altar prescribed by the Mosaic law…it was as if Ahab and Jezebel, with all their Canaanite syncretism, had been brought back to life again, only this time in Judah" (Kaiser, 371,2).

acclaimed by Jonah, son of Amittai (2Kings 14:25)" (Haroni and Avi-Yonah, 2002:108).

This success was accompanied by crimes such as the "assassination of Zechariah, son of

Jeroboam" (Haroni and Avi-Yonah, 2002:108). This started a spiritual downward spiral

that Israel would never recover from. From this historical background we may see a

seedbed for apostasy. Material prosperity led to spiritual degradation. The business ties

and vassalage plunged the nation into a state of spiritual lethargy that cost them their

covenant relationship with God. They hoped to maintain it with sacrifices, but God says

'I desire goodness not sacrifice, knowledge of God more than burnt offering' (Hos. 6:6).

2.3.7.6 A Brief Word Study of Hosea 6:6

For the purpose of this paper The researcher will focus on two words חֶסֶד and דַעַת,

these two words sum up the program of reformation that God desires for his people. The

researcher wants to submit that the issue here is not the choice but the emphasis. Within

the context of moral degeneration God emphasizes moral regeneration not through the

sacrifices and burnt offerings but through the moral renewal expressed in love, kindness,

mercy and knowledge of God and that is accomplished by renewal of the covenant. When

the heart is right with God the worship experience will be an expression of such a

relationship. To emphasize the sacrifices and burnt offerings outside the covenant

relationship is to compound guilt.

According to Davidson חֶסֶד has a wide range of meanings he has the following list:

kindness, mercy, kind benevolent, gracious, merciful, pious, godly, and holy (Davidson,

1997:268). Having surveyed the literary context, and the covenant motif in Hosea, the

meaning that seems to be fitting to this context is that God desires piety, godliness and holiness among his people.

Looking at the next word רַעַת, it is in the form of qal inf construct. According to Driver and Briggs it means, to discern, be aware of, to know, be acquainted with, recognize, and acknowledge. It also involves intelligent worship, obedience (Driver and Briggs 1979). On the other hand Gesenius brings out the relational meaning as well for him the word means: "to know, to become acquainted with anyone Deuteronomy 9:24…often put by a euphemism for sexual intercourse of a man to know a woman i.e. to lie with her Genesis 4:17,25…often used of the will, to turn the mind to something, to care for, to see about…men regarding or worshiping God (Hos. 8:2; 13:4; Ps. 36:11; 9:11; Job 18:21 I Sam. 2:12".Gesenius 1949: 334). The connotations that relate to intimacy, worship, obedience, recognition, godly, pious etc all resonate with the context that has been outlined above to help in the understanding of the meaning of the passage. Yet it is not enough given the wide range of meanings possible to rely on the word study for the meaning of the words in the context. It is also important to explore other texts within the Scriptures.

2.3.7.7 An Intertextual Study of Hosea 6:6

Hosea 6:6 echoes I Samuel 15:22 in which comparative language is used to emphasize obedience above sacrifice. Psalm 40:6-8 is in the form of a commitment to do the will of God because God does not desire sacrifice or burnt offering. Psalm 51:18,19 expresses repentance, the true sacrifice is a contrite heart. David acknowledges that God does not want a sacrifice and burnt offering. These are the texts that were written before Hosea's

ministry. Isaiah was a contemporary of Hosea and Jeremiah came later. The use of the words in Hosea 6:6 in the rest of Scripture has been analyzed and the analysis is in the appendix of this research.[46]

 In summing up the findings of the analysis it suffices to state that obedience to the will of God precedes rendering of sacrifices and burnt offerings within the covenant context. In the event of a broken covenant, the maintenance of the cult is meaningless and unacceptable to God. In the New Testament as noted in the Appendix there are three texts that use this similar phrasing as found in Hosea 6:6 applying it in different contexts. Matthew 12:7 uses a quotation from Old Testament to defend his disciples who were condemned by the Pharisees for breaking the Sabbath. The Pharisees were worried about the law but they did not acknowledge the law-giver who was in their midst. In Mark 12:33 the law is summarized as loving God first and then the neighbour. Comparative language is used to show that this love is more important than sacrifice and burnt offerings. Obedience to the law is couched in a love relationship which expresses the same idea of the covenant that is found in Hosea. In Hebrews 10:6-9 the emphasis is on the comparison between the sacrifice of Christ and the Old Testament sacrifices. The reference to God having no pleasure in the sacrifices and burnt offerings seems to point to the covenant that was broken, because verse 9 'He took away the first that he may establish the second'. More than that this was the anti-type meeting the type, thereby fulfilling all the purpose for which the typical sacrifices were intended. This seems to be

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[46] At this point it needs to be noted that there are two major opposing views on the interpretation of Hosea 6:6. Some commentators see an emphasis on obedience: Harper 1979:286 and.Beeby 1989:77 On the other hand other commentators view the message of Hosea 6:6 as "prophetic radicalism against the cult…The formulation is probably rooted in the long struggle between the Mosaic Yahwism of the amphictyonic league and the characteristic cult of Canaan. The struggle did not end in the Old Testament (Matt 9:13; 12:7)" Mays 1969: 98.

a quotation from Psalm 40:7-9. So far all the texts we have examined in the New Testament quote or allude directly to the Old Testament, and express the importance of obedience and doing the will of God.[47]

Another passage that makes no direct reference to the Old Testament but echoes the same principles as Hosea 6:6 is in Matthew 7:15-23. First there is a warning about false prophets "who come in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" (Matt.7:15). There is a clear incongruence between the way they appear and what they are. Jesus says "by their fruits you shall know them" (Matt.7:20). This refers both to their lifestyle and the results of their work. In verse 21 Jesus continues: "not everyone that says to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that does the will of my Father which is in heaven". Obedience is more important than lip service. In verse 22 there is a scene of judgment portrayed "many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord have we not prophesied in thy name? In thy name have cast out devils? And in thy name done many wonderful works?" This is a claim from those who have rendered a service in the name of the Lord. Like God's people in Hosea who continued to offer sacrifices in the name of the Lord. But Jesus says to them "I never knew you: depart from me you that work iniquity" The Greek word used here γινώσκω does not seem to carry a common meaning but a deeper meaning that is embedded in the Old Testament word יָדַע which may be used to refer to an intimate relationship between husband and wife (Gen.4:1). Just as the Israelites thought they knew God because of their offerings to Him, the same word appears יְדָעֲנוּךְ in (Hos. 8:2). God rejected them because He says "I desire goodness, not sacrifice; obedience to God, rather than burnt offerings" (Hos.6:6). Therefore in

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[47] See appendix A for further details on the inertextual and canonical study of the subject.

Matthew 7 the relationship with God is critical before one can render service to God. Having looked at how Hosea 6:6 is used intertextually and canonically we now give a brief attention to the historical background.

2.3.7.8 The Covenant and the Kingdom of Priests in Hosea

So far we have established that in Hosea there is an evident focus on the covenant. The evidence from the text points to a broken covenant. While the people breached the covenant they continued the sacrifices, which were established by God. Within this context God said "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget they children" (Hosea 4:6). It was only within the covenant context and relationship that Israel would be God's priests. Revoking the covenant meant that they forfeited the promise God made that they will be a kingdom of priests (Ex. 19:6).

The ultimate aim of their priesthood is clearly portrayed in Hosea 1:10 "yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, yea are the sons of the living God." There is a clear echo in this verse that points back to the covenant with Abraham. God has not forgotten His promise to Abraham, and also the promise He made at Sinai, that they shall be a 'kingdom of priests'. These promises were to be fulfilled on condition that the covenant terms were kept.

The eighth century prophets seem to reiterate the same idea of Israel being a blessing to the nations a 'kingdom of priests'. Payne expresses this as the "ultimately universal direction of the Gospel" (Payne, 1962:191). For Amos, God's blessings and curses affected both Israel and the other nations (Amos 1:3-2:3; 9:7); Isaiah, sees the scattering of God's people among as a means of glorifying God (Isa. 24:14-16),

> But ye shall be named the Priests of the Lord: men shall call you the Ministers of our God: ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves…For I the Lord love judgment, I hate robbery for burnt offering; and I will direct their work in truth, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them And their seed shall be known among the Gentiles, and their offspring among the people: all that see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the seed which the Lord hath blessed (Isaiah 61:6,8,9).

The reference to the everlasting covenant is an indication that God had one covenant with His people that was broken and renewed a number of times because of the unfaithfulness of the people as we have seen demonstrated in the book of Hosea. The idea of the ministry of the entire community comes out very prominently. The concept of universal mission for the covenant people of God was not a later development.

> The sinaitic testament though particularistic, was not exclusivistic. A large 'mixed multitude' had been allowed to come up with Israel out of Egypt (Ex. 12:38)…Still, the very terms of the Sinaitic testament included the thought of a broader mission. For Israel's purpose was one of service – they were to become a 'sovereignty (not a self-contained kingdom) of priests' (Ex. 19:6), so that through Israel salvation might be mediated to the world as a whole.
>
> (Payne, 1962:190)

Hosea's message that all nations will be incorporated into the kingdom of God as sons of God is echoed in Romans 9:24-26; Obadiah viewed the kingdom of God as extending beyond the nation of Israel and their territory (Mic. 4:1-4; cf Isa. 2:2-4; 11:10). Jonah was sent to the Assyrians by God to preach and the Ninevites repented (Jonah 1:17; 3:10; 4:11). When Israel breached the covenant and failed to meet the ideal that God had for them, the same promise was transferred to the new Israel the church.

> In the Church, Israel's purpose of universalism lies fulfilled. The Church, is in all the world, but it is not of the world (John 17:14-16). Christians are both the elect remnant out of the world (I Pet. 2:8,9) and yet also the sovereignty of priests who are to mediate salvation to the world (Rev. 1:6) and who are some day to reign in glory over it (2:26;5:10). We are elect, both to privilege and to responsibility.

> (Payne ,1944:194)

2.3.7.9 Summary

The stated purpose of this chapter was to forge a theology of the priesthood of believers from the perspective of biblical theology. The approach that this chapter adopted was based on principles and particular thematic strands that have been identified by scholars who in my view have developed their theology from the perspective of the Free Church heritage. It seems from the foregoing examination of the biblical texts and the theological implications thereof, that the covenant motif necessarily engenders the priesthood of believers. This is evident from the passages that have been examined. This sampling though not exhaustive covered a wide spectrum of genre and yielded the same results. Therefore the biblical concept of the 'kingdom priests' seems to be linked to the priesthood of believers based on the arguments that emanate from the exegesis of selected relevant passages. Contrary to what Elliot and other scholars have found this

chapter has demonstrated that there is resonance between the biblical idea of 'kingdom priests' and the theological construct of the priesthood of believers. The next chapter will explore the meaning of these findings in the ecclesiology that stems from a Free Church heritage. .

2.4   The Kingdom of Priests In NT Times: 1 Peter 2:9

The clause used in I Peter 2:9 is βασίλειον ἱεράτευμα which literally means 'a royal priesthood'. The clause is composed of an adjective and a noun.

The church is not to be regarded as a political institution but as a βασίλειον ἱεράτευμα, the 'royal priesthood' (Goppelt, 1978:149). This 'royal priesthood' offers spiritual sacrifices; this status also includes Gentiles who now also have access and their 'priestly access is spiritual, not merely ceremonial' (Clowney, 1988: 88, 90). Every member is a priest because of the privilege of direct access to God without a human mediator. 'Every ecclesiastical structure that places a human representative between the individual believer and God has forgotten the basic New Testament teaching of the priesthood of believers (Mounce, 1982:28). The emphasis is corporate, it does not relate to individual more than it relates to the church corporately as a royal priesthood (Davids, 1990:91). This also means that they 'make up a new nation, a nationality that supersedes any other ethnic identity. They are a people belonging to God' (Johnston, 1995:67). The royal priesthood also means 'a more excellent way, because you are each consecrated in Christ to be both the associates of His kingdom, and partakers of His priesthood' (Calvin, 1963:266). The royal priesthood has a responsibility to go out to the world and witness (Hiebert, 1992:143). Some scholars view the royal priesthood as a honorific title that affords God's

Church the same privileges that Israel had (Kelly, 1969:98). The dignity of every believer is couched in the combination of the clause 'royal priesthood' which 'teaches us the worth and excellency of that holy function…' (Leighton, 1972:155). The status of royal priesthood 'summons Christians to regard their baptism as bringing them in as living stones to build up the spiritual temple (Leaney, 1967:32). This status does not come by natural birth as it was in the Old Testament priesthood. 'We are priests, chosen of God, born into the priesthood by regeneration' (Criswell, 1976:60). Since we are God's building whose foundation is Christ our high priest, we are also priests with Him. 'Therefore I would be glad to find this word 'priests' becoming as common as it is for us to be called Christians. For it is alone thing, priest, baptized, Christian…So we conclude that we are all kings…Priests and kings are all spiritual names as Christians, saints, the Church' (Luther, 1982:101).

2.4.1   I Peter 2:9 in Its Literary Context

I Peter chapter 1, discusses the salvation that God provides through Jesus Christ. Chapter 2 focuses on the status of the Christians in Christ. In chapter 2, Peter lays emphasis on the fact that God chose and honoured Christ as a cornerstone of his temple. In the same vein he demonstrates "the holy and honoured place that Christians have, united to the Lord" (Clowney, 1988:86). This passage uses the Old Testament intertextually to show the consequences of rebellion and rejection of Christ. Thus I Peter 2:6-8 allude to (Isa 28:16; Ps 117:22; Isa 8:14) all relating to the stone. On the other hand verses 9-10 echo (Exod 19:5-6; Isa 43:20-21; 42:6-9; 63:7-9; Hos 1:6,9; 2:23) the titles given to Israel in the Old Testament are now appropriated to the new community of believers in Christ (Elliot,

2000:407, 408). Those "who rejected Christ are all unbelievers, both Jews and Gentiles" (Johnston, 1995, 65). Those who obeyed and kept the covenant are called the 'royal priesthood' (I Pet 2:9).

2.4.2 An Intertextual View of the Priesthood of Believers

Having looked at the Old Testament and the New Testament passage bearing the phrase alluding to the priesthood of believers, it is appropriate to give consideration to the Biblical view as a whole in brief. For Moulder (1986:965) "the words of God to Israel in Ex. 19:6, 'you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation,' are applied to the Church in the NT (I Pet.2:5,9; Rev. 1:6; 5:10, 20:6; cf. Isa. 61:6)." Through intertextuality[48] the New Testament writers have appropriated the Old Testament material to develop the concept of the priesthood of believers. The concept of the priesthood of believers as it is found in the New Testament therefore can be "traced back into Judaism and Old Testament times" (Moulder, 1986:965).

2.4.3 Challenges of Interpretation

The use of the Biblical texts as demonstrated above by commentators has been assumed to be Biblically and exegetically sound. However recently there are scholars who have challenged this position.

Fee observes that "two writers in the NT independently reflect on the Church as the true 'kingdom and priests' and 'holy nation' of Exodus 19:6 (I Pet 2:5, 9; Rev 1:6; 5:10; 20:6)" (Fee, 1976:852). It is not clear what Fee means by an independent reflection. He

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[48] "A passage's intertextual context includes any quotations, allusions, or echoes it may contain to other biblical passages. Quotations are explicit references to other texts; allusions and echoes are implicit" (Broyles, 2001:167)

further observes that these New Testament passages have been "used to argue for the general priesthood of believers over against any kind of episcopacy" (Fee, 1975:852). By this, Fee points to the Biblical references, as a foundation for the teaching of the priesthood of believers. Fee does not give a clear account of the proponents of the priesthood of believers who teach this doctrine in opposition to episcopacy. He elaborates further that "what is intended by such argument is that the Church by its corporate relationship to Christ, by its being 'in Christ', is 'a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ'" (Fee, 1975:852). According to Fee the conclusion reached by the advocates of this view is that "the individual shares in Christ's prerogative as high priest and has direct access to God through Him" (Fee, 1975:582). Fee reaches a conclusion after examining the context that neither I Peter 2:5, 9 nor Revelation 1:6; 5:10; 20:6 have anything to do with the idea of access to God. He argues further that "in the language of the NT itself there would seem to be little to support either a priesthood among the ministry or a general priesthood of believers. Rather the whole Church has been brought to God through the high priestly ministry of Christ; and the 'royal priesthood' of the Church is the high privilege of mediating Christ to the world" (Fee, 1975:852). This therefore calls for a closer examination of the context in order to determine the meaning of the priesthood of believers in these passages.

In an extensive work on I Peter, Elliot examines verses 5 and 9, in the light of how these verses have been interpreted. Noting that these verses have been used to provide the biblical basis for a priesthood of believers, he dismisses this interpretation on the basis that it is "exegetically unwarranted" (Elliot, 2000:453). He also observes that "It has long been recognized that the Reformation doctrine of the priesthood of believers was a

product of the ecclesiastical polemics of the sixteenth century and an attempt to affirm the priestly character of all the baptized over against the "papist" position that the status and responsibilities of priesthood were reserved exclusively to ordained clergy" (Elliot, 2000:453). Elliot concludes that those who seek biblical support for the "doctrine of Christian ministry will have to seek biblical support in texts other than I Peter 2:4-10…The point of this comment is only to emphasize that I Pet 2:4-10 is not directly relevant to these concerns" (Elliot, 2000:454, 455).

So far the positions of the Free Churches from commentary documents have been examined; this study has also taken a bird's eye view of other scholar's views on the priesthood of believers. For a biblical understanding, a closer look at the biblical text has been given and its literary context. Most scholars seem to support the biblical reference of I Peter 2:5, 9 for the priesthood of believers as noted earlier in this chapter.[49] Elliot's objections against I Peter 2:4-10 as a biblical basis for the priesthood of believers deserve to be given attention. His claims may be summarized as follows:

(1) Election rather than priesthood is the central focus of I Peter 2:4-10.

(2) The OT texts used in I Peter point to the elect and covenantal people of God, previously applying to Israel now to the end time people of God.

(3) The term *hierateuma* (priesthood) means priestly community, it cannot apply to individuals but to the believing community.

(4) The appearance of *hierateuma* in I Peter 2:5,9 is in the context of the covenant as portrayed in Exodus 19:6, this is used by the author of I Peter to affirm the election and holiness of the household of faith.

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[49] Mounce, 1982:28; Criswell, 1976:60; Hiebert, 1984:143; Davids, 1990: 92; Luther, 1982:99-103; Calvin, 1963: 265,266.

(5) Baptism, or baptismal ordination or consecration to priesthood is not mentioned in I Peter 2:4-10.

(6) No indication of the believer's share in Christ's priesthood. Christ is identified metaphorically as a priest (Heb 7:15, 21; 8:4; 10:21) and Christians are denoted as priests as well (Rev 1:6; 5:10; 20:6).

(7) Although this text indeed embraced the dignity and honour of the Christian community before God. Luther singled out the term hierateuma, applied it inaccurately to individual believers and exaggerated its role and significance within its context.

Elliot argues as though there is no harmony between the concept of Christian vocation and priesthood. Election is an act of God and priesthood is the title that is given to the elect. On the question of baptism, Johnson argues that "baptism lies at the heart of the message of I Peter. Baptism provides the point of transition from the old life into the new one. Confidence and assurance in God, which in turn leads to living a life in imitation of Christ" (Johnson, 1999:485) While baptism is not discussed in Chapter 2 but in the following chapter, it is not completely estranged to the context of chapter 2. After all the chapters and verses are a latter addition, these subjects (election and baptism) are in the same literary context. Elliot's objection on individualistic application by Luther does not seem to hold substance. Luther's comment on the passage under study is as follows: "For it is certainly clear and plain enough that he speaks to the whole congregation, to all Christians in that he says: Ye are a chosen generation and a holy people" (Luther, 1982:100). It is strange that Elliot is willing to accept the inter-textual use of Exodus 19:6 in I Peter and Revelation, and further goes to the extent of acknowledging that Revelation

1:6; 5:10; 20:6 denote Christians as priests, but not I Peter. Both I Peter and Revelation use the same reference, namely Exodus 19:6. The researcher agrees with Elliot on the point of avoiding using I Peter 2:4-10 as a proof text for the priesthood of believers, but to deny that this teaching finds basis on I Peter 2:5, 9 as well imposes limits to the text that are not there. The following section deals with the theology of the passage under study. This gives a wider view of the interpretation of the text.

2.4.4   The Theology of the Priesthood of Believers in I Peter

The focus of this section will be on I Peter, as it may be noted that there are some scholars, among them Elliot who takes the position the I Peter 2:4-10 may not be the basis for the priesthood of believers. His understanding of the *pericope* is that it is about election.   We will first establish the general view of Petrine theology. Ryrie (1959:284), describes it as "fundamentally Christological," he claims that "this exhibits itself in two principal ways. It is didactically and experientially Christological." It appears that the corporate life of Christians ranks very high in Petrine theology, but he never uses the word church throughout the two epistles.[50] Peter has the Church as a prominent feature of his theology even though the word *ekklesia* does not appear in the epistles he wrote. He views the church as "the true Israel" (Ladd, 1974:599). A further description of the Church is given from the perspective of Petrine theology.

"Israel's place has been taken by the church who are 'a chosen race a royal priesthood a holy nation' (2:9). They constitute the true temple of God as living stones being built into a spiritual house (2:5). They are also a holy priesthood, replacing the Old Testament priesthood who minister to God by offering "spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God" (2:5)"

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[50] see (Ryrie, 1959: 284)

(Ladd, 1974:599)[51] Schelkle (1978:103) drives the point home and states that "the church is the spiritual house, built on Christ the living and precious key stone chosen by God (I Peter 2:4-7).

McDonald (1972: 278), emphasizes the link between the Old Testament and the New Testament, and states:

Throughout his letter Peter makes use of the Old Testament both as pattern and as proof. He sees Christ as fulfilling the prophetic hope of Israel. He has several allusions to Old Testament forms of expressions; Christ is the lamb without blemish; believers are called to holiness, for it is declared that God is holy. It is important therfore to also see how Christ relates to the royal priesthood, the following section addresses that subject.

2.4.5   Christ and the Royal Priesthood in I Peter 2: 9

The Petrine Christological impetus comes through in verse 4 introducing Christ as the 'living stone' (I Pet 2:4). Verse 5 applies the same metaphor to the believers as well. This links the believers with Christ in a real way. The notion of Christ as a stone carries with it the idea as conveyed in verse 4 of Christ as a rejected stone. This has a rich Old Testament background.[52] Elliot sums up this Christological connection with the believers:

"On the whole, v 4 forms with v 5 a couplet linking the divine election and honor conferred upon Jesus (v4) with that conferred upon the believers (v 5) and introducing terminology and themes derived from OT material cited in 6-8 and 9-10" (Elliot 2000:

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[51] See also (Morris, 1986: 316).
[52] "Psalm 117 [118]:22, *is* cited in I Peter 2:7 cd. This psalm verse formed part of a complex of OT "stone" passages cited in v 6 (Isa 28:16), v.7 cd and v. 8a (Isa 8:14). In Israelite tradition prior to I Peter, at least one of these texts (Is 28:16) had already been interpreted messianically" (Elliot, 2000:409).

411, 412). The same thought is expressed by Arichea and Nida in a more emphatic way: The believers "share in the very nature of Christ himself. 'Living' here cannot mean 'life-giving' as in verse 4, but simply 'alive', which is a further reference to the believers' new life in Christ and their participation in his suffering and exaltation. It may further imply that the believers should be alive in their relationships…"(Arichea and Nida, 1980:56). This passage is rich with imagery that points to the Christological relationship. Another important observation that Elliot makes that is particularly significant for this study is that "In v 5 *oikos* is juxtaposed to *hierateuma*, a term derived from the covenant fomula of Exod 19:5-6, cited in v 9. Thus *oikos* here appears to be a Petrine equivalent for *basileion* juxtaposed with *hierateuma* in v 9" (Elliot, 2000:416). Arichea and Nida (1980:57), identify the temple as the church and their claim is that this idea logically leads to the description of the believers as holy priests. "Whereas spiritual temple defines the nature of the church, 'holy priesthood' defines its vocation or task…That the church is described in such fashion indicates a very unique feature of the Christian community, in which there are no special priests, but the whole community itself functions as a priestly body."

In a cultic context the function of a priesthood is to offer sacrifices. According to Michaels "the phrase 'spiritual sacrifices' draws to a focus two preceding expressions, 'spiritual house' and 'holy priesthood'v.5 (Michaels, 1988:101). Michaels also makes an intertextual connection between Leviticus 19:2 and 1 Peter 1:15-16, and relates this holiness to daily conduct. (Michaels, 1988:101). Elaborating on the word *hierateuma* in 1 Peter 2:5, 9 Elliot (2000:419), observes that "its absence in secular Greek and its occurrence elsewhere only in LXX Exodus 19:6…decisively indicates its derivation from

Exodus 19:6. Exodus 19:5-6 comprises part of the ancient formulation of the covenant established by God with the house of Jacob on Mt. Sinai (Exod 19:3-8). Elliot's argument on this point is very critical, this seems to be a junction where scholars make choices to take a direction within the options that they see presented by the text and theological study. Elliot's view is that "The history of the subsequent references to this covenantal formulation of Exod 19:5-6 prior to I Peter indicates that this text was consistently employed to affirm not aspects of Israel's kingship or priesthood in particular but Israel's collective identity as the elect and holy people of God the king" (Elliot, 2000:419). The Hebrew word תִּהְיוּ in Exodus 19:6 carries a sense of being, as a verb following a pronoun אַתֶּם which is a predicate of the sentence and the phrase a kingdom of priests מַמְלֶכֶת כֹּהֲנִים stands as the direct object in construct form. Grammatically it does not seem that there is any indication of election directly from the text. The sentence seems to refer to a status that is promised conditionally to Israel.[53] Setting aside, consecrating Israel as a priesthood in a special sense seems to fit the context here. While the idea of election may be explicit in 1 Peter and more implicit in Exodus 19, the juxtaposition of the two concepts of priesthood and election does not seem to reveal the incompatibility that Elliot seeks to prove. The fact that in 1 Peter the sacrifices are mentioned signifies a new status and function through Jesus Christ (v. 5) no longer through sacrifices because the people failed. It was not God's covenant that failed it was the people that failed. Michaels emphasizes the metaphoric aspect of the sacrifices and finds such application even to the Old Testament. He states "even in the OT the metaphor of sacrifice was used (in contrast to literal sacrifice) for prayer, thanksgiving, or a repentant heart (e.g., Ps.

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[53] See Exodus 19:5.

50:13-14,23; 51:17; 141:2)", and he concludes that "in 1 Peter, as in Hebrews, the 'spiritual sacrifices' are first of all something offered up to God as worship and second, a pattern of social conduct" (101). In his observation of the contrast between the literal sacrifices and the metaphoric sacrifices Michaels seems to miss the importance of the covenant element which is embedded within the Old Testament understanding of sacrifice. He does not bring out the fact that this was a critique of the sacrifices as they were offered in a context of a breached covenant. Grasping these elements makes a difference in how one sees the transition that Peter describes between Israel and the Church. The researcher concurs with the explanation of Arichea and Nida who argue:

> The idea of the church as the temple naturally leads to the description of the believers as holy priests (literally 'a holy priesthood'). Whereas spiritual temple defines the nature of the church, 'holy priesthood' defines its vocation or task. 'Holy priesthood' can be taken either as a reference to the exercise of priestly functions, or collectively, that is, 'body of priests'. A literal translation would lean towards the first of these two possibilities of the meaning by putting equal weight on function (serve) and the collective meaning (a body of priests). That the church is described in such a fashion indicates a very unique feature of the Christian community, in which there are no special priests, but the

> whole community itself functions as a priestly body.

> (Arichea and Nida, 1980:59)

The reason for the support of this position in this study is that it preserves the Old Testament contextual background to 1 Peter and this enriches the theological application based on the text. It is this background that informs the use of cultic language in 1 Peter such as priesthood and sacrifices. The Christological interpretation flows out of a thorough explication of the Old and New Testament contexts especially how the New

Testament uses the Old. The allusions are clear pointers to this rich Old Testament background and its application to the spiritual Israel, the Church. The following section deals with how the priesthood of believers has been applied from Scripture.

2.5 Summary

The doctrine of the priesthood of believers in section 3.2 was traced within its biblical context. It was found that with reference to Exodus19, this doctrine stems from a covenantal context. The people were under a theocratic government in which God was in charge of the governance of the nation, The idea of election in 1 Peter 2 alludes to the idea of the covenant in Exodus19:6. It seems that Exodus19:6 focuses on, who the people are in this covenant relationship. Whereas in 1 Peter 2:9 they are identified in terms of the purpose of their election: namely to "proclaim." The theme of the gathering of the nations, also comes after they are declared as a kingdom of priests. It has reference to the covenant people and their responsibility to be a light to the nations (Is 42:6). It is the nations who come to "the mount of Jehovah" (Micah 4:2). The idea of proclamation in 1 Peter 2:9 suggests reaching out to the nations (Matt 28:19). The covenant theme in Exodus19:6 and 1 Peter 2:9 blends in with their mission to the nations as a kingdom of priests or a royal priesthood.

2.6 Priesthood of Believers: Interpretation By Free Churches

As it was noted in the previous sections, the teaching of the priesthood of believers is traced from the Bible. At this point it is important to see how the English Free Church heritage in general has defined and understood the priesthood of believers. At this point it

is important to give consideration to the Free Church perspective. There seems to have been a developing interest in emphasizing the priesthood of believers during the middle of the twentieth century. T.W. Manson[54] was invited by the Free Church Federal Council at their annual congress in Liverpool on the 22nd March 1956 to give the John Scott Lidgett (1854-1953)[55] Memorial Lecture. In the following year 12 July 1957 the Methodist Church organized a conference in honour of A.S. Peake (1865-1929)[56] and invited Manson to give a lecture in commemoration of yet, another Free Churchman. These lectures were combined and published in 1958. The significance of this work is in the fact that two years later Eastwood published his first volume on the priesthood of believers. The relevance of Manson's work for this research and this chapter in particular is that he deals with the priesthood of believers from a different angle within the Free Church tradition. The stated subject of the lectures is 'some aspects of the ministry of Jesus and the task of his Church' (Manson, 1958:14). Firstly Manson argues that there is a tension between the Kingdom of God and the kingdoms of this world. He concludes that "The Church can never be the hand maid of any political party or any political movement…It is not the business of the Church to be one of the Kingdoms of this world" (Manson, 1958:25). According to this view the Church cannot and should not be involved in political parties or movements. This suggests a clear separation of Church and State. Manson's argument is based on the ministry of Jesus where He demonstrated apathy towards political issues of His day (Manson, 1958:24). Therefore given the above argument the Free Church tradition will not find a political agenda in the priesthood of

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[54] A Professor of Biblical criticism and exegesis in the University of Manchester during the mid-twentieth century.

[55] "One of the greatest Free Churchmen" (Manson, 1958:13).

[56] "whose fine biblical scholarship brought distinction to Hartley College and to the Theological Faculty of the University of Manchester" (Ibid).

believers stemming from the texts explicated in the foregoing sections[57]. Manson observes that "there is an urgent need for careful study of the problems, and that such a study ought to be carried out by Free Church scholars concerned to discover what is the characteristic Free Church doctrine of the ministry…and how that doctrine is related to the doctrine of the priesthood of believers"[58] (Manson, 1958:40). The second dimension that Manson adds to the study of the meaning of priesthood of believers is the priesthood of Christ. He states, "it seems to me that two things must be maintained: the New Testament doctrine of high-priesthood of Christ and the New Testament doctrine of the priesthood of believers" (Manson, 1958:68). In his conclusion Manson emphasizes the high-priestly ministry of Jesus Christ by stating that "it should be an essential part of Free Church principles to maintain the high-priestly along with the crown rights of the Redeemer" (Manson, 1958:70). The priesthood of believers is placed under the high-priestly ministry of Christ and "this means that they are permitted and enabled to share in the continuing high-priestly work of Christ by offering themselves in love and obedience to God and in love and service of men" (Manson, 1958:70). There is room for ministers in the Free Church ecclesiology "who neither arrogate to themselves the high-priestly rights of the Redeemer, nor lord it over the faithful who share in the priesthood of believers, but are content to be used by Christ…apart from the eternal high-priesthood of Christ, no ministry is essential to the Church in the sense that the Church could not exist without it" (Manson, 1958:71,2). The sentiments expressed by Manson's lectures express

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[57] Ex. 19:6 and I Pet. 2:9

[58] Bishop Kirk to whose honor Manson writes, "described the priesthood of all believers as the decisive formular of all non-episcopal Christendom. Certainly it has been one of the great rallying-cries of Free Churchmanship. But it may be suspected that some who use it most often and most emphatically mean by it something more like 'the priesthood of no believer whatsoever' or 'the non-priesthood of all believers'"(Manson, 1958:40).

the views of the Free Church Federal Council, the Methodist Church and its outstanding leaders who were being honoured. Following Manson's lectures two years later we have a two-volume publication by Eastwood on the priesthood of believers in 1960 and 1963 respectively. These volumes focused on the history of the priesthood of believers. In the same year Eastwood's book came out in 1960, Faley a Roman Catholic theologian published a book entitled *The Kingdom of Priests.* This brief but comprehensive work has its focus on the Biblical text and its historical background. The book focuses only on Exodus 19:6. The author concludes that "the original phrase 'kingdom of priests' was understood as the ruling power of the sacerdotal class" (Faley, 1960:93).[59]

Having examined the biblical approach to the teaching of the priesthood of believers, it is important to consider this as foundational to the understanding of what the priesthood of believers means. Whatever theology or ecclesiology that the Church adopts should be tested against this standard. From the sixteenth century the principle of interpreting Scripture among the reformers has been *sola Scriptura.*[60]   Hasel contends that "the clarity of Scripture assumes the priesthood of believers rather than restricting the interpretation of Scripture to a select few, the clerical priesthood, or the 'community' of trained scholars" (Hasel, 2006:39). This leads us to other approaches that were referred to in the introductory section of this research: the political, hermeneutical, church political and pragmatic.

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[59] Another book was published in 1969 by the Pontifical Biblical Institute under the title *A History of Old Testament Priesthood.* This well documented work traces the history of the concept of priesthood in throughout the Old Testament and makes a comparison with the Ancient Near Eastern view of Priesthood. More recent publications by the Roman Catholic scholars include Vanhoye's *Old Testament Priests and the New Priest,* published in 1980. In this work the author examines both the Old and New Testament texts with a focus on Christs priestly ministry. Grashake's book appeared in 1989 with the title *The Meaning of Christian Priesthood.* His thrust is more on the theology and practice of priesthood.

[60] This means that "Scripture alone is the ruling norm...to understand *sola scriptura,* in this sense, does not exclude the reality of cultural influences or the reality of religious experience. To maintain that scripture interprets scripture does not negate the insight from other fields of study" (Hasel, 2006: 36).

2.6.1   A Methodist Perspective

The definition and understanding of the meaning of the priesthood of believers for the Methodists, will be drawn from *The Wesleyan Bible Commentary,* this six-volume commentary is within the tradition of John Wesley and Methodism. "A group of scholars in the Wesleyan tradition responded to what they believed to be the movings of God's Spirit in the religious climate of today to produce a set of commentaries within the Wesleyan theological frame of reference" (Carter, 1967:v). The commentary claims to be "interdenominational in representation, non-sectarian, and non-polemical" (Carter, 1967: v).

Further this set of commentaries seeks "to maintain both the spiritual insight and sound biblical scholarship of John Wesley and Adam Clarke, but to express these characteristics in the context of contemporary thought and life" (Carter, 1967:v). This background then authenticates this commentary as representative of the Wesleyan - Methodist tradition. On 1 Peter 2:9, it expresses a continuity and discontinuity between Israel and the Church. "The Church replaces and fulfils the role of old Israel. He [Peter] calls Christians an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of God's own possession. These terms are reminiscent of God's words to Moses on the mount, the words about Israel as recorded in Exodus 19:5-6" (Carter, 1967:258, 259). The difference between Israel and the Church is expressed as follows, "however the Church differs from Israel, in that it transcends all racial and political boundaries" (Carter, 1967:259). The essence of this priesthood and what it means from the Methodist perspective is expressed in this manner: "As priests, Christians have access to God and are responsible for bringing others to God.

For sacrifices they offer their words of praise, works of love, and themselves to God in divine worship. As God created man for fellowship and communion, His desires are fulfilled in the redeemed and holy community which is a people for God's own possession…Everybody is somebody in God's kingdom. No Christian can be ordinary, for every Christian is a man of God" (Carter, 1967:259). This sums up the commentary definition of the priesthood of believers. It seems to express two main ideas, the first being that every believer has free access to God for the forgiveness of sins. The second aspect seems to express the status and role of every individual Christian. The emphasis on the fact that there is no common Christian, all are persons of God, nullifies any distinctions according to status within the church and clarifies the basic role of every Christian. This in brief is the biblical meaning of the priesthood of believers as understood and expressed by the Methodists. We now turn to the Baptist view.

2.6.2   A Baptist Perspective

A legitimate source for a general understanding of the meaning of the priesthood of believers as it is taught and practiced by the Baptist Church is the *Faith, Life, and Witness* document. These are papers that emanate from the *Study and Research Division of the Baptist World Alliance -1986-1990.* "This volume is a collection of selected study papers of the six commissions: Baptist Heritage, Baptist Doctrine and Inter-church Cooperation, Christian Ethics, Human Rights, Ministry of the Laity, and Pastoral Leadership"(Brackney, 1990:viii). For the purposes of this research at this point our interest is on the perspective of the Baptist church and the meaning of the priesthood of

believers from a biblical point of view to begin with. This understanding is summed up in

the paper on *Commission on Ministry of Laity* as follows:

> If we are to get at the true heart of a theology of ministry in a New Testament form, we cannot do it simply by gathering the New Testament data about the particular shapes which ministry assumed in the earliest churches. We shall make more progress, I believe, if we turn instead to the fundamental theological principles which are to be found at certain key points in the New Testament's witness, one example being the concept of "the priesthood of all believers" which occurs in two important texts (I Pet. 2:9; Rev. 1:5-6). The clear implications that all Christians are 'ministers' before God on behalf of others, or that all believers are called to be the means (the media) by which others are blessed and brought into touch with Christ (the traditional role of priests), could be drawn out in ways full of challenge and instructive import for the church today.
>
> (Peck, 1990:320)

Brief, though this exposition may be, it serves the purpose of a definition of the

meaning of the priesthood of believers from a Baptist perspective. This leads us

to the Seventh-day Adventist understanding.

2.6.3   A Seventh-day Adventist Perspective

About 49 Seventh-day Adventist scholars are acknowledged in the Seventh-day

Adventist Bible Commentary as having contributed directly towards putting it

together. This gives a fairly representative view of the understanding and

generally acceptable interpretation of a number of Bible passages by Seventh-

day Adventists.   The views of the Seventh-day Adventists on defining the

priesthood of believers in Biblical terms are as follows:

"As priests Christians are to offer to God the spiritual sacrifices mentioned in I

Peter 2:5; they also offer themselves as living sacrifices (Rom. 12:1), a body of

believers completely dedicated to God. They need no human priest serving as mediator between them and God, for there is but one Mediator between God and man, Jesus Christ (Heb. 7:17, 24-28)" (Nichol, 1957:562)

2.7   Conclusion

The foregoing reflections from the different churches mainly from the English Free Church heritage have a number of common elements:

(a) They all express the meaning of the priesthood as referring to all believers annihilating boundaries of any kind.

(b) They all point to the fact that each believer is able to present themselves before God without a human priest.

(c) The Christian responsibility to bring others to God is viewed as flowing from the understanding of the priesthood of all believers.

(d) The Baptist statement is very emphatic that all believers are ministers.

The Roman Catholic scholars on the other hand see I Peter 2:9 and all other texts relevant to its meaning as referring to the Church. "The titles of Israel in the OT are applied to the Church, and also Israel's role of bearing witness to the mighty works of God (Exodus19:5-6; Is 43:20-21)" (Fuller, 1969:1249).[61] The change in terminology between these traditions is very significant from a simple look at the semantics.

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[61] The priesthood of all believers has most often been viewed from the Protestant Reformation perspective. As this study has shown in chapter 2 that there was a move toward a Reformation from the Roman Catholic Church. This is evident in the teaching of the priesthood of all believers. The Roman Catholic Church has taken strides in the biblical understanding of priesthood, only the major studies will be highlighted as this study unfolds.

Free church traditions outside of England also depart from the Roman Catholic emphasis and may be in harmony with the English Free Churches for example a Reformed Church scholar has observed: "The doctrine (based on I Peter 2:9-10; Rev. 1:6; 5:10) that the whole people of God of the new covenant is a priesthood because it is in, with, and through Jesus Christ, the true and only priest (Heb. 3:1). This is a royal and holy priesthood with a corporate vocation. The doctrine has often been explained in popular teaching as pointing to the right of every individual believer to act in a priestly way – to pray to God for self and others and to teach God's ways to others" (Toon, 1992:303). Having looked at how the term is interpreted by commentators from the English Free Churches and the Seventh-day Adventist Church and Free Churches from the Free church tradition originating outside of England and the Catholic Church, consideration will be given at this point to the biblical text itself.

This chapter has clearly demonstrated that there are many facets attached to the meaning of the priesthood of believers. Four approaches were examined from which the meaning of the priesthood of believers has been viewed. The hermeneutical difficulties were also highlighted, with different presuppositions it may be difficult to come to the same view on the priesthood of believers. An attempt was made to look at the text itself both Old and New Testament passages. Bible commentaries from different traditions of interpretations were examined. From the study of the selected texts this study has made the following findings: From the exegetical study Exodus 19:6 it has been found that the kingdom of priests connotes a collective phrase within a ritual and covenantal context to define the role of Israel among the nations. It has also been found that the same

covenantal theme is expressed in the study of I Peter 2:9. This covenantal theme undergirds whatever else is said about the role of the priests both in Exodus and in I Peter.

This study has also highlighted the Free Church understanding of the priesthood of believers in the following points:

(1) The priesthood of believers annihilates all boundaries between the people of God.

(2) As priests Christians have access to God without a human priest

(3) As priests they have a responsibility to bring others to God

(4) All Christians are ministers and a means of blessing to the world

(5) The priesthood of believers is placed under the high-priestly ministry of Christ.

These findings have set the Seventh-day Adventist Church in very close affinity with the English Free Church heritage and its affiliates, particularly the Methodist and the Baptist Churches. It may also be observed that while there are different traditions based on the complex matrix of issues ranging from presuppositions, confessional, creedal, to more complex issues like hermeneutical choices, there is still a thread that binds all the Reformation movements together and that is the quest to be true to Scripture. This quest has caused the Seventh-day Adventist Church to cut across these traditional boundaries in search for what it means to be a covenant people of God, a royal priesthood for the end time. This crossing of boundaries or the disregard thereof has manifested itself in many forms.[62] By not affiliating formally with any tradition the Seventh-day Adventist Church has maintained its identity as part of the end time covenant people of God, and has lost its

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[62] As a case in point, the ecumenical movement is one of the prominent forms that has bound churches together.

identity among the various traditions that are present today.[63]   Having explored the

meaning of the priesthood of believers from the Scriptures within the literary context, and

having examined the teaching of the Free Churches within the milieu of the Reformation

with its different traditions, we now turn to the priesthood of believers in history.

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[63] In his article on the 'Church' Dederen butresses this view "Like the Anabaptists Seventh-day Adventists have stood traditionally equidistant from magisterial Protestantism (Lutheran, Reformed, Anglican) and Roman Catholicism. They have promoted the authority of Scripture, believer's baptism, separation of church and state, religious liberty, a deep concern for the Great Commission, and the conviction that the church is built as close as possible to the pattern of the NT, transcends national boundaries and local cultures. For them the church, whatever else it might be, is a community of baptized believers, rooted in Scripture and unrestricted in their missionary concern by territorial limitations" (Dederen 2000:574). This does not reflect Dederen's view point but the sentiments of the Annual Council of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists that met in Nairobi Kenya in 1988 with Seventh-day Adventist Church delegates from around the world, as a result of which a volume on Seventh-day Adventist Theology was commissioned and eventually published in 2000.

CHAPTER 3

PRIESTHOOD OF BELIEVERS IN HISTORY

3.1   Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to trace the historical roots of the teaching of the priesthood of believers for the Free Churches and in particular the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The starting point will be the Reformation since the emphasis of this doctrine started at that point in history; however a brief overview of the teaching of the priesthood of believers in the Bible up to the Reformation will be given. Realizing that the history of the pre-Reformation period and Continental Reformations each could be a study on its own, there will not be a strong focus on those aspects for the purposes of this research. The main focus will be on the English Reformation from which the historical roots of the Free Churches under study will be drawn. This chapter proposes to also establish whether the Seventh-day Adventist Church can be classified historically as a Free Church. Before the chronological study of the priesthood of believers is given this introduction is extended by a section on the background literature to guide the reader to further study. There is also an important background on the English Free church that is given.

3.1.1   Important Background Literature

This section introduces some important figures and background literature. Acknowledging that this doctrine did not arise in isolation is important. There were struggles with not only doctrinal issues but also socio-political issues. It is therefore necessary to review this background data with reference to the priesthood of believers on the basis of relevant literature before a chronological study is done.

3.1.1.1 Primary Sources

Some primary sources that deal with the priesthood of believers will be listed and reviewed briefly in this section of the study. The works of Martin Luther, John Calvin, James Arminius[64], and John Wesley are considered important background sources for this study. Some of the relevant background writings of the English Reformation will also be noted. It is only recently that there has been discontent in just focusing on secondary resources for the English Reformation. The most recent published work that embodies documents and writings of a primary nature is now available. It covers the period from about 1526 to the end of the seventeenth century and is entitled *Documents of the English Reformation* edited by Gerald Bray and published in 1994.

The focus of this comprehensive work is on the activities of the crown in England, as it is believed by most historians that the English Reformation was more the act of the crown.[65]

3.1.1.2 Secondary Sources

Since the comprehensive and standard work of Eastwood came out in 1960 and 1963, a number of works have been published on the priesthood of believers with no particular focus on the Free Church and the Seventh-day Adventist Church. In 1960 Eastwood

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[64] Arminius' name has many variations, in the introductory section of his works an explanation is given on how his name evolved. "Arminius was named Jacob, which was the given name of both his grandfathers. Following the patronymic system, his name was Jacob Harmenszoon. The abbreviated spelling, Harmensz., is the modern common usage... As a university student Arminius Latinized his name, first to Jacobus Hermannws, then to Jacobus Arminius, the name of the early Germanic chieftain who resisted the Romans in the first century. His given name has been commonly translated as James (The Works of Arminius, Vol 1, 1996: viii, ix).

[65] Alister McGrath, (1999:250), states "the evidence strongly points to the personal influence of Henry VIII having been of fundamental imporatance to the origins and subsequent direction of the English Reformation"

published *The Priesthood of believers – An examination of the Doctrine from the Reformation to the Present Day.* Another book was published by Eastwood in 1963, *The Royal Priesthood of the Faithful – An investigation of the Doctrine from Biblical times to the Reformation.* In the latter publication, having surveyed the historical development of the doctrine Eastwood (1963:225) concludes: "it has not meant in history what it has often been supposed to mean."[66] Eastwood (1963:225), continues to illustrate his point: "for instance, it has often been supposed that the priesthood of all believers means the right of private judgment, the theological sanction for an egalitarian principle, the so-called 'claims' of the laity, the refutation of the office of Ministry, and that it has been the theological monopoly of a small but radical minority." For Eastwood (1963:225), "the ideas connected with the doctrine of the Priesthood of All Believers in the mainstream of the Reformation are: Justification by Faith, the right of access to the presence of God, religious liberty for all men, the duty of Christian witness and neighbourly service, and the recognition that every man has a divine vocation to fulfil."

The work *the Royal Priesthood* edited by Michael G. Cartwright (1994) is the most recent work that has a focus on the Free Church tradition and the Radical Reformation. This book deals with ecclesiological and ecumenical issues that are relevant to this study.

In his introductory essay Cartwright states:

> It would, therefore, be a mistake to think that the significance of the title of this collection of essays is limited to the distinctive character of the community of faith in relation to the rest of the world. As Yoder has articulated in several contexts, the priestly character of the community of faith arises out of its very mission: the role of the church is not to serve itself but to be the bearer of reconciliation. The royal character of this community can be specified in terms of its participation in God's intentions for the direction of the world. In these senses, then, it is

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[66] Hence the next chapter and the rest of the research focuses on what the doctrine means for the Free Churches and the Seventh-day Adventist Church

appropriate to the vocation of the church 'to serve our God and to rule the world'. Without such a self-understanding, the church will be tempted to presume either that it should make history come out right, or conversely, that it has no rule in God's reign now or in the future.

(Cartwright, 1994:2)

This study of the historical development of the doctrine of the priesthood of believers aims at touching briefly on the different perspectives namely: Magisterial and Radical traditions. In the contemporary scene the Free Churches that are rooted in the Radical Reformation tradition have a different perspective with regards to the state-church relationship from the position of the Magisterial Reformation traditions. This widens the gap in the way ecumenism is perceived by churches from both perspectives. This also has interesting implications for the impact of the priesthood of believers on the ecclesiology and theology of churches from both traditions. The same work of Cartwright referred to above, also centres on the contribution made by Yoder both in the understanding and the implications of the Royal Priesthood both ecclesiologically and ecumenically. Another important name in the Free Church tradition is Littell who is referred to in the same book. In his opening address on The *Historic Free Church Tradition* for the seminar on the Church and the World at Earlham College, Richmond Indiana in June 1964 he highlighted the principles of the Free Church or the Believer's Church as it is later referred to: "voluntary membership, believer's baptism, separation from the world, mission and witness of all members, church discipline, the rejection of the state-church alliance, which in this instance Littell interpreted in terms of the importance of understanding the secularity of government in the wake of the collapse of Christendom" (Cartwright, 1994:27). Littell wrote a book *The Free Church* published in 1957. Recounting the history of the Free Churches within the span of four hundred and twenty

five years, he notes a change of attitude that has occurred towards Free Churches. He states: "Students who have referred to the primary sources are beginning to see that the traditional hostility to the pioneer Free Churchmen was more political and ecclesiastical than anything else" (Littell, 1957:ix, x).

Within the Seventh-day Adventist Church a few authors have written, for example, Edwards (1995) and Olsen (1990). Edwards, writing from a pragmatic perspective, without placing the Seventh-day Adventist Church in its historical Reformation tradition focuses on the priesthood of believers as basis for the fulfilment of the mission of the church. On the other hand Olsen emphasizes the polemical issues and argues for a theological basis for the understanding of priesthood of believers and ecclesiology. This diversity of views may be traced throughout the history of the Seventh-day Adventist ecclesiology. In his doctoral dissertation, *Seventh-day Adventist Organizational Structure*, Oliver demonstrates how on the one hand Jones developed a theological understanding of the nature of the church, while for Daniels "the missionary nature of the church was the theological perspective that informed the need for, and shape of, the structures of the church" (Oliver, 1989:228, 241). The list of sources given above is in no way exhaustive there are many other sources that deal with this subject that will be cited as the study unfolds.

3.1.2   The Historical Roots of the Free Church in England

This section gives a historical background of the Free Church that will be the main focus in this study. It is therefore important to trace its historical background in terms of movements and historical figures that were influential in its development.

A number of those who fled from England during the persecution of Protestants by Mary from about 1553 had contact with Anabaptists, Lutherans and Calvinists. The source of the English Free Churches cannot be sought from one tradition. Their progenitors were many and varied (Payne, 1944:28).

Davies (1952) traces the history of the English Free Churches from the Sixteenth Century, however the formation of the National Free Church Council (NFCC) in 1896 marks the formal establishment of the Free Churches in England. The churches that affiliated with the NFCC were, Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Baptists and Methodists. The identity of these churches in England as Free Churches did not start in the nineteenth century. They were popularly known as the Non-conformists or Dissenters; and also nicknamed as 'Puritans'; this description dates back to the seventeenth century. (Davies, 1952:1)

It is of importance to note how Davies (1952:13, 14) connects the Puritans in England with the sixteenth century Magisterial Reformation:

> The spiritual father of the Puritans was indeed John Calvin, and their spiritual home was Geneva, the city which John Knox had glowingly apostrophized as 'the most perfect school of the Apostles since the time of Christ' If the first stage of the Reformation was the Lutheran rediscovery of the Gospel, the second stage was the rediscovery of churchmanship which was accomplished in the Genevan theocracy. How then, was Calvinistic Puritanism transmitted to England? It was mediated by persons and writings. In the main the persons who were the apostles of Calvinism were exiles, either Continental exiles who found an asylum from persecution in the days of Edward VI, or returning English exiles who had left England during the time of Henry VIII or Queen Mary and returned in more auspicious days.

Davies (1952) further divides the leading churches of the English Free Church tradition into two categories namely the indigenous and the imported English Free Churches.

Of the four leading Free Churches three are indigenous products of the English religious scene; namely, the Congregationalists, the Baptists, and the Methodists. Whilst Presbyterianism in England is a Swiss importation, by way of Scotland, it is significant that the first Presbytery was established at Wandsworth when Elizabeth was Queen. Presbyterianism[67] was sponsored by the conforming Puritans, who complained of the inconsistency of the Queen in allowing refugees from Catholic persecution to celebrate worship according to the Reformed rites in the *ecclesia peregrinorum* in Canterbury, and in permitting the establishments of Presbyterianism in the Channel Islands, whilst she discouraged English Presbyterianism. The head of the English Presbyterians, according to Fuller, was Thomas Cartwright.

 (Davies, 1952: 41)

To further buttress this distinction between the English Free Churches Davies (1952:49, 50) further elaborates:

If the Presbyterians were recruited from the conforming Puritans, the founders of the Congregationalists and Baptists were the non-conforming Puritans, or Separatists. They are distinguished from Presbyterians by their conception of the 'gathered church.' Whilst for Anglicans and Presbyterians in Elizabethan days a Christian nation and a Christian Church were co-extensive terms, for the Separatists and the followers a church consisted only of those gathered by God out of an unbelieving world. An essential distinction between the Separatists and the Church of England was that between the 'sect' and the 'church' type of religious organization (A distinction first made by E.Troeltsch in *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*).

Townsend claims that "it is impossible to trace the Confessions, Declarations and principles of each of the various Free Churches from the sixteenth century onwards concerning the doctrine of the Church" (Townsend, 1949: 28). For this reason Townsend draws our attention to the constitution of the Free Church Federal Council[68] which deals

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[67] See also Elliott-Binns, (1966:164) where he states that the early Presbyterians in England were not Nonconformists

[68] The federation was initiated at a congress of members of free churches in Manchester in November 1892. The congress formed itself into a Federation in 1896. "It embraced all the Evangelical denominations claiming spiritual autonomy and refusing to recognize the patronage and control of Parliament. It was the creation of a new organization in which Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and others met, not as denominationalists, but simply as Evangelical Free Churchmen" (Clifford, in Jackson, 1901:377).

with the ecclesiology of the Free Churches, the following statement was according to

Townsend agreed upon and therefore authentic (Townsend, 1949:28):

> We believe that the Catholic or Universal Church is the whole company of
> the redeemed in heaven and on earth, and we recognise as belonging to
> this holy fellowship all who are united to God through faith in Christ. The
> Church on earth – which is One through the Apostolic Gospel and through
> the living union of all its true members with its one Head, even Christ, and
> which is Holy through the indwelling Holy Spirit Who sanctifies the Body
> and its members – is ordained to be the visible Body of Christ, to worship
> God through Him, to promote the fellowship of His people and the ends of
> His Kingdom, and to go into all the world and proclaim His Gospel for the
> salvation of men and the brotherhood of all mankind. Of this visible
> Church, and every branch thereof, the only head is the Lord Jesus Christ;
> and in its faith, order discipline and duty, it must be free to obey Him
> alone as it interprets His Holy Will.

> (Townsend, 1949:28, 29)

Therefore with the view of both the classical understanding of the nature of the church

and the statement of the Federal Council we have a glimpse of the Free Church

Ecclesiology from the English Heritage perspective. This brings us to a closer look at the

Seventh-day Adventist ecclesiology as it relates to the history of the English Free Church

ecclesiology. It is the purpose of this research to understand the development of Seventh-

day Adventist Ecclesiology from this historical background.

3.1.3   The Seventh-day Adventist and English Free Churches

According to the Seventh-day Adventist teachings the major purpose of an organized

church is to accomplish God's plan "to fill this planet with the knowledge of God's glory,

only the visible Church can provide a number of the functions vital to meeting this end"

(Ministerial Association, 1988:144). It is further stated that "the church is organized for

mission service to fulfil the work Israel failed to do…the greatest service the church provides the world is in being fully committed to completing the gospel 'witness to all nations' (Matt. 24:14), empowered by the baptism of the Holy Spirit" (Ministerial Association, 1988:144). On the teaching of the priesthood of believers in the church this means "each church member has a responsibility to minister to others in the name of God, and to communicate directly with Him without any human intermediary. It emphasizes the interdependence of church members, as well as their dependence. This priesthood makes no qualitative distinction between clergy and laity, although it leaves room for a difference in function between these roles." (Ministerial Association, 1988: 143) What does the teaching on the priesthood of believers mean and what impact does it have on ecclesiology is the main concern of this research? While it is claimed that the church subscribes to the teaching of the priesthood of believers, there is a need to understand the meaning and the impact of the priesthood of believers within the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The Seventh-day Adventist Church traces its roots from the biblical tradition through the apostolic times and the Reformation. This research will focus on evidence from the Reformation period, within the English Free Church Heritage, and also give due consideration to the 'Arminian' Wesleyan Methodism[69], which has ties with the historical roots of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. "So also the term 'New Methodist' (one who uses this new, wrong method) was a derogatory name applied to some of the Arminians by their theological opponents in writings such as Theophilus Gale's *Court of the Gentiles* (1678) and an anonymous pamphlet by 'A Country

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[69] "Wesley's Arminian theology and loyal churchmanship differentiated him from many of the local revivals that had begun to spot the British landscape…And Wesley's doctrine of perfection also differentiated him from many of the evangelical clergy within the Church, who saw this teaching as a form of enthusiasm" (Heitzenrater, 1995:141).

Presbyter' entitled *A War Among the Angels of the Churches; wherein is shewed the Principles of the New Methodists in the great point of Justification* (1693). The controversy died out at the turn of the eighteenth century but may have provided the terminology for a derogatory designation of Wesley's preaching at Oxford, which fitted the Arminian 'New Methodist' mold rather precisely" (Heitzenrater, 1995:18). "Historians such as George Williams, and Roland Bainton used the term 'free church' among other things to designate the non-magisterial reformation churches…" (Cartwright 1994: 23). Some writers prefer to use the term believer's church which originated in Max Weber's study of the *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism,* 1958. In this book it is used to describe the Anabaptists and Quakers (Cartwright, 1994:24). "In the middle 1960s theologians began to use the term 'believer's church to discuss the commonalities and differences of churches that were in some sense, neither Protestant, nor Catholic in the Mainstream uses of those designations" (Cartwright, 1994:24).

Ecclesiology has always been central in the conferences of the Free Churches or Believer's churches. Commenting on the very first conference held in 1967, Cartwright states "the key note speaker for that first conference was Dr Franklin Littell, a United Methodist theologian and the author of The *Anabaptist View of the Church: The Origins of Sectarian Protestantism.* Littell's address highlighted the basic principles of the Believer's Church paradigm: voluntary membership, believer's baptism, separation from the world, mission and witness of all members, church discipline, and the rejection of the state-church alliance" (Cartwright, 1994: 26, 27). These characteristics of the Believer's Church (Free Church) can be linked up to a certain extent with the Seventh-day Adventist ecclesiology. Having touched briefly on what Seventh-day Adventists teach on the

priesthood of believers, it is imperative that we give due consideration to this teaching from the English Free Church Heritage. Our aim in this section is merely to give a brief overview.

3.1.4   The Priesthood of Believers within the English Free Church

The teaching of the priesthood of believers in the free churches serves as an important factor in understanding their ecclesiology. This is seen especially within the Radical Reformation in Northern Europe during the sixteenth century. It has been observed that "unordained monks and friars were much more common among the recruits of the Radical Reformation than were ordained priests and prelates. Thus a basic conflict over the conception of the nature of the church and polity between the Radical Reformation and the Magisterial Reformation came to be articulated in the debate between the two sides, not in terms of ordination, which was generally neglected, but rather in terms of formal, university theological education on the one side and apostolic, or prophetic or inspired, vocation on the other" (Williams, 1962: xxx; cf. Williams and Mergal, 1957:15, 44). The extent to which the priesthood of believers was taken up in the free church ecclesiology is presented by Williams as follows: "akin to the prominence of the layman in the Radical Reformation and the functional extension of the priesthood of all believers in the direction of personal witness to Christ in missions and martyrdom, rather than the diversification of the conception of vocation (as with Luther and Calvin), was the corresponding elevation of women to a status of almost complete equality with men in the central task of the fellowship of the reborn" (Williams, 1962: xxx). In this regard Keith Thomas has documented some three hundred female sectarian preachers and

prophetesses who were so stirred during the 1630s up to the 1670s. This led to many of them recording their words through publication (Thomas, 1965:317-40). "Publications by women attained a new high during these middle decades of the seventeenth century, due in no small measure to the prose genres published by female sectarians" (Gillespie, 2004:9). The teaching on the priesthood of believers among the English Free Churches and the Seventh-day Adventist Church, are rooted in Scripture. The Radical Reformation ideas of the sixteenth century seem to have influence on the English Free churches. The following section gives a historical overview on the subject of the priesthood of believers.

3.2   The Priesthood of Believers From the Church Fathers up to the Reformation

The foregoing introductory section has given historical backgrounds of important movements and historical figures and the English Free Church. This is an important background for understanding the context in which the priesthood of believers developed in the Free Church and the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

3.2.1   The Early Church on the Priesthood of Believers From 70-590 A.D.

It is important for the purpose of this study to touch briefly on what the Church Fathers wrote as they reflected on the priesthood of believers:

> In the preceding book I have shown that all the disciples of the Lord are Levites and priests *Irenaeus (c. 180, E/W) 1.5564.*

> The spiritual man is, then, the truly kingly man. He is the sacred high priest of God. *Clement of Alexandria (c.195, E) 2.533.*

> We are the true worshipers and the true priests who, praying in the spirit offer sacrifice in spirit: prayer, which is a proper and acceptable victim to God. *Tertullian (c.198, W) 3.690.*

[Demetrius] has added to his letter that this is a matter that was never heard of before, and has never been done: that, laymen should take part in public speaking when there are bishops present. However, in this assertion, he has evidently departed far from the truth… For, indeed, wherever there are found persons capable of profiting the brethren, such persons are exhorted by the holy bishops to address the people. *Alexander of Cappadocia (c. 250, E) 6.154.*

Let him who teaches, teach. This is true even if he is one of the laity – if he is skilful in the Word and serious in his living. *Apostolic Constitutions (compiled c. 390,E), 7.495.* (See also Bercot, 1998:161,162)

When the church fathers were making reference to the priesthood of believers, it may appear in a number of occasions as cited above that they were not discussing the priesthood of believers. They made some profound statements on the subject without elaborating. The following examples show how secondary literature has elaborated on the works of the church fathers with reference to the subject of the priesthood of believers.

In summing up the work of Polycarp (70-156), Eastwood (1963:61) states that it gives an indication that through the Priesthood of Christ believers were given a part in the life and work of the Church. St. Clement of Rome makes the following statement: "The laymen are bound by the layman's ordinances"[70] (Lightfoot, 1962:30). After his study of the statement within its immediate context Lightfoot states "The implication surely is that the whole body of laity has a proper share in the sacramental ministry carried on by the whole church. Yet this universal priesthood I Pet. ii, 9 by no means precludes some particular and representative limbs of the body from having a special office and ministry" (Lightfoot in Lawson, 1961:48).

Ignatius one of the Church Fathers wrote: "If anyone be not within the precinct of the alter…he lacketh bread…For if the prayer of one and another hath so great force, how

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[70] This is an english translation of the Epistle of St Clement to the Corinthians by J.B. Lightfoot.

much more that of the bishop and of the whole church"[71] (Lightfoot, 1962:64). Commenting on this statement Lightfoot states: "Every believer and every group of believers can pray with power. There is thus a priestly character in herring within the whole body of the Church, I Peter ii, 9. The priestly principle is not limited exclusively to the ordained ministry" (Lightfoot in Lawson, 1961:109). This in essence means that "There is an universal priesthood of believers in the sense that to the whole body of the faithful, and to every individual in it belongs the privilege of prevailing prayer to God" (Lawson, 1961:150).

Parallel to these utterances of the Church Fathers and their interpretation thereof we find some historical developments whose impact will be discussed later in the research, when the impact of the priesthood of believers on ecclesiology is discussed. It suffices to just sketch these developments. The most dramatic change was the proclamation of Theodosius I in 380 that the whole empire should acknowledge and confess "the sole deity of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit" (Wilken, 1968:57). Since the time of Constantine there was a gradual development of laws that transformed the Roman Empire. In 313 A.D. there was a provision made for subsidies to the church and clergy were exempted from public duties. In 320 A.D. the clergy were exempted from paying tax. In 321 A.D., Sunday was recognized as a day of rest for the Empire. "Taken together the mass of new laws during the period give clear testimony of the influence of Christianity on its environment" (Wilken, 1968:57).

This was setting a stage for the exaltation of the clergy above the laity albeit above the church in the future. A seed planted during this period would develop into a product that would be difficult to uproot in the future. We now turn to the Medieval period.

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[71] This is a translation of the Epistle of Ignatius to the Ephesians, translated by J.B. Lightfoot.

3.2.2   The Priesthood of Believers From 590-1517 A.D.

The highlight for the teaching of the priesthood of believers in this period was the position taken by Gregory the Great (540-604)[72]. He uttered a statement that "Whoever calls himself a universal priest or desires to be called so, was the forerunner of the Anti Christ (Schaff, 1913:218)   In opposition to the pompous titles that were given and ascribed to the pontiff and ecclesiastical leaders, Gregory chose to call himself in "proud humility: the servant of servants of God" (Schaff, 1913:220).

The utterance of Gregory implied that the universal priesthood belongs not to one person or even a selected few but to the entire church.

There are three individuals that stand out as forerunners of the Reformation in this regard. These may be regarded as unsung heroes whose efforts have not been put in the spotlight by many historians. Robert Grosseteste (1175-1253), Roger Bacon (1214-1294), and Ramon Lull (1232-1315) may be regarded as reformers of this period, "theirs constituted a genuine, though strictly medieval attempt at reform. They contemplated no reshaping of the entire social order in keeping with humanity engineering dynamics…Collectively these three innovators recapitulated the roles of universal thinkers, linguists, translators and preachers" (Wilken, 1968:95).

Grosseteste was an Oxford preceptor of Franciscans, a distinguished scholar, teacher, and translator. He is described as "dedicated bishop quite able and willing to send a pope into

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[72] He was born in 540 AD and died in 604 AD, and not long after his death the churches (Roman Catholic) gave him the title 'Gregory the great'... "And if goodness is the highest kind of greatness then the church moved rightly in according him the title 'great' certainly no other man or woman better represents the early middle ages... He spent the greater part of his fortune in founding seven monastries. He distributed the rest in alms for the poor" (Shelley, 1995, 164, 5).

apologetic fits. This he did whole cheerfully subscribing to the Pontiffs, unlimited commission as a 'servant of servants of God'" (Wilken, 1968:95).

Roger Bacon was thoroughly a child of his times. He was also a Franciscan scholar and a self-established authority on practically all fields of experimental, metaphysical, and theological knowledge (Wilken, 1968:95).

Ramon Lull was a riddle of scholarship and devotion as an unrelenting critic of the Christian pilgrimage (Wilken, 1968:95).

These men are outstanding during this period in that "they believed the coming judgment and final kingdom to be imminent. The church's business was to explicate, in its earthly disposition of clerical rules and lay obedience, the heavenly mandate for human salvation. The majestic concern of the celestial hierarchy was to empower terrestrial hierarchies for true deification of human service…Grosesteste's most blistering criticism of a bloated papacy and curia was his Memorandum of 1250.   It was preceded and supported by a whole series of administrative, sermonic, and biblically documented propositions…This was a reforming appeal to free the church to the condition in which Christ had delivered it. It was currently being hemmed in for clerical aggrandizement in the name of Petrine servantship" (Wilken, 1968: 97-99).

This is clear evidence that there were reforming agents during this period, who were working within their context to take the church back to the mandate of a salvation agent and service to humanity. "To the Protestant reformers, the medieval Catholic canon law obstructed the individual's relationship with God and obscured simple biblical norms for right living. The early Protestant reformers further taught that the church is at heart a community of saints, not a corporation of politics" (Witte, 2008:16). Witte identifies

these reforming agencies as: Lutheranism, Anglicanism, Anabaptism and Calvinism. He further observes that "each of the four original branches of Protestantism made its own distinctive contributions to Western law, politics and society" (Witte, 2008:18). This would not be accomplished with the medieval pomposity of the clergy that eclipsed the role of the members of the church. It was this very reformation spirit that Martin Luther would pick up during the Reformation. Witte in his introduction essay does not touch the topic of the priesthood of believers and the rest of the essays in the book follow suit.

3.2.3   Priesthood of Believers From 1517 – 1843 A.D.

According to McGrath (1994:26) "the Reformation was fundamentally a quest for Christian identity and authenticity. It represents one of those great and rare moments in Christian history when the church was prepared to re-examine itself and to face up to a series of deeply disturbing questions concerning its role and its relevance." The Reformers revived the teaching of the priesthood of believers in this context. The revival of the doctrine was necessary because "by the time of the Reformation the biblical concept of the priesthood of had been eroded by a hierarchical and priest-centred church. Luther's reaffirmation of the principle was a protest against clerical power" (Edwards, 1995:69). This protest did not go on unchallenged; there was resistance against change. "And it is here that the Reformation had a fundamental contribution to make – a contribution that has continued in what has come to be known as 'the Protestant principle'. One of the deepest and most powerful wellheads that nourished the Reformation and its heritage is a spirit of creative protest, of prophetic criticism" (McGrath, 1994:27). It is evident that while the Reformation was intended to challenge

the Roman Catholic Church, the reformers themselves had different views on the Reformation. Williams (1962: xxiii) recounts a decade between the end of the "sanguinary Great Peasant's war in Germany in 1525 and the collapse of the polygamous Biblical commonwealth of misguided peasants, artisans and burghers in Munster in 1535," as significant because of the rise of Anabaptism, "which because of a profound disappointment with Martin Luther, Ulrich Zwingli, their clerical associates, and their magisterial supporters, withdrew into separatist conventicles" (Williams, 1962: xxiii). This created a gulf between the Magisterial Reformation which included Lutheran, Zwinglian and Calvinist movements, and the Radical Reformation which included "besides the Anabaptists of various types, Spiritualists and spiritualizers of varying tendencies, and the Evangelical Rationalists, largely Italian in origin" (Williams, 1962: xxiv). "In contrast to the Protestants, the exponents of the Radical Reformation believed on principle in the separation of their own churches from the national or territorial state" (Williams, 1962:xxiv, xxv). We now turn to the Magisterial Reformation initiated in the European Continent but its influence had a ripple effect that went beyond the borders of the Continent.

3.2.3.1 The Magisterial Reformation

According to Olsen (1990:104), the "structure of the church and its ministry, as it developed in the fourth century, prevailed for more than a thousand years." This period is marked by a transition that took place under Cyprian who advocated for the authority of the priests. This led to a point where "the High Priestly Race gave place to a High Priestly class…all authority was given unto the Bishop who unquestionably controlled

the Church's teaching, worship, discipline, and ministry" (Eastwood, 1960:xii). There were movements that arose to challenge the medieval ecclesiology for example the Albigensians, Waldensians, John Eckhart (1327), Marsilius of Padua (1342), William of Occam (1349), John Wyclif (1386), and John Hus (1415). "However it was first through the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century that fruitful attempts succeeded in restoring or coming closer to the ecclesiology of the New Testament and the early church" (Olsen 1990:104). Martin Luther's contribution on the priesthood of believers is very significant for this period; however it is important to consider the contribution of John Calvin as well when we look at the Magisterial Reformation and the priesthood of believers. Another name coming after Luther's and Calvin is James Arminius. The researcher includes him because he would later have a very strong influence on Wesley's theology. It is also important in this historical section to acknowledge that there was a Reformation that took place within the Roman Catholic Church.

a)   Martin Luther and Lutherans on the Priesthood of Believers

Martin Luther was born on November 10, 1483 in Eisleben, a little town north of Erfurt. His formative years ran up to 1517, at this point he had already began to be critical of the church particularly indulgencies. "Between 1518 and 1521 he was forced to break with the *Roman Catholic* Church; 1522-1530 was a period of organization; and from 1531 to peace of Augsburg in 1555, Lutheranism, led by Luther and, after his death, by his friend Melachthon, faced an era of conflict with Romanism and the consolidation of its gains"[73] Italics supplied (Cairns, 1954: 312, 313).

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[73] It seems to be a widely accepted fact that Martin Luther did not withdraw or break away from t he Roman Catholic Church, but was expelled. The only difficulty that may be highlighted is the date of his

The researcher has identified four perspectives from which the understanding of the teaching of the priesthood of believers by Martin Luther has been ascribed. This is one way in which secondary literature on the teaching of Priesthood of Believers by Martin Luther may be categorized namely: (1) Pragmatic; (2) Polity; (3) Politics; and (4) Polemics.[74] This shows that anyone writing on Martin Luther about the Priesthood of believers must make his/her perspective clear. This adds to the need for understanding the meaning of the priesthood of believers.

Luther himself in his own works elaborates on the doctrine. He focuses his arguments on Scripture. "For it stands in Scripture…But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood…Tell me, can anyone be so crude as not to understand what St. Peter speaks here? Or do the passages fro the fathers have to step forward here and provide the interpretation? He [Peter] names the people and the congregation very clearly; and he calls them all together a royal priesthood" (LW, 39: 236).

He was engaged in a polemic debate with Emser[75] who represented the Roman Catholic Church and had just written against Luther's argument on the priesthood of believers. This was Luther's response, "He may interpret 'priests' as he pleases, but all Christians are nevertheless such priests through this passage. If all of us should preach, then the tonsure-bearers (what he chose to call the Roman Catholic priests) must keep silent, since

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excommunication. "Luther burned the bull on 10 December 1520…An unambiguous date seems to be supplied by the actual issuance of the bull of excommunication on 3 January 1521. It was executed on 28 January" (Brecht, 1985:426,427).

[74] See Sokupa, 2004. "Martin Luther on the Priesthood of all believers" MTh paper University of Stellenbosch.

[75] Some background information about Emser, Luther's opponent is inorder "Jerome Emser (1477-1527) the goat of Liepzig – Luther's designation because Emser's coat of arms, a shield and helmet adoned with a goat, was displayed on the title page of his writings, had pursued a variegated career before engaging Luther in a bitter literary feud. After studying law and theology at the university of Tubingen and Basel, he became secretary to Cardinal Raymund von Gurk, papal legate in the matter of indulgencies until 1505" (Luther Works, vol 39, 107). The version of Luther's Works quoted here and in subsequent references is Luther Works, Edited by Eric W. Gritsch, Louis: Concordia, 1972.

they have different, special priesthood above all Christians." He gives another two passages that support the passage from 1 Peter 2:9, Revelation 5:9-10 and Revelation 20:6. He then concludes "Thereby the Holy Spirit teaches us that the ointments, consecrations, tonsures, chasubles, albs, chalices, masses, sermons etc. do not make priests or give power. Rather, priesthood and power have to be there first brought from baptism and common to all Christians through the faith which builds them upon Christ the true high priest" (LW, 39: 236,237).

In summing up Martin Luther's contribution Olsen highlights the abolition of the distinction between clergy and laity from a spiritual perspective. The impact of this revival in the way ministry is understood and practiced affected and influenced the whole history of Protestantism. "However, a complete vision and thereby a total realization of the priesthood of believers did not take place…One basic reason was that at the time of the Protestant Reformation the nature of the church was mainly defined by two marks: The gospel rightly preached, and the sacraments rightly administered" (Olsen, 1990:105, 106).

It is important at this point of the research to trace how Luther's views were received in the context of the English Reformation. "By the time Henry VIII was first seriously moved to threaten and coerce the pope, and to question whether the pope really possessed the spiritual authority which he claimed, vast tracts in central and northern Germany had already repudiated this; so too had Denmark and Sweden; the movement was spreading, and almost everywhere it was a movement led by princes" (Hughes, 1950:118). According to Elliott-Binns, Reforming influences were first introduced from the European Continent by the Lutheran influence. This started in the reign of Henry VIII,

the second phase came through the influence of Zwingli, and the third wave was Calvinist during the reign of Elizabeth (Elliott-Binns, 1966: 24).

It was after severing ties with Rome that HenryVIII and Archbishop Cranmer "started looking for allies among the Continental Protestants. An English delegation went to Germany in 1535 in an attempt to forge some kind of agreement with the Lutherans…This called for a full acceptance of the Augsburg Confession in England, in return for which Henry VIII was nominated to be commander-in-chief of the Protestant cause in Europe. Henry accepted this but soon negotiations broke down over the question of his divorce which the Lutheran theologians were not prepared to recognize" (Bray, 1994:118). From this one can understand why Lutheranism could not have an early impact in the English world. We now turn to the contemporary views on the priesthood of believers within Lutheranism.

The Lutheran view places the ministry in the congregation. "So the ministry becomes a function of the priesthood of all believers and not a hierarchal caste" (Eastwood, 1960:4). The practical consequence of this view is that "the laity play a very real part in the Church life" (Eastwood, 1960:6). Up to today the same balance that Martin Luther advocated is kept especially with reference to the clergy/laity difference. Just as Martin Luther did not teach that the priesthood of believers does away with the appointed ministry, the Lutherans have followed the same trend.

"Lutheran theologians today are striving against the misrepresentation and devaluation of the priesthood all of believers, which does not mean we do not want a priest, for it possesses a much more positive content when it is interpreted in the light of biblical

teaching" (Eastwood, 1960:26). Although the classical views[76] on the doctrine of the priesthood of believers are appreciated there seems to be a need for relevance to the contemporary situation. "Current Lutheran ecclesiology sees a need to supplement the classic Lutheran view of the church…the dimension of sending (Mission) has now become significant for the Lutheran understanding of the church. That the church is a decisive social factor (Church and State) with a public responsibility was self-evident to the Reformers (within the still existent *corpus Christianum*), and it has been the subject of fresh reflection today. But the church is now also to be seen as an instrument of God's mission to the non-Christian world; in the context of a secular society, the church is understood and described as a fellowship of witness and service" (Kuhn, 1999:493). The current position of the Lutheran church on the priesthood of believers is depicted as follows:

"In principle, the Lutheran church remains in harmony with the biblical and early Christian understandings of the priesthood of believers. Unfortunately, even Lutherans tend to elevate the ordained ministry above the priesthood of believers and see the ordained ministry as a privilege secured for a few and not as priestly service. Frankly we still understand the ordained ministry in terms of men, and that relegates women to a segregated class similar to South Africa's racial segregation" (Kiwovele, 1988:74).

"African understanding of the priesthood of believers would emphasize family, the role of mediators, and the realization that there are powerful forces in the world, some of which we often contend against and some of which defend us…A Lutheran African understanding of the priesthood of believers must be rooted in the First Commandment,

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[76]My interpretation of the classical views is that they refer to the views of the Reformers like Luther, Calvin, there is no further elaboration and clear identification of the classical views, this is an assumption based on the context.

that we shall have no other gods except the Lord God Almighty. The challenge to African Lutheran Christians, is to put at the forefront of our priesthood of believers the firm commitment that the church will be united in faith" (Kiwovele, 1988:75).

Stewart gives a brief summary of the history of the priesthood of believers from a Lutheran perspective. In her conclusion she asks a question "How is the priesthood of believers recognized today" (Stewart, 1988:193)? Her appeal seems to point towards the political understanding of the priesthood of believers. She addresses social issues throughout the article with the priesthood of believers as a basis. We now turn to Calvin and the Reformed tradition.

b)   John Calvin and Reformed Churches on the Priesthood of Believers

John Calvin (1509-1564) was born at Noyon in Picardy in France. According to Olsen Calvin aimed at Christianising Geneva. "By having a Christian magistracy it was hoped that church and state would mutually support one another" (Olsen, 1990:108). It is often claimed that John Calvin did not emphasize the doctrine of the priesthood of believers. However according to Eastwood (1960:66), he linked the doctrine of the priesthood of believers with the *triplex munus* (which speaks of Christ as Prophet, Priest and King); the doctrine of the keys; the ministry; the idea of vocation; and the necessity of offering spiritual sacrifices. It is observed that Calvin has a double interpretation for almost anything. This is observed in his doctrine of the knowledge of God, and the doctrine of the church. "His attitude to the priesthood of believers is no exception to this twofold interpretation. Quite unashamedly he holds the following points of view: There is no priesthood save that of Christ who is the only High Priest. Secondly, it is the business of

every Christian to offer spiritual sacrifices because he belongs to a royal priesthood" (Eastwood, 1960:67). In harmonizing the seemingly contradictory statements, Calvin according to Eastwood (1960:67), employs the notion of *triplex munus*, which throws light in the seeming contradiction. According to Eastwood (1960:71), Calvin accepts the priesthood of believers, but differs from Lutheranism in that he relates this doctrine to other tenets of faith.

Eastwood sums up the views of Calvin on the priesthood of believers as follows:

> As far as Calvin's theology is concerned, the priesthood of all believers is not to be considered as some obscure by-path, but as a main road along which he frequently travelled. Starting with the Priesthood of Christ, he regards the universal priesthood as being dependent upon it. He then goes on to show how priesthood is the Christian's calling and vocation. This priesthood is a high calling indeed because the power of the keys is vouchsafed to the whole Christian community and not simply to official representatives. Ministers were set aside to serve the Church, not as those who are above the congregation, but as those who are within the universal priesthood. The sacrifices that are offered are spiritual and are offered by the whole Church. This means that the universal priesthood is expressed in the worship, intercessions, witness, and service of the whole community.

> (Eastwood 1960:90)

In dealing with the subject of the priesthood of believers firstly Calvin acknowledges the raging conflict and states "in our own day there has been great controversy over the efficacy of the ministry. Some exaggerate its dignity beyond measure. Others contend what belongs to the Holy spirit is wrongly transferred to mortal men – if we suppose that ministers and teachers penetrate into minds and hears and so correct both blindness of mind and hardness of heart. We must therefore correctly assess this controversy" (Inst.

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XXI: 1020)[77]. Secondly he addresses the question of the appointment of ministers and the involvement of the whole church in that process. His sanction on the matter is that "the call of a minister is lawful according to the Word of God, when those who seemed fit are created by the consent and approval of the people, moreover, that other pastors ought to preside over the election in order that the multitude my not go wrong either through fickleness; through evil intentions or through disorder" (Inst. XXI: 1065). He further laments that the ancient form of Church government was eroded by the tyranny of the papacy. "Now all the people's right in electing a bishop has been taken away. Votes, assent, subscriptions and all their like have vanished; the whole power has been transferred to canons alone. They confer the episcopate on whom they please; they introduce him directly before the people, but to be adored, not to be examined. They have nothing from the New Testament to confirm their opinion" (Inst. IV, XXI: 1066). Thirdly and more directly he deals with the situation as it prevailed in the time of the Reformation.

> First, all whom they enlist in their service they initiate into the clergy with a common symbol. For they shave them on the top of the head, that the crown may signify royal dignity, since clerics ought to be kings, to rule themselves and others. For Peter speaks of them as follows: 'You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of his possession' [I Peter 2:9, Vg]. But it was a sacrilege for them to take to themselves alone what was given to the whole church, and haughtily to boast of a title that they had snatched from the believers. Peter is speaking of the whole church; these fellows twist it to a few shaven men, as if to them alone it was said, 'Be holy' [I Peter 1:15-16; Lev 20:7; Lev 19:2]; as if they alone were made a kingdom and priesthood to God through Christ [I Peter 2:5,9].

> (Inst. IV, XIX: 1472, 73)

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[77] In this quotation and subsequent references the version of Calvin's Institutes used is: Calvin: Institutes of the Christian Religion in two volumes Edited by John T McNeil translated and indexed by Ford Lewis Battles, Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960.

Calvin as shown above is critical of the Roman Catholic priesthood and the exclusivism that accompanies it, in which the clergy are regarded above the laity. What Calvin is addressing is the interpretation of I Peter 2:9, ascribed to the clergy exclusively. He condemns this interpretation as faulty and affirms that the priesthood belongs to believers. His statement may not be understood as anti-clerical but as inclusive. For Calvin the whole church both clergy and laity, belong to the kind of priesthood that is described in I Peter2:9. As if this is not enough he also examines other texts within the context of this passage to support his thesis in defence of the priesthood of believers. Calvin doest not end there, he takes this further to Christ as priest when he states:

> "First, indeed, this ought to be taken as an actual fact (which we have asserted in discussing the papal Mass) that all who call themselves priests to offer a sacrifice of expiation do wrong to Christ. Christ was appointed and consecrated priest according to the order of Melchizedek by the Father with an oath [Ps. 110:4; Heb. 5:6], without end, without successor [Heb. 7:3]. He once for all offered a sacrifice of eternal expiation and reconciliation; now, having also entered the sanctuary of heaven, he intercedes for us. In him we are all priests [Rev. 1:6; cf. I Peter 2:9], but to offer praises and thanksgiving, in short, to offer ourselves and ours to God. It was his office alone to appease God and atone for sins by his offering. When these men take this office upon themselves, what remains but that their priesthood is impious and sacrilegious? Surely, they are utterly wicked when they dare designate this rite with the title of sacrament. As far as the true office of presbyter is concerned, which is commended to us by Christ's lips, I willingly accord that place to it…He gave a command to preach the gospel [Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:15] and feed the flock [John 21:15], not to sacrifice victims. He promised the grace of the Holy Spirit, not to enable them to make atonement for sins, but duly to engage in and maintain the government of the church [Matt. 28:20].

> (Inst. IV, XX: 1476)

Calvin puts the ministry of Christ in its rightful place. He guards against usurping the priestly ministry of Christ. In a very stern rebuke he condemns any priesthood that takes the place of Christ as blasphemous. Once again this is not an abolitionist approach for

Calvin, he still believes in the ministry but as it is given by God not as a substitute of Christ's ministry of atonement. He separates issues and puts the presbytery in it rightful place for the government of the Church as directed by the word of God, and he quotes the relevant passages. One may view the foregoing arguments to be in line with Luther with even an added dimension, i.e. the ministry of Christ. An observation is made by Avis (1981:96) after his examination of the primary source of Calvin's theology *The Institutes of Christian Religion* that "conceived of a the ministry of all Christians, as the relation between the believer and his brother, the doctrine of the universal priesthood does not interest Calvin." On the other hand Avis observes "it is probably Calvin's interpretation rather than Luther's that has been dominant in post-Reformation Protestantism" (Avis, 1981:96). Toon (1992:303) a Reformed theologian makes a similar observation at the end of his brief article on the priesthood of believers, he states: "this doctrine was clearly expounded by Luther and Calvin. But while Luther made some exaggerated claims and statements, Calvin's teaching is clear and balanced." Toon gives no direct references to the original sources; instead he has Eastwood as his main source. Therefore one does not find any comparative study backing his claims. McGrath whose work *Reformation Thought* has been revised over the years with the latest printing in 1999, ascribes the priesthood of believers to Luther and discusses the subject in the chapter on 'the political thought of the Reformation' under the 'Luther's Doctrine of the Two Kingdoms' in the same chapter another subject appears: 'Calvin on Magistrate and Ministry' but surprisingly nothing is mentioned of Calvin's views on the priesthood of believers. These observations call for a comparative comprehensive study of Luther and Calvin on the priesthood of believers, which is beyond the scope of this research. It suffices to say that

Calvin did address the teaching of the priesthood of believers and his point of view has been presented and the investigation into his writings is in no way comprehensive.

Having looked at the Reformation from Calvin's writings and other secondary sources, we now turn to the Reformed Churches from a birds eye view. Heron makes his own assessment of the ecclesiology both strengths and weak areas thereof and states the following:

"The family of Reformed churches is a worldwide one, with each church also being stamped by its own history. Common Reformed concerns have done much to shape not merely the church but indeed the whole of Western society. Without this contribution modern democracy would hardly be conceivable, let alone feasible. It must not be overlooked, however, that in a pluralistic society, Reformed ecclesiology can easily degenerate into a kind of lack of breadth that opens the door to sectarianism" (Heron, 1999:495).

Now we turn to Cloete who forges a way forward for the Reformed Churches with the priesthood of believers as his organizing principle for his research. Whether his model provides answers to the issues anticipated by Heron, remains to be seen in practice.

A recent study by Cloete within the Dutch Reformed Church has been categorized by the researcher as falling within the pragmatic perspective in the understanding of the priesthood of believers.[78] In his research Cloete highlights the need for a theory and ecclesiological model for the priesthood of believers within the Dutch Reformed church.[79]

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[78] See Sokupa 2004, "Martin Luther on the Priesthood of all Believers" MTh paper. p. 21.
[79] A more elaborate interaction with his model will be dealt with in chapter 5 of this research.

In conclusion we may highlight that the teaching of the doctrine of the priesthood of believers under the Magisterial Reformation involved the role of the magistrates. Although Luther and Calvin differed in their approach they both saw the importance of this teaching. These reformers have given impetus to the contemporary Lutheran and Reformed churches that seek to build on the foundations that were laid by Luther and Calvin.

c)   James Arminius (1560-1609) and the Priesthood of Believers

Arminius was born on October 10, 1560 in Oudewater, a town on the river IJssel in Holland. Elaborating more on his biography Bangs (1971:17, 25) states: "He was a Dutch Reformed minister and theological professor in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries."

His understanding of the priesthood of believers may be traced from his emphasis on the concept of the Christian vocation. This is defined as "a gracious act of God in Christ, by which, through his Word and Spirit, He calls forth sinful men, who are liable to condemnation and placed under the dominion of sin, from the condition of the animal life and from the pollutions and corruptions of this world" (Arminius, 1828:231, 232). This vocation concept is discussed further stating that this form of vocation "is placed in the very administration of the Word and of the Holy Spirit…the point of commencement is that of sin and misery on account of sin, that is, out of guilt and condemnation (I Peter ii,9; 2 Pet. 1,4; Eph. ii,1-6; Rom. vi,17,18). Having defined this vocation and its commencement point Arminius also uses covenant language to describe the end to which this vocation leads. "The proximate end of vocation is that they who

have been called, answer by faith to God and to Christ who give the call, and that they thus become the covenanted people of God through Christ the mediator of the New Covenant" (Arminius, 1828:233). Therefore Arminius implicitly connects the priesthood of believers to the call to salvation and covenant obedience to God's commandments. His ecclesiology also gives a clue to his understanding of the priesthood of believers. In outlining his ecclesiology Arminius has a section on councils which is of interest for this study. For him "an ecclesiastical council is an assembly of men gathered together in the name of God, consulting and defining or settling according to the Word of God, about those things which pertain to religion and the good of the church, for the glory of God and the salvation of the church" (Arminius, 1828:428). Having defined the council whose work seems to orbit around the governance of the church, he points to the church itself as the only entity that has the authority of appointing such a council (Arminius, 1828:429).

The council is composed and presided over either by ecclesiastical or lay members (Arminius, 1828:429). His understanding of ministry is that it is "a public auxiliary office or duty, subservient to a superior, who in this instance, is God and Christ as He is the Lord and Head of the church" (Arminius, 1828: 432). The offices of the church "are so ordered, that a person can discharge all of them at the same time; though, if the utility of the church and the diversity of gifts so require, they can be variously distributed among different men" (Arminius, 1828:433).

Arminius' ecclesiology certainly does accommodate the idea of the priesthood of believers although like Calvin he does not explicitly give an exposition of the doctrine but it is interwoven within his ecclesiology and theology of ministry.

Another episode that comes after the death of Arminius in 1609 is the Synod of Dordt. It is important to note how this affected the English people, because later we discover that John Wesley espouses the teachings of Arminius particularly his theology.

The followers of Arminius who were known as Remonstrants were summoned to the Synod of Dordt (Dordrecht) after his death. They did not follow Calvin all the way rather they followed the teachings of James Arminius set out in the form of articles. "The appearance of these Articles set off a storm in the Dutch Reformed Church, which reverberated across Protestant Europe. In response to an invitation from Holland, James I (1603-1625) sent a delegation from the Church of England to the Synod of Dordt, which condemned the Artiles and propounded what has since become the classical 'Calvinist' understanding of grace and salvation" (Bray, 1994:453). Although the Church of England never officially accepted the affirmation made at the Synod of Dordt, and the Synod had no impact on the Church of England in spite of the representation. "But it marked the beginning of a special relationship between the Dutch and British Protestants which eventually culminated in the reign of William III of Orange as King of England (1689-1702). William secured a Protestant settlement of the Church which remains the basis of the constitution of the United Kingdom to this day" (Bray, 1994:453). There were some who sympathized with the

Remonstrants within the Church of England, but they may not be classified as Arminians. "Only later in the eighteenth century, is it really possible to speak of 'Arminians' as opposed to Calvinists. Anglican Armnianism is best represented by John Wesley and the Methodists, while its Calvinist counterpart is usually associated with Wesley's contemporary, George Whitefield, and the Evangelical tradition within the Church of England" (Bray 1994:455). We now turn to the Radical Reformation.

3.2.3.2 The Radical Reformation on the Priesthood of Believers

The core of the difference between the Magisterial and the Radical Reformation is that for Luther and Calvin (Magisterial Reformers) the church needed to be reformed, because its systems had become corrupted (McGrath, 1999:204). On the other hand for the radical Reformers the church did not exist anymore. There was a need to restore the Church rather than reform it (McGrath, 1999:205).

 Under the Radical Reformation this study gives special consideration to the Anabaptists, and the Separatists. The reason for handpicking these religious movements is the impact they had in the English Reformation. This influence had a ripple effect in that it also spilled over to America. The history of the Baptist Church reveals these dynamics of interaction between these movements. Essentially Puritans do not fall under the Radical Reformation but there were relationships between most of the movements of the Reformation period that it becomes necessary to juxtapose them in order to see the interconnections and the diversities that they display. It may be acknowledged that there are also other forms of Radical Reformation, however there are three main groupings that

deserve to be mentioned, the Anabaptists, Spiritualists, and the Evangelical Rationalists (Williams, 1962: 20). For the purpose of this research we will only give consideration to the Anabaptists. The reason for this direction is that from each grouping there is a wide variety of view points. Balke (1981:2), states "it should be observed that it is not easy to characterize the Anabaptists or to distinguish them accurately from other Radicals such as the Spiritualists, the Fanatics, and the Antitrinitarians. The radicalism of the sixteenth century was a very complex phenomenon. Scholarly discussions on it offer so many different interpretations that we cannot expect a common opinion to emerge in Anabaptist scholarship in the near future." According to Balke (1981:10), John Calvin tried to distinguish between these groups. He identified one group as the Anabaptists and the other group as *Libertins sprituelz* "he believed that the Anabaptists accepted the authority of Scripture, while the Libertine Spiritualists forsook the Bible."

The origin of the Anabaptist movement can be traced from the Swiss Brethren who are later known as Mennonitism. The movement was formally initiated on January 21, 1525, in the city of Zürich, Switzerland (Kauffman and Harder, 1975:20). According to McGrath the origins of the Anabaptists can be traced from Germany, but their influence was felt only in Lowlands. "The movement produced relatively few theologians (the three most significant are generally agreed to be Bathasar Hubmaier[80], Pilgram Marbeck[81] and Menno Simons[82]). This failure, partly reflects the fact that the movement

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[80] "Balthasar Hubmaier (1481-1528), of Friedberg had studied at the University of Freiburg where John Eck, the opponent of Carlstadt and Luther at Leipzig disputation, acqured powerful influence over him and encouraged him in his rapid progress in theology" (Williams, 64,65).

[81] Marbeck (also known as Marpeck) arrived in Strassburg in September 1528. He acquired citizenship and was destined to become "a major spokesman of South German Anabaptism…He had been converted and baptized by Kautz. He had come to think of Anabaptism as a middle way between the papacy and Lutheranism" (Ibid, 252,253).

[82] "Menno was born in 1496 in the village of Witmarsum in West Frisia….Menno's ordination to the priesthood took place in March 1524, when he was twenty eight years old" He became one of the

did not have any substantial common theological basis" (McGrath, 1999:10). Although there is no strong theological foundation, among the Anabaptists one can observe from the writings of the leaders that they were focused on the Bible as the foundation of their beliefs. Among the sixteenth century documents that have been compiled by Williams and Mergal, there is one entitled *The Church of God,* ascribed to Dietrich Philips as its author and dated c. 1560. In its first appearance as a published document there was no indication of the date and place.[83] In this particular text Philip traces the origin of the fall and the restoration of the Church. His definition of the Church is rather revealing he states "the Church of God is a congregation of holy beings namely, of the angels in heaven and of the believing reborn men on earth" (Williams and Mergal, 1957:228, 229). Under a sub-title 'spiritual rebirth' Philips start with Nicodemus and his conversation with Christ and in the middle of his treatise he states:

> But the Gospel is the word of grace. It is the joyful message of Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, the only Redeemer and Saviour (I Tim. 2:5; Titus 2:14) who gave himself for us that we might be ransomed from the power of Satan, sin, and eternal death, and made us children and heirs of our Heavenly Father, to be a royal priesthood (Gal.1:4; Heb. 2:15; Rom. 8:14; Eph. 1:5), to be a holy people and an elect race and a possession of God in the Spirit (I Peter 2:9) … This is the true gospel, the pure doctrine of our God, full of grace and mercy, full of comfort, salvation, and eternal life, given to us by God from grace without our merits and works of the law, for the sake of the only eternal and precious Saviour Jesus Christ, who made himself subject to the law for our sake and became the fulfilment of the law unto eternal salvation for believers if it be that we accept it in true faith.

> (Williams and Mergal, 1957:236)

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influential Anabaptists, "before the banishment of Anabaptists from Wismar in 1554 he called a synod of seven elders to discuss several issues…" (Williams, 488)

[83] Later a critical edition was published by F. Pijper, and the English translation is ascribed to Kolb based on the Pijper text.

The idea of the priesthood of believers is inferred in this text. Be that as it may, it is placed as part of the central and key understanding of what the gospel is about. Further on Philips expounds on the seven ordinances of the church which deals with the keeping of all of God's commandments. He states: "The apostles likewise teach in their epistles that Christians must in all things show themselves obedient children of their Heavenly Father as the elect and chosen ones of a holy God (Col.3:12; I Peter 1:1; II Cor. 6:4) as servant of the Lord Jesus Christ, as the instruments of the Holy Spirit, as a royal priesthood (I Peter 2:9) as a chosen generation, peculiar people, zealous of good works…This is the heavenly philosophy, which Jesus Christ, the Son of God, received of his Father" (Williams, 1957: 251). Again here the emphasis and the use of Scripture points to a deliberate attempt to place the idea of priesthood of believers in a central place not in the peripheral. In depicting the views on Anabaptists Olsen observes that the grossest injustice has been done in the picture painted in the minds of those who read history books. Extreme views within the movement have been highlighted as central and a core of the Anabaptist movement. "When the Anabaptist movement is compared with the classical Protestant Reformation it should be remembered that the sober evangelical leaders among the Anabaptists had much in common with the young Luther and Zwingli" (Olsen, 1990:112). The transition is seen after 1525, when they had to deal with a different Luther, "who changed after submitting the Reformation church to the protection and support of the civil authorities, and thereby also compromised some of the basic tenets of evangelical Protestantism" (Olsen, 1990f:112). It is important at this stage to note, "The contributions made by the Anabaptists are significant and grew out of their doctrine of the church and ministry" (Olsen, 1990:113). Olsen lists inter *alia* the

separation of church and state and the priesthood of believers. "The Anabaptists were firm in their rejection of an alliance between church and state in which each uses the other for its own sake. Their concept of the church as a voluntary congregation opposed the concept that the church was identical with the people in a given territory" (Olsen, 1990:113). The claim that the doctrine of the priesthood of believers "which taught that all are equal in the eyes of God, made the Protestant Reformation the religious starting point of modern democratic ideas; but the development of the democratic principles is found in that branch of the Protestant movement where the voluntary church principle is adhered to" (Olsen, 1990:113). The ecclesiological understanding of the Anabaptists is summarised as follows:

> Their idea of the church as a fellowship of active believers and a self-governing congregation led them into an experience of working as a small and thoroughly democratic society, which did not use force in bringing into practice its decisions but was guided by a fellowship of discussion that assumed all members of the fellowship had something whereby to enlighten the others. Their rejection of external ecclesiastical and political compulsions, and their application of the principle of consensus, became important in the political sphere. The social, political, religious and theological framework of the Anabaptist movement of the sixteenth century is in many respects different from that of the Magisterial Reformers and the Counter Reformation of Roman Catholicism; that in turn influenced the Anabaptist's concept of the nature of the church and its ministry, as well as their contributions to society and Christianity at large.

> (Olsen, 1990:13, 14)

It is important for this study, to note at this point that Littell contends "the connection of the destroyed Continental Anabaptist movement of the sixteenth century and the Free Churches of the seventeenth century in England has yet to be portrayed in detail, though the evidence is there" (Littell, 1957: 40). Kauffman and Harder in their comprehensive study of the Anabaptist movement also examine the question of the extent to which

contemporary Anabaptists embrace the principles of their sixteenth-century pioneers. The following principles are listed: "The early leaders emphasized the need for the church to be separated from the state, taught love and non-resistance, opposed military service and the swearing of legal oaths. They taught that membership should be based on a voluntary decision, and symbolized by adult baptism" (Kauffman and Harder, 1975: 336, 337). From the principle listed above, it seems according to Kauffman and Harder's research that, "from sixty to eighty percent of the present church members express agreement with these basic principles of Anabaptism" (Kauffman and Harder, 1975:337). On the other hand they highlight a point that is very significant for the purpose of this study. They state "Contemporary Anabaptists are weak in their support of the early Anabaptist principle of the 'priesthood of the laity'. The Anabaptists emphasized that all members of the congregation are ministers and should share in the ministerial functions of the congregation" (Kauffman and Harder, 1975:337). This may be understood to mean that the doctrine that was at one time held to a certain level of importance has relegated to a level where it is virtually neglected. This needs to be understood as an opinion that will need to be tested in an empirical study that will be looking at the validity of the statement in terms of the support. The current study focuses more on the theology and ecclesiology of the Free Churches. One of the implications of this doctrine in contemporary society according to Kauffman and Harder is: "the role which women can, and should fill in congregational leadership" (Kauffman and Harder, 1975:337). According to the study "traditional views on women's roles prevail, among both men and women. The churches need to explore new ways by which the resources of women can be more fully utilized in the work of the church" (Kauffman and Harder, 1975:337).

Having looked at the Anabaptist views on the priesthood of believers it is important to look at the Puritan heritage.

3.2.3.3 The Puritans on the Priesthood of Believers

The Puritan movement is said to have its beginnings between 1550 and 1580. "The main spring of Puritanism was the following of John Calvin. Calvin, of course, not only discouraged the control of religion by the State, but going to the opposite pole would have the State controlled by the Church. His teaching flourished abundantly in the soil of England" (Elliott-Binns, 1966:161)[84]. Coertzen, observes that Calvin "argued for a measure of ecclesiastical autonomy, a separation of church and state" (Coertzen, 2009: 576).[85] According to Eastwood, Puritanism "developed in three progressive phases which may be called the Conformist, the Non-Separatist, and the Separatist" (Eastwood, 1960:130). Eastwood also notes that two important movements sprang out of the Separatist Puritans namely the Baptists and the Quakers. In surveying the religious and political background from which the Puritan tradition advanced in England, Eastwood notes: "Reformation in England was an act of the State. There was an interplay of religious, social and political forces which makes the situation in England more complex than in either Germany or Switzerland…It was the doctrine of the Priesthood of believers which said all that the Puritans wanted to say…"(Eastwood, 1960:131).

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[84] Calvin believed strongly in the cooperation between church and state, but when it came to the issue of the ecclesiastical and civil power he took a position that there is a distinction between them (Calvin: Inst. Vol.IV: 1215)   With reference to 'heretics' he states: "for there are Christian magistrages who ought to correct these things by laws and sword" (Calvin: Inst. Vol. IV: 216). On the ministers and magistrates he concludes that "their functions ought to be joined that each serves to help, not hinder the other" (Ibid).

[85] See also Institutes, 1559,4.11.3-16; 4.20.1-4; Witte, 2008: 75.

There are three basic Puritan principles that undergird the Nonconformist belief and practice according to Eastwood: (1) Christ is the Head of the Church; (2) The Principle of Religious Liberty; and (3) The priesthood of believers (Eastwood, 1960: 151, 152).

Monk observes that a consideration given before on the link between Wesley and the English Puritan Tradition, tended to focus on "Wesley's affinities with Calvin or Luther and do not give sufficient attention to the fact that for the expression of this Reformed emphasis, Wesley depended upon the English version of the tradition, Puritanism" (Monk, 1966: 16). For Monk (1966:17), the focus of the Wesleyan and Methodist Puritanism was on "reviving the evangelical passion and experiential religion." Monk (1966:26), further defines Puritanism in terms of the English sixteenth century period, as referring to those "who sought to continue the Protestant Reformation by establishing what they understood to be 'pure' forms of doctrine, worship; and church polity." In summing up how Puritanism was seen even beyond Methodism, Monk (1966:27), makes the following observations "However within the bounds of this unity of belief and concern there was a great freedom of opinion. The Puritan movement therefore included persons representing a wide variety of theological emphases, ecclesiastical policies and political positions. The term includes some who remained loyal to the established Church, the Separatists such as Baptists, some Independents who separated from the established Church and those Presbyterians and Independents who were finally forced out through the act of uniformity of 1662."

According to Davies (1952:89) "the most distinctive contribution of Puritanism to English life, is found in the literal application of the doctrine of the priesthood of believers."

Townsend commenting on the ecclesiology of the Puritans states: "the ministry is the functioning of the whole membership; it is a divine vocation, the call and gift of Christ and of no other; but as functioning within the church the 'call' is confirmed by the whole membership of the local fellowship" (Townsend, 1949:66). Eastwood seems to be placing the Puritans and the English Free Churches in the same level. He uses the two terms interchangeable. He starts off by discussing about Puritans and ends up concluding about Free Churches. Davies in his attempt to explain the connection between the English Free Churches and the Puritans states: "the English Free Churches became generally known under that description only after 1896, when the separate non-Episcopal communions of England were affiliated to form a National Free Church Council, which included the Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Baptists, and Methodists, with the Society of Friends in sympathy on the periphery of the organization" (Davies, 1952:1). According to Davies the English Free Churches were nicknamed the 'Puritans', "Puritanism proper was the outlook of the radical Protestant party in Elizabethan days, who regarded the 'Elizabethan Settlement' as incomplete, a mere half-way house between Rome and Geneva. Their overriding aim was to model English liturgy, discipline, and government according to the 'pure' Word of God (Davies, 1952:1). According to Davies "Puritanism applied the Reformation and scriptural doctrine of 'the priesthood of believers' to family life and ecclesiastical government. The father and head of every household was its priest…The foundations of modern democracy are to be found in Church meetings of Independents and Baptists, and Class Meetings of the Methodists" (Davies, 1952:8).

Looking at the context in which Puritanism was nurtured, Davies observes, "Elizabeth's religious policy was subservient to her political aim of national unity. She deliberately

chose to make Canterbury independent of Rome and Geneva, with the result that Jesuit priests and Puritan preachers alike were persecuted under Elizabethan settlement, as potential enemies of England's unity" (Davies, 1952:20). This resulted in two groups being formed the conforming and non-conforming Puritans. "Their aims were the same, but their methods different. The conforming Puritans hoped for a further Reformation according to the Word of God, to be established by constitutional means, by the machinery of Parliament. The non-conforming Puritans, more impatient, less sanguine of the prospects of constitutional reform determined to have 'a Reformation without tarrying for any'" (Davis, 1952:20). The external pressure from the state affected the movement "the suppression of Puritanism within the Establishment led to the increase of Separatism. But a large party remained within the national Church, refusing to contemplate schism, and hoping for a change of heart in the sovereign or, if that seemed unlikely, a change of sovereign" (Davies, 1952:24). It is appropriate at this point before we deal with the Free Churches on the priesthood of believers, to give a brief overview on the Roman Catholic Reformation.

3.2.3.4 The Roman Catholic Reformation on the Priesthood of Believers

It may be noted that Magisterial, Radical and English Reformation focused on the Roman Catholic deviations from the Word of God. According to McGrath the Reformation of the Roman Catholic Church started after the Council of Trent that took place in 1545. Historians formerly referred to it as the 'Counter Reformation'. Most scholars today acknowledge it as a "Reformation of the Roman Catholic Church" (McGrath, 1999:11). The outcome of this movement presents a very interesting turn

about of events "as a result of the Catholic Reformation, many of the abuses which originally lay behind the demands for reform – whether these came from humanists or Protestants – were removed. By this stage, however, the Protestant Reformation had reached a point at which the mere removal of malpractices and abuses was no longer sufficient to reverse the situation: the demand for the reformation of doctrine, religious ideology, and the church was now regarded as an essential aspect of the Protestant-Roman Catholic controversies" (McGrath, 1999:11). The Reformation of the Catholic Church was not without problems, for "certain currents of the Catholic reform were eliminated as suspect or even heretical. The problem of correct ecclesiastical discipline, along with how to make the care of souls more rigorous and effective, remained alive. This was the problem that faced the Council of Trent (1545-1563)" (Hillebrand, 1996: 292). In trying to control things so that they don't go out of hand, "on 2 August 1564 a commission of cardinals was charged with monitoring and promoting the resolutions of the council. From that moment the implementation of the reform was under direct papal control: the numerous and significant guidelines that the council had provided for modifying the functioning of the ecclesiastical structure and its relationship to the laity were filtered through the Roman authorities" (Hillebrand, 1996:293). It is only during and after Vatican II that there is a more pointed emphasis on the role of laity in contrast to the suspicion that we observe during and after the Council of Trent in the sixteenth century. Congar a Roman Catholic theologian played a vital role in attempting to bring the priesthood of believers in some kind of spotlight in the arena of Catholic theology. "Congar developed his theology of the laity through the use of the ecclesiological construct of structure and life in which he sought to offset the one-sided emphasis in the

treatises *de ecclesia* on the hierarchy or the structure pole of the church to the detriment of the life pole to which the laity belongs…Congar made positive steps in developing a 'laicology' as a corrective to the one-sided emphasis on a 'hierarchology'" (MacDonald, 1984:130). All these efforts to reform the Roman Catholic Church from within were not without resistance and suspicion. In a recent article that is featured among other Catholic scholarly writings on the subject at hand, Hans Kung wrote an article on the 'participation of laity in the church', in which he points out:

> If we may, to begin with, argue, from a more sociological point of view: Some of those who today reject joint decision making with the laity in the church earlier rejected on the same basis any serious participation of the laity through collaboration and advising in the church. And some of those who protest today against a democratization of the church and against any translation of secular sociological models to the church not too long ago accepted without reflection the secular sociological model of the monarchy for the church, and even in practice did nothing against the monarchization of the church. Basically it is better even in the church to speak of democracy (the entire holy people of God) than of the hierocracy (a holy caste). For while in the New Testament all worldly honorary titles are strictly shunned in connection with the bearers of office, they are in fact given to the entire believing people, which is designated 'a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a consecrated nation' (I Pet. 2:9) and made 'a line of kings and priests, to serve our God and to rule the world' (Rev. 5:10) But that already demonstrates that in decisive matter we are careful to argue not in sociological but in theological categories. Only in this way can we show that joint decision making and regulation on the part of the laity is not only a timely concession to modern democratic developments but is a move thoroughly rooted in the church's own origins.

> (Küng, 1992:81, 82)

This sums up historically and currently what the Roman Catholic Church has been saying and doing in a nutshell on the doctrine of the priesthood of believers particularly with reference to the Catholic Reformation. We now turn to the English Reformation.

3.2.3.5 The English Reformation and Free Churches on the Priesthood of Believers

The Continental Reformation in Europe was not simply transplanted into England. England had its own unique series of manifestations of Reformation. Most historians claim that the English Reformation was initiated by the crown in its different stages. On this point most historians are in agreement.[86] However it is apparent that there is a recent shift in English Reformation historiography. The work that stands out and that cannot be ignored by any serious historian on English Reformation is Dicken's *English Reformation* which was published in 1964. Haigh cites one reason which he believes is the main reason for the ascendance of this book to such a high level of popularity, and that is "it built upon a well-established tradition in English historical consciousness" (Haigh, 1987:1). Dicken's work follows a similar pattern with the historical account of the English Reformation that was given by John Foxe in 1563, but in a more sophisticated way (Haigh, 1987:1). There is always a need to revise historical data, and recent research has challenged Foxe and Dicken's works. Haigh makes a significant point that clarifies this particular shift more, "the historian who seeks long-term causes for the English Reformation can easily find them, as Dickens did in the first five chapters of his book. Because the Reformation happened, it is tempting to assume that it was necessary, that it was a justifiable protest against appalling defects in the late-medieval Church. But the search for flaws is a dangerous undertaking, and their contemporary significance can be exaggerated…Generations of historians tracing the origins of the Reformation have cited examples of negligence and immorality among the clergy. There were scandals it is

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[86] "The one definite thing which can be said about the Reformation in England is that it was an act of the State" (Powcke, 1941: 1; See Also McGrath, 1999: 252 and Dickens, 1964:83).

true – but they were very rare" (Haigh, 1987:3). McGrath argues with a similar accent that there is overwhelming evidence "that the origin of the *English* Reformation cannot be attributed to criticism of the late medieval church, or to Lutheran influence" italics mine (McGrath, 1999: 250). Therefore the difference between the recent research on English Reformation and the long standing popular historiography are the claims that were made earlier which do not seem to be able to stand the new evidence anymore. The recent research claims that "the fact that there was a Reformation does not mean that it was wanted: it does not imply that there was a deep-seated popular demand for religious change" (Haigh, 1987:4; cf McGrath 1999 249, 250). The earlier claims represented in Dicken's work show that anti-clericalism was one of the main causes of the English Reformation, because it ushered a spirit of dissatisfaction that led to alienation from the Catholic Church (Dickens, 1964:82). Therefore when Dickens refers to the priesthood of believers, he will view it differently from the more recent researchers. As a case in point Scairisbrick (1984:38), raises a pertinent question and argues to the contrary: "since these religious guilds seem to have been most numerous in eastern, lowland England and since they gave special opportunities for lay initiative, must there not have been some connection between them and the spread of English Protestantism? The answer is no." For Scairisbrick "there is no evidence that pre-Reformation heresy and anticlericalism found fraternities to be natural seedbeds (as they could be on the Continent)" (Scairisbrick, 1984:38).

 With the foregoing arguments, it is important at this point to acknowledge that the emphasis on the priesthood of believers in the context of the English Reformation would be different from that which we find in the Continental Reformation. The contribution

this background makes to this particular research is that it explains why there is not such a strong accent on the priesthood of believers, from a theological angle. On the other hand it is not entirely absent but one could say it is assumed.

We now turn to the Separatist movement and how they saw the priesthood of believers.

a)   The English Baptist Heritage and the Priesthood of Believers

The early movement of the English separatists started as early as the late sixteenth century. "The Ancient Church of English Separatists was established in London in 1587. The members of this congregation who escaped the clutches of the English government fled to the Netherlands beginning in 1593" (Coggins, 1991:30). However it will be anachronistic to speak of the significance of the Separatist movement before 1603. The English Separatist movement took shape under the religious policy of James I, where he had to choose between the movements and churches that were there, one that would be a state Church. Some Anglicans, Puritans, Catholics and the ancient Church in Amsterdam[87] were among those churches that appealed to the monarchy to think of them as an option for a state Church. But James I chose the Anglican Church, and this was the beginning of persecution for those that did not conform (Coggins, 1991:30). These rappid events led to the persecution of the Separatists and non-conformists.

> On July 16, 1604, James reiterated in a proclamation (against the House of Commons) that no innovations in religion would be allowed, and established November 30 as the deadline for conformity. In September he proclaimed a set of 141 canons passed by the convocation of the

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[87] Geudeke observes that "in Amsterdam the Reformed Church never had support of the majority of the people...The local Reformed Church moved toward greater Orthodoxy" (1996:30). The kind of Orthodoxy that was strong was the contra-Remonstrant Orthodoxy. "Within Holland, the Amsterdam consistory led the struggle against the Remonstrants, who were for their part supported by the provincial government...When the state of Holland and their leader were overthrown...the Orthodox party was enabled to organize the Synod of Dordrecht (1618-1619) in which Amsterdamers played a prominent role. All disputed issues were decided in favor of Orthodoxy" (Geudeke, 1996:30)).

English Church. In December he obtained a favourable court ruling that these canons were enforceable without the consent of Parliament. The Council of Archbishop of Canterbury Richard Bancroft quickly set in motion the wheels of government that would enforce these canons. By canon 37, all clergy were required to subscribe, not only to the royal supremacy and the Thirty nine Articles, but also to episcopacy and the Book of Common Prayer. Perhaps three hundred Puritan clergymen refused to subscribe to these canons and were threatened with disciplinary action and the loss of their livings. (Some gave in others held on to their belief and suffered the loss) Those who were deprived met together for prayer, consultation and worship – Out of some of these gatherings grew Separatist congregations.

(Coggins, 1991:31)

Ultimately both non-conforming and separatist churches were persecuted under James I and they fled to Holand. From there there were two groups that went to America. The first group came about 1620 and they became the Pymouth church. They were not Puritans or Non-conformists, but Separatists. They were severely persecuted for the position they took to separate from the Church of England (Armitage, 1977: 619).

Eight years later about 1628 another group came to settle in Plymouth, and these were "non-conformists from the Netherlands" (Armitage, 1977:621). This group is described as follows:

The Puritans, who settled the Massachusetts Bay Colony, in 1628, eight years after the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth, were another people entirely. They had paid a less price for their religious freedom and were less tolerant in spirit; while in regard to the separation of the Church from the State they stood substantially with the Pilgrims. The Plymouth men had separated from the Church of England as a corrupt and fallen body, but the Puritans continue in communion with that Church, although they refused to conform to many of its practices and denounced them warmly; hence they were known as Non-conformist or Puritans.

(Armitage, 1977:622)

Another important name in the Baptist history is that of Roger Williams. He is said to be the first Baptist in America. "Roger was a stern Puritan, opposed to the liturgy and hierarchy…He was a sturdy Puritan when he left England, but when he reached Boston he had become a Separatist…When he finally separated from the Church he found refuge in a semi-fellowship with the English Church and the Congregational Churches put under the control of the magistrates. Because of his separatist ideas he was eventually banished from Salem where he had hoped to find a home" (Armitage, 1977:627, 628).

Roger Williams also became a very important name among the Jews both in England and America. His book *Bloody Tenet* is alleged to have oppened doors of liberation and acceptance for this estranged people both in England and America (Armitage, 1977:654). One of the best skilled among the Jewish writers recently had this to say about Roger Williams:

> The earliest champion of religious freedom, or 'soul liberty,' as he designated that most precious jewel of all liberties, was Roger Williams. To him rightfully belongs the immortal fame of having been the first person in modern times to assert and maintain in its fullest plenitude the absolute right of every man to 'a full liberty in religious concernments' and to found a State where in this doctrine was the key-stone of its organic laws… Roger William, the first pure type of an American freeman, proclaimed the laws of civil and religious liberty, that 'the people were the origin of all free power in government,' that God has given to men no power over conscience, nor any men grant this power to each other; that the regulation of the conscience is not one of the purposes for which men combine in civil society. For uttering such heresies this great founder of our liberties was banished out of the jurisdiction of the Puritans in America… In grateful remembrance of God's merciful providence.
>
> (Armitage, 1977:657)

The brief historial account given above concerning the English Reformation particularly as it affected the Baptist Church both in England and America and the interaction with

the Puritan Dutch Baptists sets the stage for our later discussion on the Seventh-day Adventist history. The researcher is inclined to believe that the high regard the Jews had for Roger Williams may have had an influence in many of the American Jews. It will be shown later when dealing with the Seventh-day Adventist history, that the Sabbath was introduced by the Seventh-day Baptists among the early Seventh-day Adventists. Could this be an important link as well between the Baptist heritage and the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Armitage finally makes a historical statement that for me sums up the history of the Baptist Church and links it up with the Seventh-day Adventist Church as we will also note later in this very chapter. He states:

> We have now seen that the Baptists who in the former times were called Anabaptists, and at a later period Mennonites, were originally Waldenses, who in the history of the Church, even from the most ancient times, have received such well deserved homage. On this account the Baptists may be considered, as of old, the only religious community which has continued from the times of the Apostles; as a Christian Society which has kept pure through all ages the evangelical doctrines of religion. The uncorrupted inward and outward condition of the Baptist community affords proof of the truth contested by the Romish Church, of the great necessity of a reformation of religion such as that which took place in the sixteenth century and also a refutation of the erroneous notion of the Roman Catholics that their denomination is the most ancient.

>   (Armitage, 1977: 149)

A final note on the Baptist Church and the priesthood of believers. Morris writing on *Baptist Distinctives and Polity* defines the Church for Baptists as a theocracy that operates "in the local time and place as a democracy. Democracy in the local church can only be effective when there is an understanding of what it means by being a theocracy" (Morris, 1994:161). For the Baptists "the idea of democracy in the local church is based

upon the doctrine of the priesthood of believers, or the right of every individual to believe and act for himself as a redeemed person…The priesthood of believers means more than individual freedom and privileges. It means responsibility and servanthood. It is not 'individualism' but free persons functioning together in a community of faith" (Morris, 1994:162). On that note where the teaching of the Baptists on the priesthood of believers is given in a nutshell, we move on to the Methodist heritage starting with John Wesley.

b)   John Wesley (1703-1791), Methodists and the Priesthood of Believers

Wesley's life took a new turn from a humble dedicated young life that was focused on ritualistic ideas to a warm person, when he listened to the reading of Luther's preface to his Commentary on Romans. His brother Charles also had a similar experience. "In 1739 George Whitefield, with whom he later broke because of Calvinistic theology, asked Wesley to preach at Bristol. This was the beginning of his preaching career. This meant extensive travel on horse back, in England, Scotland, and Ireland" (Cairns, 1954:416, 17).

At the beginning of the Methodist Movement about 1748, John Wesley wrote an account on the "People Called Methodists" in which he outlines simple articles based on his reflection on the general principles of Scripture. In this account he encourages the believers to minister to one another (Wesley, 8:249). He initiated the organization of societies, where this ministry of the laity continued. Ministers were also involved but it was mostly the laity that took leadership. Some lay leaders were given several groups to visit and take care of, they were charged with the responsibility "to advise, reprove,

comfort, exhort, as occasion may require" (Wesley, 8:253, 261). His organizational structures were challenged by some as not based on Scripture. As Wesley was not prepared to find a text to support this, he appealed to the general application of Scripture (Wesley, 8:255). Some raised objection on the believers ministering to one another and confessing in the groups and condemned it as Popery. Wesley once again reasoned from logic and did not bother to expound from Scripture, "Do not they yet know, that only Popish confession is, the confession made by a single person to a Priest? – and this itself is in nowise condemned by our Church; nay, she recommends it in some cases. Whereas, that which we practise is, the confession of several persons conjointly, not to a Priest, but to each other" (Wesley, 8:259). This brief account brings us to a decisive conclusion that Wesley subscribed to the teaching of the priesthood of believers though its approach was not expository like Luther but rather pragmatic in the application of his ecclesiological structures. This conclusion is supported not only by the inferences we have noted above from Wesley's own writings, it has also filtered through scholarly debates and studies. In a study that was originally a doctoral dissertation and later was synthesised into a book by Monk, we find more illumination on the subject. In his research Monk refers to research that has been conducted before by John Simon *John Wesley and Religious Societies* which is an attempt to show a link between the Methodist societies and the Religious society of the English Reformation period. His conclusion affirms this connection. Another study by Towlson on *Moravians and Methodists* – in this book a comparison is made between the Moravian structures and the bands and societies of the Methodists. His conclusion is that Wesley was influenced by Count Zinzendorf of the Moravian movement (Monk 1966:210). Monk dismisses both claims on the basis of

being far fetched and argues for an amalgam of the Puritan concept of the gathered church and the priesthood of believers as foundational for Wesley's bands and societies. For Monk "The Methodist application of the great Protestant doctrine of the priesthood of believers in the use of the lay preacher, lay leaders of societies, and classes as well as emphasis upon the individual responsibility for one another's spiritual life" speaks for itself (Monk, 1966:210, 211). Having established that Wesley in the eighteenth century, during the formative years of the Methodist movement used the doctrine of the priesthood of believers as a foundational principle for organizing the movement

c)   **The Seventh-day Adventist Church Heritage and the Priesthood of Believers**

It is appropriate at this point of the research to sketch some highlights that mark the historical development of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It is also an apt point to establish whether the connectivity alluded earlier between the Seventh-day Adventist Church with Baptist and Methodist Churches, can be substantiated by historical evidence. The Birth of the Seventh-day Adventist Church has its starting point in America with the Millerite Movement. Although in tracing their roots Seventh-day Adventists never have this as a starting point. As Schwarz (1979:13) puts it "Seventh-day Adventists believe that their roots in history go back a long way. Back, not only to the Millerite movement of the 1830s and 40s, but farther: to Wesley and the eighteenth century Evangelical revivalists, to the great Protestant Reformers … Back to Christ and the apostles themselves." Looking back at the Millerite movement, it may be noted that this inter-confessional movement is named after William Miller who was its originator. Miller was born at Pittsfiels, Massachusetts, February 15, 1782, under the influence of a religious

mother; his grandfather and uncle were Baptist preachers. His father was a veteran of the Revolutionary war. His mother, the daughter of a Baptist minister, Elnathan Phelps, taught him to respect Scriptures as a Revelation from God. Being of a hospitable nature, Miller often spent time entertaining his Grandfather Phelps, who was then pastor of the Orwell Baptist Church, and his Uncle Elihu Miller, pastor of the Low Hampton Baptist Church. They had an indelible influence in Millers young mind, but he still had questions that were unresolved in his mind especially as he encountered deism (Dick, 1994:4). During the war of 1812 Miller became a lieutenant in the state militia; his experience shook his belief in deism. After the war he went back to Low Hampton and began attending the local Baptist church perhaps at first to please his sickly and widowed mother (Schwartz, 1979:31).

Miller began his rigorous study of the Bible after his conversion in 1816. Starting with the study of the Second coming of Christ, he presented this to a group of about 15 families. After that presentation he received an invitation from Elder Fuller, the Baptist minister of Poultney, requesting him to lecture on the second coming in his church. From there he was frequently invited by Baptist, Methodist and Congregational churches, in western Vermont, northern New York, and in Canada. In September 1833, the Baptist Church, without prior discussion with him, granted him a licence to preach (Dick, 1994: 5, 6, 10). By 1836 Miller's lectures had been compiled and passed on to many people. One of the recipients of these printed lectures was a 28 year old Methodist minister Josiah Litch. In 1838 he received these lectures in written form with a request to evaluate the value of the material. Litch was convicted about Adventism and in April 1838 he wrote a book on Millerism. Litch had a special burden for the ministers of the Gospel.

He wrote a book to the clergy by 1840 urging them to examine the evidence for the second coming which was to take place in 1843 according to Miller's calculations. His activities brought him into conflict with the Methodist leadership. The matter reached its climax on June 9 1841, at the meeting of the Province, Rode Island, Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church; this was Litch's employing organization. At this conference he was publicly examined for about fourty minutes by his bishop concerning his preaching of Miller's doctrine, as it was understood to be. "The bishop frankly asked Litch if he felt his beliefs were 'Methodism'. 'I do' replied Litch. 'at least it is not contrary to the articles of religion on the Methodist Episcopal Church.' The conference concluded that Litch, believed nothing contrary to Methodism" (Knight, 1993:97). At his own request Litch was relieved of his duties as a Methodist minister, his aim was to devote more time on preaching and teaching this important doctrine.

Another very able preacher joined Miller in the preaching of the Second Coming. This was Joshua Himes, who upon joining the movement began the work of printing a journal 'The Signs of the Times' the first issue was printed on March 20, 1840, this was about four months after he had met Miller. The journal had a change of name to 'The Advent Herald' in February 1844. Today the Seventh-day Adventist Church has the Adventist Review and the Signs of the Times Journals still being printed periodically (Gordon, 1990: 52, 54).

Miller's visit to Portland Maine gained more people that would feature prominently in the movement. This is where a twelve year old Ellen Harmon heard the message of the Second Coming of Christ for the first time and she embraced it in 1840. The Harmon family were members of the Methodist Church in Portland Maine (Gordon, 1990:62).

The Millerite movement was not only spreading in the United States of America, there are clear evidences of this movement in Great Britain. One of the agents of the movement was Robert Hutchinson a former Wesleyan Methodist missionary to Canada who had been converted to Adventism. He printed a magazine known as the 'Voice of Elijah'; he used this magazine to convince his Methodist friends and colleagues about his newly found faith. He also tried to refute anti Millerite stories that appeared in the press. An important Millerite centre in Britain was established in New Radford a suburb of Nottingham. It was in this locality that the first Millerite chapel was established in Great Britain. The Leader in 1844-1845 was Edmund Micklewood. He became dissatisfied with the rigidity and authoritarian leadership of the Wesleyan Methodists of which he was a member. It is important to note a claim that has been made that "no denomination in England was more opposed to Adventism than the Methodists and those Methodist local preachers with Adventist sympathies were silenced" (Numbers and Butler, 1987:63, 64). By the end of 1845 an appeal was made for funding the British mission. This was approved by the Advent Conference in New York in May 1846, Joshua Himes, Robert Hutchinson, and F.G. Brown sailed for Britain in June of that year. These are the efforts that were made after the Great Disappointment of 1844 when the predicted date passed without the event happening. They continued to preach the Second Coming in Britain. It is estimated that perhaps about 2000-3000 converts accepted the message of the Millerites in Britain between 1842 and 1846. A large percentage of those who became Millerites were from the Baptist, Methodist, or millennial sects. (Numbers and Butler, 1987:70). The context, in which the Millerite movement thrived both in America and Britain, is worth noting. There was a premillennial fever which affected the United States

and Britain during the 1840s. This was an understanding that Christ's Coming was before the Millenium which is the thousand years of peace (Numbers and Butler, 1987:72). Miller's views on the Second Advent were not without opposition. One of the most potent opposers of Miller's views was from the ranks of the Methodist Church. An influential woman preacher, Phoebe Palmer, was both a preacher and a prolific writer. On two occasions Palmer wrote to William Miller, the first letter came just after the predictions of Miller were not fulfilled. She demanded that he recants and acknowledge his errors in public. In her second letter she accused Miller of deception of Satan in his erroneous calculations (Raser, 1987:368, 369).[88]

The transition from Millerism to Seventh-day Adventism demands a brief consideration at this point. "Millerism contributed to the Seventh-day Adventist identity and has sustained an impact throughout Adventist history" (Numbers and Butler, 1987:198). Among the different groups that were formed after the Dissappointment of 1844 there were two distinct opposing views: The first group believed that the prediction of the Second coming of Christ in October 22, 1844 was a prophetic miscalculation, while a small group who would eventually become Seventh-day Adventists followed Hiram Edson's view that the prediction was correctly calculated, the mistake was on the event, it was not the second coming but rather the investigative judgment that was predicted. In giving the context in which Adventism developed in America Butler states: "By the 1840s, Americans had gained release from religious and cultural confinements which had bound them to a fixed place in God's cosmos and the social order…In the transition from

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[88] On general treatment of Adventist and Millennial views in America see Ernest R. Sandeen, 1970. *The Roots of Fundamentalism: British and American Millennarianism, 1800-1930.* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press. and also Timothy P. Weber, 1979. *Living in the Shadow of the Second Coming: American Pre-millenialism 1875-1925.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Puritanism to Victorianism from piety to moralism, the individual came to bear the inordinate moral weight of character building" (Numbers and Butler, 1987:200, 201).

The Seventh-day Baptists added a new doctrinal understanding to the Millerite movement by introducing the Biblical understanding of keeping the Seventh-day Sabbath. By 1859 the Sabbath-keeping Adventists had passed from the anticlericalism of Millerism to the ordination of clergy. Added to the rigorous study of Scripture to test every doctrine there was also an acknowledgment of a prophetic gift of Ellen White, previously Harmon, but now was married to James White who was also a strong influence in the development of the organization (Numbers and Butler, 1987:204).

From 1855-1901 there was a gradual but steady growth in membership, institutions and missionary work (Ferm, 1953:375). It was during this time that the Seventh-day Adventist Church began to spread in Great Britain and South Africa. Britain was first visited by William Ings born in Hampshire, England, but brought up in America. He started his missionary work in Southampton, May 23, 1878. Seventh-day Adventists conducted a baptismal service for the first time in Great Britain on February 8, 1880 (Olsen, 1932: 363, 364).

It is important for this study to note the developments in South Africa because it was during this time that the reorganization of the Church took place. South Africa played a significant role in the direction the church took towards church reorganization.   The first Missionaries arrived in South Africa in 1887, it was Elder D.A. Robinson and C. Boyd with their wives and George Burleigh and R.S. Anthony (Literature Evangelists), this team arrived in Cape Town in July 1887. As a result of their efforts in 1892 the Cape Conference was organized, with head quarters at Cape Town (Olsen, 1932:483-85).

Francois Swanepoel wrote an M.A. thesis in 1972 in which he sketches the history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church from 1886-1920. His study highlights some important themes:

> The struggles to reconcile American and South African religious practices and methods; the attempts to imitate the American church's institutions and organizations; the particular influence of certain leaders of the church and of its main institutions; the effects of the political and economic climate of South Africa; and the church's growth to stability and a measure of self-dependency and maturity in South Africa.
>
> (Swanepoel, 1972:vii).

Swanepoel makes a significant observation based on his findings. That the State Archives in South Africa, Pretoria, Bloemfontein, and Cape Town do not have any historically significant documents on the Seventh-day Adventist Church is quite revealing. He then attempts to account for this gap and states:

> The Seventh-day Adventist Church remained strictly aloof from political involvement, and operated on such a level that it seldom had any direct contact with the country's government…persons not belonging to the church seem not to have considered it of enough importance to record anything about its activities.
>
> (Swanepoel 1972: viii)

The early beginnings of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa are marked by the presence of a Seventh-day Adventist in the 1870s of whom there is no clear record, who had been searching for gold mining opportunities and had come to Kimberly, South Africa, to explore the diamond mining opportunities. William Hunt had been in contact with J.N. Loughborough and D.T. Bourdeau who were the leaders of the Seventh-day

Adventist Church in America. It was around the time of Hunt's visit to South Africa that a letter was received from J.H.C. Wilson, a former local preacher of the Wesleyan Methodist Church, who had been converted to Seventh-day Adventism after studying the literature provided by Hunt (Swanepoel, 1972:1).[89] No record is available until 1885, again around Kimberly two members of the Dutch Reformed Church Pieter J.D. Wessels, and George J. van Druten who worshipped at the Boshof, O.F.S. congregation were convinced of the Seventh-day Adventist teaching about the Seventh-day Sabbath and decided to keep the Saturday Sabbath (Swanepoel, 1972:1). Later on they met William Hunt and he provided them with Seventh-day Adventist literature (Swanepoel, 1972:1). Richard Moko was the first black South African to be convicted about Seventh-day Adventist teachings. He helped to spread Seventh-day Adventism among the Xhosa in the Eastern Cape. He settled near King Williams Town (Buwa, 1985:9).[90] The first convert among the Sotho- Speaking people was David Kalaka who became a translator initially for N.S. Haskell during his evangelistic world tour in 1895 (Makapela, 1995:71). Makapela highlights the connection between Cecil Rhodes and Pieter Wessels, which is a business and political relationship that started at a personal level when diamonds were discovered in the Wessels farm. Cecil John Rhodes bought the farm. "The Wessels family, especially their son Pieter, became chief facilitator between the Seventh-day Adventists who were seeking to establish a foothold in Southern Africa and Cecil Rhodes whose ambition was to expand his mining concerns and also increase British imperial control in Africa" (Makapela, 1995:51). In 1894 a meeting took place between Cecil John Rhodes and a representation of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the person of Pieter

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[89] See also (Nichol, 1976:1363)

[90] Moko was Baptized in Kimberly in 1895, and was granted a licence to preach in 1897 (Nichol, 1976:1365).

Wessels and A.T. Robinson (an American Missionary who was in South Africa at the time). Robinson was mandated by the Foreign Mission Board of the Seventh-day Adventist General Conference to explore possibilities of land acquisition in Matabeleland[91]. This was in line with the missionary purpose of the Church, but this time it collided with Cecil Rhodes' interest in expanding the British presence from Cape to Cairo. "However, the Matabeleland venture created consternation at the Seventh-day Adventist General Conference Headquarters. The debate was around the issue of separation of church and state. Dissidents were arguing that the church abide by its founding principles of separating itself and its activities from those of the state no matter how tempting the carrot" (Makapela, 1995:51). In spite of the position taken by the Seventh-day Adventist Church to stay aloof from politics and to separate church and state, the political and economic dynamics have had an effect on the Church. Therefore the structure of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa has been affected by these dynamics.

The first local conference[92] was organized in 1892.[93] Referring to the development of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa Oliver states:

> The most far-reaching developments which would later culminate in reorganization of the structure of the denomination did not take place in North America. They took place in response to the needs of the Church as it ventured in new situations in the mission fields for example, South Africa. It came about as a result of demands being placed on the organizational structure of the church by the escalating internationalization of the Church.

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[91] The supervision of the work in the whole of Southern Africa was based in South Africa, this included Rhodesia and Basutoland (Nichol, 1976:1366).

[92] A group of local congregations form a local conference in the Seventh-day Adventist ecclesiological structure.

[93] "with A.T.Robinson, president, I.J. Hankins, secretary, and Mrs N.H. Druilland, treasurer. The administrative headquarters were in the Roeland Street Church in Cape Town" (Nichol, 1976:1366).

(Oliver, 1989:74)

Upon his arrival in South Africa in 1891, in his attempt to organize the work in this new field for the Seventh-day Adventist Church, A.T. Robinson soon realized that he cannot import the same structure that is operative in North America in South Africa at the time.[94] He proposed a structure and a constitution that will consolidate these structures, and his rationale was to release as many people as possible to be involved in direct ministry rather than administration. Therefore by centralizing administration more personnel could be dedicated to direct lines of ministry especially pastors. His proposal was received by O.A. Olsen who was the President of the General Conference[95] at the time who in turn sought advice from W.C White, an experienced administrator. He generally liked the proposal and made a few suggestions about detail issues. White also took time to write to Robinson to encourage him. By the time Olsen took the matter to the Foreign Missionary Board in which the proposal was rejected, time had lapsed and on the basis of the positive response Robinson had gone ahead and implemented the plan. "Subsequently he observed that in spite of the disapproval of the Foreign Mission Board the work of the South African Conference went along quite smoothly, under the new plan of organization" (Oliver, 1989:81). The same form of structure that Robinson proposed and implemented was to be adopted by the Seventh-day Adventist Church globally by 1901, and it was developed and perfected further. By 1902[96] a union conference[97] was

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[94] "which comprised a number of autonomous, self-governing auxiliary organizations" (Oliver, 1989: 74). Today these are known as church departments (ministries) in which laity are involved according to their areas of giftedness.

[95] See footnote 56

[96] By 1901 the membership was 715 in 15 Churches (Nichol, 1366).

[97] A group of two or more local conferences form a union conference within a larger geographical area such as a national scope.

organized, "with two local conferences and two mission fields."[98] The two local conferences operated from 1929 until 1958.[99] Thompson however also observes the negative impact of the plan. With reference to World War II period he states: "as a result of the great emphasis on institutions, education and training there were issues at stake in the growth of institutionalism over evangelism" (Thompson, 1977:287). Another development around this time that impacted negatively on the Church was the dividing of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa along racial lines. "The Cape Field was organized in 1933 to supervise work among the Coloured community. In 1936 work among the African people of South Africa consolidated into two fields, the South Bantu Field and North Bantu Field. The Indian Field was organized in 1956" (Nichol, 1976:1367). There is no evidence of any reflection on the biblical basis for these changes in the church structure. "In 1960 the South Africa Union was divided into two groups of organizational units. Group I comprised the organizations, both conference and field, serving the non-Bantu population of the union while Group II comprised organizations serving the Bantu population" (Nichol, 1976:1367). These structures were additions that were not found anywhere in the world. "By 1965 it was decided to dissolve Groups I and II and form two separate unions, namely the South African Union, with responsibility for the work among the White, Coloured and Indian people; and the Southern Union, to care

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[98] This information is taken from a document on unity that was a subject of discussion at a union conference meeting in 2004, "Local Conference Mergers in Southern Africa Union – Review of Procedures and Options" p 6.

[99] The Seventh-day Adventist Church since as early as 1897 operated health institutions, publishing centeres, and centers of learning which operated through this period (1929-1958) some to the present. "During the early years of the Church in South Africa a number of young men and women went to America to atend Battle Creek College. When in 1892 it was decided to have an college in South Africa, land was purchased and buildings erected near Claremont, a suburb of Cape Town and there Claremont Union College (later commonly called Union College) was opened in February, 1893. Because of financial reasons it was closed in 1918 and moved to a farm in Natal, where it became Spion Kop College. In 1928 the school was moved again this time to Somerset West, a rural site about 30 miles from Cape Town (Nichol, 1976:1367). It is up to now training teachers, ministers and some business courses are being offered.

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exclusively for work among the Blacks" (Nichol, 1976:1367). The General Conference[100]

took an initiative in 1981 and 1990 to address the racial situation in South African

Seventh-day Adventist Churches which were by this time removed from the division that

operated in the African territory because of the racial intonation that undergirded their

structures. A special South African Affairs committee was formed to work towards the

unity of the structures that were operating in the same geographical territories divided

according to race groups. The Seventh-day Adventist Church had already taken a stand

on racism in its fundamental belief 13 "where it is stated that distinctions of race, culture,

learning, rank, wealth and sex must not divide the Church" (Nichol, 1976:1367). This

was based on biblical grounds which were highlighted by the commission that was

mandated by the General Conference to take on the task of "determining what the

Church needs to do to meet the multi-racial needs of the Church within the biblical

framework of church unity and equality of all members" (Nichol, 1976:1367). As a

result of the initiative of the General Conference, the biblical and doctrinal rational

provided by 1991 the two unions had merged into one unified structure, this was

followed by the merger of the Kwazulu Natal Free State Conference in 1994 (Schwartz,

2000: 507). On 13 September 2010, a merger took place between the Good Hope

Conference (historically coloured conference) and the Southern Conference (historically

black conference) (du Preez, 2010:294). Du Preez further recounts that "the 'merger' that

eventually took place in 2006 between the Cape Conference [historically white

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[100] This is a structure that unites continental structures known as divisions that come after the unions which are national structures. Sometimes these structures are not exactly national, the Union in South Africa for example incorporated Namibia, Lesoto, Swaziland and this is still the case. And the divisions are not all necessarily strictly according to continents, sometimes language is considered. Some of the African countries were incoporated into European divisions because they were French speaking, to accomodate the language needs.

conference] and the Southern Hope Conference [a merged Conference with both coloured and black constituencies], did not transpire because of a decision by the Cape Conference to Merge" (du Preez, 2010:294). A restructuring process Union-wide restructuring process led to the formation of the new Cape Conference, which combined the Southern Hope Conference and the former Cape Conference (with a mainly white constituency) (du Preez, 2010:295). The last leg of the mergers or restructuring whichever may come first is expected between the between the Conferences with head offices based in Gauteng: the Transvaal (historically with coloured and white constituency) and Trans-Orange Conferences (historically with a black constituency), is still hanging in the balance. This sums up the history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa in broad strokes.

3.3   Historical Developments in Seventh-day Adventist Ecclesiology

Alberto Timm (2002:283-302) gives an overview of the Seventh-day Adventist ecclesiology from 1844-2001. His study is more historical, in that it is divided according to specific periods of historical significance for the development of Seventh-day Adventist ecclesiology: (1) 844-1863 was a time largely of doctrinal development; (2) 1863-1950 was mainly a period of organizational development; (3) 1950-2001 was characterized predominantly by academic development and a number of concerns on the organizational structure were raised at this time.

3.3.1 Historical Developments in Seventh-day Adventist Ecclesiology 1844-1863

About six months after the 1844 Disappointment, a conference was convened at Albany New York on 29 April 1845. About 61 ministers and delegates came together under the chairmanship of William Miller (Daniels Feb, 7 1907:5). A position was reached and an agreement was made:

> Order is heaven's first law. All things emanating from God are constituted on principles of perfect order. The New Testament rules for the government of the church we regard as binding on the whole brotherhood of Christ. No circumstances can justify us in departing from the usages established by Christ and his apostles.
> We regard any congregation of believers, who habitually assemble for the worship of God and the due observance of gospel ordinances, as a church of Christ. As such, it is an independent body, accountable only to the great Head of the church. To all such we recommend a careful examination of the Scriptures, and the adoption of such principles of association and order as are in accordance therewith, that they may enjoy the advantages of that church relation which Christ has instituted.

> (Daniels Feb, 7 1907:5)

Prior to this statement an informal discussion brought a resolution they should never organize another church (Daniels Feb, 7 1907:5). This was discussed in the context of the movement that drew people from different churches with no intended purpose to organize a church. It was the hostility of those who opposed it just prior the 1844 disappointment that made it impossible to be a Millerite and remain in a church (Daniels Feb, 7 1907: 6). This led to a number of believers to come out of their churches, thus creating a need for organization. This need would be resisted until 1860 when a formal discussion on the name was started. At a formal meeting at Battle Creek, Michigan on the month of September 1960, a resolution was taken to take the name Seventh-day Adventist (Daniels March 21, 1907:4)

The following year a council was called on 5 October 1861 in which the organization of believers into churches and the organization of churches into conferences, was achieved (Daniels April 11, 1907:6). The same council resolved that the conference consist of ministers and representatives from the churches (Daniels April 11, 1907:6). It was also resolved that "the officers of this conference consist of a Chairman, Clerk, and a Standing committee of three" (Daniels April 11, 1907:6). It was further resolved that the very first session of the Michigan State Conference of Seventh-day Adventists be held at Monterey, Michigan on 5-8 October 1962. This conference was also charged with the responsibility to give credentials to the ministers of the State of Michigan who are in good standing (Daniels April 11, 1907:6).

In 1863 a complete form of structure was adopted. This added a third level of organization comprising of all state conferences, to be known as the General Conference. The officers of this level were to be: president, secretary, and treasurer, plus an executive committee of three. The sessions of the General Conference were to be held annually (Oliver, 1989:49, 50). The form of church governance "incorporated, but adapted elements from Episcopal, congregational, and Presbyterian forms of governance (Oliver, 1989: 50).[101] While the organisational structure of the Seventh-day Adventist Church resembled some of the structures of Free Churches in some aspects, no reference was made to the doctrine of the priesthood of believers in the process of organization up to this point.

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[101] This structure was eclectic "its president was given administrative powers akin to those of a bishop. Further, the president was elected by the constituency as were bishops in the Methodist episcopacy. The Methodist conference system was also adapted to the needs of the denomination. From congregational governance it adapted the broad-based authority of the constituency. From presbyterian governance it adapted the committee system and the concept of representation" (Oliver 1989:50). Oliver further observes that there is no evidence to support an intentional design of such an eclectic structure. The manner of organization may be traced rather to the "denominational backgrounds of those involved in organization" (Ibid).

3.3.2   Historical Developments in Seventh-day Adventist Ecclesiology 1863-1950

It may seem that there were some who attempted to articulate the ecclesiology of the Seventh-day Adventist Church at this time. In 1885, J.H. Waggoner, one of the pioneers of the Seventh-day Adventist Church writes: "The system of church government among Seventh-day Adventists, as among Baptists, is the congregational…Our Conference organization is the balance-wheel, the check to prevent maladministration of discipline in the churches. It enables an aggrieved party in any action to appeal to a body of disinterested and experienced persons…This shows the benefit of an organization wider than the limits of individual churches" (Waggoner, 1885:361). In 1888 A.T. Jones and E.J Waggoner, ministers of the Seventh-day Adventist Church began to emphasize the theme of righteousness by faith in their preaching and teaching. At the 1888 General Conference session in Minneapolis, Minnesota, the appointment of W.C. White as the president of the General Conference brought in some changes in the organization of the Seventh-day Adventist Church at the time. There was a move to decentralize the General Conference. The territory of the United States and Canada was divided into four districts: South, East, West, and Midwest (Oliver, 1989: 69, 70). It was also proposed at that session that "there should be a division of responsibility among the members of the [General Conference] committee…various members of the committee had been appointed to have the oversight of different sections of the country as counsellors" (Oliver, 1989: 70). This move though not theologically motivated does seem to relate to the priesthood of believers as it was viewed at the time of Reformation. Therefore the lack of articulation of the doctrine of priesthood of believers does not necessarily mean

that there is nothing that relates to it in this early history. The following year at a campmeeting in Ottawa, Kansas in May 1889, A.T. Jones preached on three important subjects: righteousness by faith, religious liberty, and church organization (Knight, 1987:179). It was only at this point that the articulation of the principles and themes of the doctrine of the priesthood of believers began to emerge. Knight summarises the thrust of Jones' message on the doctrine of the church well: "the heart of Jones' doctrine of the church in 1889 (and subsequently) was that the 'church is the body of Christ and Christ is the head of the Church. Christ is the head not only of the body but every member of the body, every man. No man is the head of any other man but Christ is the head of every one and all" (Knight, 1987:179). Knight claims that the basis of Jones' teaching was both Paul's ecclesiology and Martin Luther's concept of the priesthood of believers. Knight's assessment of Jones is that he "had part of Paul's analogy correct when he noted that Christ was the Head of the body, but he fell short in understanding the various interrelated functions of Christ's body which includes 'administrators' and 'governments.' He ended up, therefore with a distortion of the biblical view of the church (Knight, 1987:179). Oliver also makes a similar claim on E.J Waggoner's ecclesiology that "presumably he was working from the reformation principle of the priesthood of believers" (Oliver, 1989:235). Both Knight and Oliver make reference to the priesthood of believers without explicit reference from Jones' sermons or writings. These assertions are based on the principles that he sought to apply to Seventh-day Adventist ecclesiology. But the extremity of E.J. Waggoner's views went even beyond congregational view of Seventh-day Adventist ecclesiology that even J.H.

Waggoner (his father) espoused. He argued that nobody should rule over another in God's economy (Ibid).

There were however some Biblical arguments from this time: "E.G. White expressed the relationship between Christ and His people as follows: 'Jesus is light, and in Him is no darkness at all [I Jn. 1:15]. His children are the children of light [I Thes. 5:5]. They are renewed in his image, and called out of darkness into his marvellous light [I Pet.2:9]. He is the light of the world [Mt. 5:16]. It is not merely the ministers who are required to do this, but every disciple of Christ.' Both the ministers and the laity were responsible for the mission of the church" (Damsteegt, 1977:265).

According to Oliver "throughout the 1890s and the 1910s Ellen White's expressed ecclesiological concerns included: (1) the headship of Christ, (2) the priesthood of believers, (3) the corporate nature of the church (4) the church as a building with Christ as the foundation, (5) the missionary nature of the church, and (6) the separation between the church and the world" (Oliver, 1989:267).

The 1892 reorganization plan initiated by A.T. Robinson in South Africa may seem to be taking the church back to the idea of centralization of functions (Oliver, 1989:73, 74). But when one examines his proposal to place the auxiliary societies and association under executive control of the envisaged Conference, it may appear that it also avoids a top-heavy administrative personnel. Thereby opening more room for other ministers to have direct contact with the churches in this new field, where training of members was so desperately needed. This focus on the needs of the congregations was in line with the principles of the priesthood of believers. No explicit reference is made to the doctrine in this instance as well.

Therefore what seems to be a rejection of the principles of the priesthood of believers during this period of organisational development, is in fact a rejection of views that distort this doctrine.

3.3.3 Historical Developments in Seventh-day Adventist Ecclesiology 1950 Onward

The developments in Seventh-day Adventist ecclesiology at this time are characterised by more explicit presentations of the doctrine of the priesthood of believers. This study draws attention to some parallels that exist as well as differences on the priesthood of believers within the Free Churches.

After a survey of the history of the church in general and a brief account of Seventh-day Adventist ecclesiology, Dederen sums up the position of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the light of various traditions:

"Like the Anabaptists, Seventh-day Adventists have stood traditionally equidistant from magisterial Protestantism (Lutheran, Reformed, Anglican) and Roman Catholicism" (Dederen, 2000:576).

This conclusion then places the Seventh-day Adventists within the Radical Reformation. He continues: "They have promoted the authority of Scripture, believer's baptism, separation of church and state, religious liberty, a deep concern for the Great Commission, and the conviction that the church built as close as possible to the pattern of the NT, transcends national boundaries and local cultures. For them the church, whatever else it might be, is a community of baptized believers, rooted in the Scriptures and unrestricted in their missionary concern by territorial limitations" (Dederen, 2000:576).

The foregoing description places the Seventh-day Adventist Church within the English Free Church tradition that was Separatist in its nature. On the teaching of the priesthood of believers Edwards is very emphatic about the position of the church and its teaching: "Throughout our history Seventh-day Adventists have held the doctrine of priesthood of believers as one of our cardinal beliefs and most cherished distinctives. Yet in spite of our profession we have seriously misunderstood and certainly inadequately expressed the full meaning of this doctrine" (Edwards, 1995:63). Edwards traces the history of the priesthood of believers from the early church. Since our starting point is the reformation for our purpose his emphasis is on Luther. He identifies Luther as the "chief leader of the Reformation which carried Christendom back to first principles, and urged it forward to new conquests. Luther championed the general priesthood of believers…It must be kept in mind that Luther developed the expression 'the priesthood of believers' to meet a very definite historical problem: a priestly tyranny" (Edwards, 1995:71). At the inception of the Seventh-day Adventist Church "a distinction was made between the leadership and the laity in regard to the question of authority…according to White 'there is no higher tribunal upon earth than the Church of God…However as far as the mission of the movement was concerned…the work does not depend alone upon the ministers. The church – the lay members – must feel their individual responsibility and be working members" (Damsteegt, 1977:257). This difference between pastors and laity in Seventh-day Adventist ecclesiology is in function rather than status. The next section deals with inter-faith discussions.

3.3.4 Seventh-day Adventist Church and Lutherans in Conversation

A consultation was convened on 1-5 November 1994 in Darmstadt, Germany between the Lutheran World Federation and The Seventh-day Adventist Church. The report reveals that "both Adventists and Lutherans understand the church as community of believers" (Adventists and Lutherans in Conversation, 1994). One of the recommendations for consideration in this study states: "we recommend that Lutherans in their national and regional church contexts do not treat the Seventh-day Adventist Church as a sect but as a free church and a Christian world communion" (Adventists and Lutherans in Conversation, 1994). Further more "we also recommend that Adventists in their relationship with other Christian churches seek to have this conviction consistently affirmed. This recommendation can be seen as an expression of the Seventh-day Adventist General Conference's Working Policy 1996/1997# O75 which unequivocally speaks of 'other Christian churches' and recognizes 'those agencies that lift up Christ before men as a part of the divine plan for evangelization of the world.' Furthermore, according to the Adventist understanding of the Lord's Supper, Lutherans as 'believing Christians (FB 15) are welcome to participate in Adventist communion service" (Adventists and Lutherans in Conversation, 1994). There were some differences and more similarities and agreements between these two denominations in conversation particularly on ecclesiology. The priesthood of believers seems to be one of the bridges that connected the two denominations as they engaged in conversation.

3.3.5 Seventh-day Adventist Church and Reformed Churches in Conversation

A meeting took place at Jogny sur Vevey, Switzerland on 1-7 April 2001, between the representatives of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and those of the World Alliance of

Reformed Churches. From the available report, it appears that there were a number of doctrinal similarities and differences that emerged. There were also some areas of convergence that are closely related to the subject of the priesthood of believers. The thrust of the discussion on matters of ecclesiology was mainly on the issue of religious freedom. Both groups affirmed:

> we recognize that religious freedom is a gift of God and a fundamental freedom that should be promoted and protected; we are concerned about the increasing violations of religious freedom in several parts of the world leading to an increase of intolerance and conflict; we encourage cooperation between our communions: (a) in defending and promoting religious freedom through international agencies, governments, and churches; (b) in organising conferences and symposia to discuss religious freedom issues; and (c) in sharing information and joining in common projects and prayers for those who are persecuted.
>
> (Report of the international theological dialogue between the Seventh-day Adventist Church and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, 2001)

This discussion not only provides opportunity for further dialogue it also suggests collaboration on matters of common concern. The concern with such documents is how far they go in affecting the local church and each church member.

3.4   Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to trace the priesthood of believers, starting with background information before the Reformation and through the Reformation to the present. The special focus on the Seventh-day Adventist history has shown that there are definite links. The pioneers of the Seventh-day Adventist Church came mainly from the Methodist and Baptist churches respectively. This has been revealed by brief biographies of persons that

came from these traditions before they were associated with the Seventh-day Adventist history. Therefore since there is a link in terms of persons from the Free Church Traditions we may conclude on the basis of a historical background that Seventh-day Adventists are part of the Free Church Tradition. We have noted that with respect to the teaching on the priesthood of believers there is also a common heritage that links the Seventh-day Adventist Church and the Free Churches particularly from the English Reformation heritage. There is however still a need for further exploration into the ecclesiology and the theology of the priesthood of believers as our main line of investigation. It is worth noting however that the Seventh-day Adventist Church may not look at Wesleyan Arminianism as the only link there are other commonalities with the non-conformist and separatist groups like the Anabaptists, and subsequently the Baptist Church, as it has been shown for example that the doctrine of the Sabbath was introduced by the Seventh-day Baptists. Finally credit may be given to the Magisterial, and Radical Reformations of the European Continent, because evidence overwhelmingly showed that the priesthood of believers is far from being a brain child of the English Free Churches, it was emphasized and upheld by other traditions as well. There was a deliberate attempt to structure this chapter within a periodized historical format to attempt to show some of the interconnections between the various traditions within the Reformation heritage. Our next step is to investigate the meaning of the priesthood of believers in the various selected English Free Churches. This will be addressed in the chapter that follows.

CHAPTER 4

PRIESTHOOD OF BELIEVERS IN SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST THEOLOGY

4.1   Introduction

Chapter 3 dealt with the development of the doctrine of the priesthood of believers in history. The development of the doctrine within the Seventh-day Adventist Church was also explored. It was noted that there is very little that has been done in the development of this doctrine within the Seventh-day Adventist Church, particularly in the early stages of the development of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It is note-worthy to acknowledge that the picture began to change from the 1990s onward. It was also shown that more Seventh-day Adventist theologians are beginning to include this doctrine in their discussions on Seventh-day Adventist ecclesiology. No official theological statement of the Seventh-day Adventist Church has yet been published on this doctrine.

This chapter will focus on the priesthood of believers in theology, particularly with reference to ecclesiological developments within the Seventh-day Adventist Church. This chapter will cover the period from the nineteenth century onward. This is an important period for the Seventh-day Adventist Church because her ecclesiology started to take shape from about the mid-nineteenth century. It was also about the same period that the Free Church movement, as discussed in chapter 3, was formalized. It is therefore a relevant starting point.

There are a number of theologians in general who have made a contribution toward the understanding of the doctrine of the priesthood of believers. This study evaluates the use of theological literature by Seventh-day Adventist theologians during this period, particularly on the development of the doctrine of the priesthood of believers in Seventh-

day Adventist ecclesiology. What impact did this have on the development of Seventh-day Adventist ecclesiology?

This chapter therefore begins by making a brief reference to contributions in general, made by the theologians of the nineteenth century onward. This serves to provide a background for the evaluation of the Seventh-day Adventist theologians who wrote during the same era on the church, and priesthood of believers.

4.2   Priesthood of Believers and Theologians

This study has given attention to the importance of church traditions in the development of doctrine of the priesthood of believers in history. The contribution of theologians from these traditions will be mentioned briefly in this section. From the Roman Catholic perspective, Joseph Lecuyer (1959: 114), saw the priesthood of Christians as a direct extension of the priesthood of Christ. For Dulles (1974:162), from the same tradition, the priesthood of believers should not focus only inward but outward to society as well. Reformed Theologian Karl Barth (1958:694), discusses law and order as a community matter that affects all believers. Barth (1973:180) also saw Christianity as a priestly religion (see also Koch, 1988:47; Corchrane, 1962:42). The focus of Hermann Ridderbos (1975:342) was on kingdom theology, with important implications for the church and the priesthood of believers. Pannenberg (1961:78), a Lutheran theologian, emphasized the importance of the kingdom in relation to the vocation of the church (see also Braaten and Jenson, 1995:149; McGrath, 1988:303).   There are also a number of Free Church theologians who have reflected on the subject, Forsyth (1911:12), a Congregational theologian who claimed that Christianity is a lay religion (see also Ford, 1997:232). John

Howard Yoder (1994:265) focuses on the Baptist church which he identifies as a free church with voluntary membership and freedom from the state. Eastwood (1963:218) wrote the most comprehensive work on the priesthood of believers. On Methodism he claims that priestly service by the believers is only achieved "if evangelism becomes the concern of every church member." From the few examples mentioned it may be observed that there was a discussion going on in many churches and theological circles regarding the subject of the priesthood of believers from the nineteenth century further. The next section will examine the Seventh-day Adventist theologians and their contribution.

4.3   Priesthood of Believers in Sabbatarian Adventism and Early Seventh-day Adventist Theology

The reason for starting with Sabbatarian Adventism[102] is that there are some major theological shifts that happened during this formation period. In this period there is very little interaction between the theological development in Adventism and theological developments in the history of the Christian Church during this period. The first Seventh-day Adventist theological work to be considered is *Foundations of the Seventh-day Adventist Message and Mission* by Gerard Damsteegt, published in 1977. In this book Damsteegt does not discuss the priesthood of believers, but he does discuss the theological foundations of Seventh-day Adventist ecclesiology. The relevance of this book to the subject of the priesthood of believers relates to the reasons for the omission of the doctrine of the priesthood of believers in the early development of Seventh-day Adventist theology.

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[102] This is a general name used to refer to Seventh-day Adventists before the official name was adopted.

The Millerites who were predecessors of Seventh-day Adventists, as an interconfessional movement urged their members to remain in their churches. They were critical of the Roman Catholic Church and Protestant churches. The Millerites followed an apocalyptic-eschatology, a method of interpretation which led to a view of mission that was based on Matthew 24:14 "and this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come" (Damsteegt, 1977:49, 50). This view of mission emphasized the proclamation of the gospel to the world. The goal of the Millerites was to reach every Christian community especially those that were unaware of the second coming of Christ (Damsteegt, 1977:53).

The strong emphasis on the doctrine of the second coming could have overshadowed the priesthood of believers, and other important doctrines that resonate with the idea of the mission of the church. The movement was also a lay-driven one, which means that the priesthood of believers may have been assumed.

There was a shift from an interconfessional view of the church to an ecclesiological view that regarded Roman Catholic and Protestant churches as Babylon (Rev 17:5). At t his time the Millerites preached that those who believe in the imminent coming of Christ must come out of these churches (Damsteegt, 1977:78-100). The disappointment experienced by the Millerites in 1844 was another important ecclesiological milestone. When Christ did not come in the predicted time based on the study of Scripture, many were discouraged and left the church. The Seventh-day Adventists were among those that re-studied the Scriptures to find an explanation. Leading up to 1844 a "shut door" concept of salvation was taught based on Mat 25:10 and Luke 13:25. This meant that those who rejected the Millerite message were not going to be saved. This view affected

the understanding of mission to the point that the work of warning the world ceased. Further mission work was regarded as unbiblical. The "shut door" understanding of salvation was one of the factors that may have slowed down the development of the doctrine of the priesthood of believers during this time. The concept of mission promoted by the "shut door" concept was not in harmony with the doctrine of the priesthood of believers, because this doctrine is closely tied to the concept of mission in Free Church and Seventh-day Adventist ecclesiology. Damsteegt makes reference to the "absence of a new theology of mission during the first few years after 1844, making it difficult to proclaim a relevant message which would arrest the attention of non-Adventists" (Damsteegt, 1977, 158).

In 1849 Ellen G. White received a vision which clarified the "shut door" concept to be the door in the Holy Place not the door of mercy, based on Rev 3:7, 8 (see E.G. White, 1856, 118; 1945, 42; cf Damsteegt, 1977:153). Damsteegt gives a summary of the vision with ecclesiological implications.

> (1) At first the shut-door concept was defined as referring to all who had rejected the Advent doctrine; (2) then the visions indicated that some of God's people were still in the churches, and would, after being reached successfully through future missionary efforts, separate themselves from Babylon; (3) and finally there was a shift away from a shut-door concept which referred to a limitation of salvation for certain individuals to one in the setting of the sanctuary theology. These developments prepared the minds of Sabbatarian Adventists gradually for a new mission.

> (Damsteegt, 1977:155)

This led other Seventh-day Adventist Church pioneers to study Scripture further and from the explanation of the vision a shift from a "shut door" to modified views was presented

by for example Joseph Bates, James White and many others (See Bates, 1849:28; J. White, 1857:93; cf Damsteegt, 1977:158-162).

From 1850-1874 the Adventist theology was still apocalyptic-eschatological focusing on Revelation 14:6-12. This key passage defined the mission of the church as that of proclaiming the second coming of Jesus and thus preparing the world for this (Damsteegt, 177:165). The Seventh-day Adventist Church from its early development has placed this passage at the heart of its ecclesiology and theology of mission. One of the indicators of the focus on apocalyptic-eschatology is that the theological discussion of Revelation 14:6, 7 led to a view of Christ's high-priestly ministry. The priestly nature of the church was not recognized in the theological development of Seventh-day Adventist doctrines at this early stage. This is evidenced by the absence of any discussion on the priesthood of believers especially when the mission of the church is under discussion. Even what Damsteegt hints as participation of believers in this judgment remains within the apocalyptic-eschatological context (Damsteegt, 1977:166). A dominant interpretation of Revelation 14:6-12 was that the "three angels represented successive periods in salvation history" (Damsteegt, 1977, 178). The influence of the "shut door" concept was still felt in the interpretation of this passage with reference to mission. For example, Damsteegt (1977:178) observes that there was a strong view that Rev. 14:6, 7 was "a major event in the past." Andrews who later (1874) would become the first missionary outside of the United States, believed that "the world and church have been tested by this great truth, and nearly all have rejected the counsel of God against themselves" (Damsteegt, 177:178; cf Andrews, 1851:81). Regarding the second angel's message Rev. 14:8, Andrews believed that it was "the professed church united with the kingdoms of the world. In other

words, 'Babylon is the apostate churches'" (Andrews, 1851:81; see also J. White, 1859:122). Andrews further states: "the proclamation of the coming kingdom was made to her by the first angel, and the message having been rejected no farther work could ever be done for her" (Andrews, 1851:81). This still followed the "shut-door" interpretation. Therefore the apocalyptic-eschatological thrust was another factor that slowed down the development of the priesthood of believers at this early stage of Seventh-day Adventist ecclesiological development. James White for example applies "the Babylon of the Apocalypse to all corrupt Christianity. . . The Protestant sects are fitly represented by the harlot daughters of the woman of Rev. xviii, 4, 5" (J. White, 1859:122)

According to Damsteegt (1977:254) the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church was focused on their identity as the remnant church, a concept derived from Rev. 12:17. The view that there were God's people in other churches as well was held by the Seventh-day Adventist pioneers in light of the remnant concept. Damsteegt (1977:244), observes that "The Remnant motif does not appear to have directly contributed to the growth of Seventh-day Adventist missionary consciousness."

The third angel according to Andrews (1851:82) refers to the beast which he interpreted as Papal Rome. For him the two-horned beast, is a "symbol of a civil and religious power. . ." (Andrews, 1851:83). He further related this power to America, and the horns "denote the civil and religious power of this nation – its Republican civil power and its Protestant ecclesiastical power" (Andrews, 1851:83).

Damsteegt, (1977:241) points out that there was a close relationship seen between the preaching of Rev 14 and the Sabbath, particularly in light of the interpretation of Rev 14:12 by Sabbatarian Adventists. Therefore the acceptance of the Sabbath doctrine was

closely linked with the acceptance of the doctrine of eschatology of Rev 14:9-12 (Damsteegt, 1977:241).

At this stage the thrust of the Sabbatarian Adventist Message was clear but the motivation for mission was gradually developing. Damsteegt, observes that "Frequent calls from individuals interested in 'present truth' led to the conclusion that the harvest was great (Lk. 10:2; Mt. 9:37), the fields 'already white to harvest' (Jn. 4:35), but the 'laborers were few' (Lk. 10:2; Mt. 9:37, 38). The Adventist leadership found a basis here for persuading believers to enter into mission service. The idea of a great harvest did not contradict the concept that only a remnant would be saved, for it was generally understood that the majority of God's people were still outside the remnant church" (Damsteegt, 1977:261). This was a step in the direction of non-apocalyptic view of mission. Damsteegt (1977:263) refers to five key categories of non-apocalyptic theology of mission: (1) the *imitatio Christi*, (2) the light of the world – the salt of the earth, (3) love, (4) salvation of others and , (5) the parable of the talents. These were all motivations for mission and engagement of believers in mission. On the *Imitatio Christi* E.G. White and other Sabbatarian Adventists (Loughborough, 1854:140; J. White, 1854:53; Cottrell, 1874:45), developed the concept of Christlikeness as a motivation for mission by using 1 Peter 2:9 as her basis. She writes: "'But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light.' Christ has called you to be His followers, to imitate His life of self-sacrifice and self-denial, to be interested in the great work of the redemption of the fallen race. . .Christ has given us an example of pure, disinterested love" (E.G. White, 1948:169). Damsteegt (1977:264),

observes that "'disinterested benevolence' played an important role during the Second Great Awakening, being especially emphasized by Samuel Hopkins [1721-1803] and other New England theologians as a vital element in the social responsibility of the Christian." Damsteegt, seems to have his finger on the issues relevant to this discussion here. A closer view of Hopkin's argument seems to show an agreement with E.G. White. Hopkins (1793 [1811]:470), points to Jesus Christ as "a remarkable and striking instance of disinterested benevolence in which Christians are to imitate him" so does E.G. White (1T, 1948:432). While Hopkins develops a vision for this doctrine of 'disinterested benevolence' spreading over the whole world and uniting "[hu]mankind into one happy society, teaching them to love each other as brethren, each one seeking and rejoicing in the public good. . . this will form the most happy state of public society that can be enjoyed on earth, he does not end there. He also has another dimension of the teaching when he states: "and when we take into view their love [believers] to the Redeemer, their devotedness to his honour and service, and obedience to his laws in the practice of piety, devotion and mercy. . . This will be the greatest likeness of anything that has taken place on earth, or ever will. This leads to a view of the most perfect, happy, and glorious society in heaven, in the eternal kingdom of God" (Hopkins, (1793 [1811]:491). Hopkins (1793[1811]:485), relates his theological concept to the kingdom theology when he states: "and whether they thus 'seek first the kingdom of God' and devote all they have and themselves, to his glory, and the greatest good of the whole; having no other interest but this and what is comprehended in it. . ." E.G. White develops thoughts around this concept that are worth noting: "I appeal to all who profess to believe the truth, to consider the character and life of the Son of God. He is our example. His life was marked with

disinterested benevolence. He was ever touched with human woe. He went about doing good. There is not one selfish act in all His life. His love for the fallen race, His desire to save them, was so great that He took upon Himself the wrath of His Father. . ." (E.G. White, 1T 1948:482). That E.G. White uses 1 Peter 2:9 twice in the motivation for mission as seen through the theological view of Damsteegt, is very significant.

"The work you have to perform is to do the will of Him who sustains your life for His glory. If you labor for yourselves, it can profit you nothing. To labor for others' good, to be less self-caring and more in earnest to devote all to God, will be acceptable to Him and be returned by His rich grace" (E.G. White, 2T 1948:170). In this context the addressees are the "the followers of Christ" (E.G. White, 2T 1948:168). The main issue under discussion is service offered in pure disinterested love (E.G. White, 2T 1948:169). She also expresses the ideas found in 1 Peter 2:9 in the same volume "God requires His people to shine as lights in the world. It was not merely the ministers who were required to do this, but every disciple of Christ. Their conversation should be heavenly. And while they enjoy communion with God they will wish to have intercourse with their fellow men in order to express by their words and acts the love of God which animates their hearts. In this way they will be lights in the world, and the light transmitted through them will not go out or be taken away" (E.G. White, 2T 1948:122). It is in this context that 1 Peter 2:9 is cited.

The researcher suggests that this forms the fulcrum of the doctrine of the priesthood of believers that connects this early period where there is seemingly a dearth of significant discussion on the priesthood of believers. This discussion becomes the early foundation that was left undeveloped for a long time. Damsteegt's conclusion is apt when he

recapitulates: "The missionary nature of the church was evident in the general understanding that all believers were called to engage in missionary activity though a distinction in authority was maintained between the leadership and laity. The mission endeavors of the believers were placed in the framework of God's mission" (Damsteegt, 1977:270). It is worth noting that earlier in 1849, it was E.G. White's vision that contributed to the shift away from the "shut-door" concept. At another time of transition we see her role not coming by a vision but through her reflection from scripture especially 1 Peter 2:9. Damsteegt (1977:270), emphasizes that "the development of non-apocalyptic motives could be attributed to E.G. White more than others, with her prevailing theme being the *imitation Christi.* Damsteegt (1977:254), states that it was not his purpose to deal with the issue of organization. In a few pages he limits himself in dealing with the issues of the name and authority. Damsteegt's work, therefore covers the development of Seventh-day Adventist theology of mission from about the middle of the nineteenth century to 1874. With reference to the post-1874 theological developments within the Seventh-day Adventist ranks, Damsteegt (1977:ix) delimits his research, but makes a significant statement about this period. He claims that the expansion of the church to a worldwide scale "resulted in a more Christocentric mission theology with a greater non-apocalyptic thrust. The fact, however, that its basic theological framework has generally remained unchanged, makes this research of great relevance for an understanding of contemporary Seventh-day Adventism." The link between mission theology as discussed by Damsteegt in his book and the priesthood of believers as discussed in this research may be seen both in content and context. In chapter two of this research, it was established from a study of Exodus 19:6 and 1 Peter 2:9 that the teaching

of the priesthood of believers in Scripture includes the idea of mission. The survey of the history of the development of the doctrine of the priesthood of believers as presented in chapter three of this research has also featured this mission element among other things. For this reason therefore it may be concluded that the effects that the early development of theology among the Sabbatarian Adventists and later Seventh-day Adventist Church on the mission of the church also affected the development of the doctrine of the priesthood of believers.

4.4 Priesthood of Believers in Seventh-day Adventist theology Post-1874

Without denying the claims made by Damsteegt, it is important to assess some important developments that Damsteegt does not cover in his book. Two series of articles deserve to be noted for their theological contribution to the Seventh-day Adventist's understanding of the priesthood of believers. These will not be mentioned in the order of publication because their content dictates that we treat them as such. The series of articles by Daniels published in 1907 look backward and deals with organization and the third angel's message. J.H. Waggoner in his series "the church," on the other hand in his series in 1885 looks forward at the development of the church.

The work of Barry Oliver complements the efforts of Damsteegt for the period after 1874. There are also some overlaps. Damsteegt barely touches on issues of church organization, and clearly delimits this aspect as outside the scope of his work (Damsteegt, 1977:254)[103]. On the other hand on matters of organization Oliver picks up some church organizational issues from the period before 1874 as well, but it becomes his major

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[103] In another work published in 2005, Damsteegt does contribute a chapter that deals with issues of church leadership within the Seventh-day Adventist Church. See Damsteegt, 2005: 643-691).

contribution. Oliver carefully analyzes the theological tension in the church organizational views of major contributors to the development of Seventh-day Adventist theology and ecclesiology. Oliver in his published dissertation *Seventh-day Adventist Organizational Structure: Past, Present and Future,* has a chapter: "The Theological Basis of Reorganization." He observes in this chapter that "church leaders did not think that organizational refinement and adjustment should be made in a haphazard fashion. . .Yet, in spite of their insistence on the necessity of 'principles,' Seventh-day Adventists did not develop systematic theological positions which provided a framework by which their principles could be prioritized" (Oliver, 1989:218, 219). In view of this position, Oliver sees it as no surprise that there is polarization of theological view points on the issue of which biblical texts to use as foundations for ecclesiology. He separates the views into two camps: (1) those who considered "the priesthood of believers, the headship of Christ, the church as the body of Christ, and spiritual gifts. . ." and (2) those "who maintained that the church was not only local but also universal in nature. For them, the universal unity of the church took priority over the individuality and diversity of its constituent local congregations and individual members" (Oliver, 1989:219, 220). It may appear that the latter group was the most influential. "They did not deny that Christ was the head of the church, that the church was his body, that there were spiritual gifts given to the church, and that the reformation principle of the priesthood of believers was important to Seventh-day Adventists" (Oliver, 1989:220). His conclusion is that "they did not take into consideration the possibility that organizational principles derived from emphasis on those theological concepts could facilitate the task of the church" (Oliver, 1989:220). No explicit discussion of the priesthood of believers is found in the

discussions by the church leaders in the opening years of the twentieth century. The theological debate was mainly on the reorganization of the church. It was during this period according to Oliver, that E.G. White expressed her theological concerns: "(1) the headship of Christ, (2) the priesthood of believers, (3) the corporate nature of the church, (4) the church as a building with Christ as the foundation, (5) the missionary nature of the church, and (6) the separation between the church and the world" (Oliver, 1989:267). The context in which E.G. White discussed the priesthood of believers was the developments in Southern Africa. She specifically mentions Cape Town during a critical time of reorganization. This was the first place to model the idea of decentralization of departments. Her view of the church in this context is very much akin to the doctrine of the priesthood of believers. She sees the church as "a Christian society," and "all the members are to draw together, that the church may become a spectacle to the world, to angels and to men" (E.G. White, TSA: 89). The focus on imitating Christ is also echoed here "All our work in this world is to be done in harmony and love and unity. We are to keep the example of Christ ever before us, walking in His footsteps. . .Organized into a society of believers, for the purpose of combining and diffusing their influence, they are to work as Christ worked. They are to show courtesy and respect for one another. Every talent has its place, and is to be kept under the control of the Holy Spirit" (E.G. White, TSA:89). In the same context on the purpose for which the church is formed, she states: "because by this means Christ would increase their usefulness in the world and strengthen their personal influence for good. . . Believers are to shine as lights in the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid. A church, separate and distinct from the world, is the estimation of heaven the greatest object in all the earth. The members are pledged

to be separate from the world, consecrating their service to one Master, Jesus Christ" (E.G. White, TSA:90). It is in this context that E.G. White cites 1Peter 2:1-12 (E.G. White, TSA:90). The separation of the church from the world is emphasized in this context as well. It is clear from the context that E.G. White refers to the state in this case (E.G. White, 1895:129). Ellen White (1894:673), expressed the missionary aspect of the nature of the church as clearly when she stated: "the church of Christ has been organized for missionary purposes, and it is of the highest importance that every individual member of the church should be a sincere labourer together with God, filled with the Spirit, having the mind of Christ, perfected in sympathy with Christ, and therefore bending every energy according to his intrusted ability to the saving of souls" (E.G. White, 1894:673). With reference to the followers of Christ E.G. White defines their role: "not only are they to shine to illuminate the immediate darkness, but through the united endeavours of the church of Christ they are to be the light of the world. It was the object kept in view through all Christ's ministry that the church should be united in one, and be one with himself and the Father in the great work of recovering souls from the slavery of sin and the dominion of Satan, to translate them into the kingdom of God" (E.G. White, 1894:689).

From the work of Oliver, it may therefore be concluded that the development of the doctrine of the priesthood of believers in Seventh-day Adventist ecclesiology, was also dwarfed by the notion of the separation of the mission of the church from this doctrine. It appears that again during the period of reorganization E.G. White echoed her previous views on the priesthood of believers, building on her earlier assertions. This doctrine still

remained underdeveloped for a number of years after all these explicit expressions, that call for a change in theological thinking.

4.5   Priesthood of Believers in Seventh-day Adventist Theology from 1990 Onward

This is a period of major developments in Seventh-day Adventist theology, leading to the 1995 General Conference Session in which a major decision whether to allow a request from North America to ordain women or not. It is in this period that major theological developments are seen in the Seventh-day Adventist ecclesiology. The theological works or works of theological importance for the doctrine of the priesthood of believers that will be considered are by: Olsen, Edwards and Dederen. These works especially display a new trend of more interaction with theological works from other Christian theologians. Some relevant aspects of this interaction will be evaluated.

Olsen a Seventh-day Adventist theologian, who writes during the late twentieth century, in his introduction, gives his understanding of the role of the doctrine of the priesthood of believers in ecclesiology. For him, "this doctrine is constitutive for the concept and structure of the church and in turn has foundational consequences for the understanding of the ministry of the church, including the rite of ordination" (Olsen, 1990:4). He uses Barth's definition of the church as an "event" and relates it to the priesthood of believers (Barth, 1949:68). Although Barth, does not make reference to the priesthood of believers in this context, Olsen makes that connection. He suggests, "to this could be added that what 'takes place,' or 'the event,' makes the congregation a priesthood of believers" (Olsen, 1990:42). He further claims that "the ecclesiology of the early church in all its

aspects, including organization and administration, enhanced the doctrine of the priesthood of believers" (Olsen, 1990:44). He also sees baptism as a "mode of entry into the priesthood" (Olsen, 1990:44, 45). Barth (1969:201), also argues that baptism is "a consecration or ordination to take part in the mission which is committed to the whole church." Barth (1969:201) further claims that "all those baptised as Christians are *eo ipso* consecrated, ordained and dedicated to the ministry of the church." The difficulty with this view of baptism is that the point of conversion may not be the point of baptism in essence. In the current position of Seventh-day Adventist teaching, "the baptismal ceremony is a demonstration of an inner cleansing – the washing away of sins that have been confessed" (Ministerial Association, 1988:185). Without conversion as a prerequisite baptism is inadequately expressed according to Seventh-day Adventist teachings. Olsen's expression of baptism here, seems to be influenced by Barth's theology.

Olsen, also sees the high priestly office of Christ having an effect on ecclesiology. First the church does not need a mediatory order like the levitical priesthood any more. The believers "are one with Christ in a holy and royal priesthood of reconciliation (Olsen, 1990:40). He further claims that Baptism is a means of entering into the priesthood. In fact he views baptism as an ordination of the believers as priests (Olsen, 1990:44). In his book he covers quite a number of theological themes reflected in the title of his book: Myth, Truth, Church, Priesthood and Ordination. His claims on the priesthood of believers are supported from history and the Bible. On the question of Baptism as ordination he appeals to Tertullian (ANF: 3, 7 672) and Luther (LW, 41: 152). He also uses such Scriptures as Acts 2:38 to buttress the claim of baptism as ordination. This

book is significant in the development of Adventist Ecclesiology because it brings up the theological arguments and the relevant themes. In the history of ecclesiology this was a time (1950-2001) when theologians were raising concerns about church organization (Timm, 2002:299). In the survey of ecclesiology cited above, Olsen's work is not mentioned. It appears that the preoccupation was with the function of the church structures rather than the theology under girding it. We find a similar pattern in the period from 1863-1950 in which the ontological model of church organization which emphasized the priesthood of believers among other things was rejected. A more functional model that emphasized the universal unity was adopted (Timm, 2002:292). This book by Olsen marks the beginning of developments in the thinking of some theologians within the ranks about the importance of the priesthood of believers for ecclesiology. Other developments will be discussed when we deal with the development in ecclesiology. Olsen's work gives a balanced picture connecting the priesthood of believers in history. One weakness is that he does not mention Calvin in his discussion of the priesthood of believers during the Reformation.

This theological work is an important mile stone in Adventist theology. The author attempts to relate the priesthood of believers to ecclesiology. The next theological work for consideration falls more on the practical application of the priesthood of believers and more focused on the Seventh-day Adventist ecclesiology.

In introducing the priesthood of believers Edwards in his book *Every Believer a Minister,*(1995:8), defines the scope of the believers influence as the whole world. Edwards (1995:65), recognizes a need for a theological foundation for this doctrine. In an effort to build the theological foundation, Edwards (1995:66) appeals only to the New

Testament passages of Scripture: Rev 1:5, 6; 5:10; 20:6; 1 Peter 2:5, 9. No reference is made to the Old Testament texts for this theological foundation. Edwards also draws from the works of other theologians to make his point about the priesthood of believers. Edwards (1995:65) cites Kraemer (1955:13, 14) on the importance of a doctrine that is "undergirded by a well-thought out theology of the laity on a biblical basis." The use of the Old Testament references would strengthen Edward's position on his development of a theological argument. Kraemer argues that "the concept of universal priesthood as it has developed in Protestantism is too individualistic and too tied to anti-Catholic arguments to be useful. Use is rather made of concepts such as 'the ministry of the laity,' similar to universal priesthood but not burdened with a particular history" (Kraemer, 1958:94). Edwards in developing his concept of the priesthood of believers seems to draw largely from Luther (Edwards, 1995:71-78).

Edwards also supports his position on the priesthood of believers by drawing from Lightfoot. Edwards (1995:67), observes that "in the New Testament community there was no office that corresponded to the Jewish concept of priest." Lightfoot is quoted as saying "the only priests under the Gospel, designated as such in the New Testament, are the saints, the members of the Christian brotherhood" (Lightfoot, 1903:6). In the context of the comparison between the Old Testament and New Testament priesthood, Lightfoot makes an observation that the Christian idea of priesthood revived the covenant idea. He develops his idea to give an impression that the priesthood was initially given by God to Israel. Later the priesthood was delegated to the Levitical priests to serve a function that was deemed temporal. When their term was over in the New Testament era the priesthood was returned back to the people (Lightfoot, 1903:3, 4). Edwards does not

highlight the continuity of the priesthood of the Christian community from Israel as Lightfoot does. Immediately after quoting Lightfoot, Edwards draws also from Manson: "when priests were converted (Acts 6:7), they did not thereby perform the function of the priest (in the Jewish sense) in the Christian community. In the catalogue of church ministries in First Corinthians 12:28-30 and Ephesians 4:11, 12 no mention is made of priests. Therefore. . . 'there was not room for a regular priesthood, as priesthood was understood in that time'" (Edwards, 1995:68; Manson, 1956:56). There is a twofold emphasis in Manson that is not found in Edwards. With reference to the ministry of the community of believers Manson sees their task in this twofold manner: "to proclaim the Kingdom to those who are still outside and to manifest the Kingdom in its own community life; to declare Christ to the world and to show the Lord's life and death and risen life within its own borders; to convert the non-Christian and to 'edify' the Christian" (Manson, 1956:54, 55). Another work of Manson quoted by Edwards is in the context of a discussion on whether the doctrine of the priesthood of believers has both individual and corporate aspects (Edwards, 1995:65). Edwards leaves this matter hanging without offering a solution. The conclusion that Manson comes to in his book is that "the priesthood of all believers lies in the fact that each believer offers himself as a sacrifice according to the pattern laid down by Christ; and – what is equally essential – that all these individual offerings are taken up into the one perpetual offering made by the one eternal high-priest of the New Covenant" (Manson, 1958:64). In the same book Manson does trace the priesthood of believers from the Old Testament. He argues: "we must therefore ask what the priesthood of all Israelites could mean in the early centuries of the first millennium BC. We could think most naturally of the offering of sacrifice as the

characteristic priestly function; but against this it must be borne in mind that originally the head of any family in Israel could sacrifice in somewhat the same way that the head of any Christian household can conduct family worship (Manson, 1958:52). In his attempt to make sense of the priesthood of the community, Manson compromises the corporate element by individualizing the priesthood as heads of the household. Another problem with this view is that the corporate temple worship did away with individual family sacrifices. His idea seems to divide the Old Testament between the patriarchal era and the era of centralized worship.

Raoul Dederen, wrote a chapter in a book *Women in Ministry* published in 1998. The chapter was entitled "The Priesthood of All Believers". The purpose of the book was to answer questions relating to whether or nor women in the Seventh-day Adventist Church should be ordained as pastors. The article is written with that purpose in view. The chapter develops the subject of the priesthood of believers from the Old Testament first. The Old Testament passages are examined within their textual context and applied primarily there (Dederen, 1998:10-12). The New Testament is also explored and relevant texts are discussed. Baptism is presented as a "sign of our universal call" (Dederen, 1998:17). In this sense it is not a means of admission into the church by a sign that we have been admitted. This is in harmony with the Seventh-day Adventist teaching of Baptism and ecclesiology. On the meaning of the priesthood of believers in practical terms, Dederen asserts that "we are to be witnesses of his presence, reminders of his grace, unfolding God's loving presence in the world through lives shaped by his grace" he further argues that "we can no longer isolate ourselves from the sins and woes and cares of the world in which we live. We are to see our priesthood in the light of Christ's.

As he was sent into the world to fulfil a priestly mission for sinners so also are his believer priests commissioned to fulfil the mission entrusted to them" (Dederen, 1998:19). The view of the function of the priesthood of believers in Dederen's view is broader than just evangelizing. But his emphasis is on the redemptive work as the main task. Dederen (1998:20) argues that the priesthood in the biblical sense is corporate in nature.

Two years later, Dederen writes (also serves as editor) an essay in the volume, *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology* (2000) under the subject "The Church". This is the official volume of Seventh-day Adventist theology. There is no discussion on the priesthood of believers in this volume or in the chapter by Dederen. After a well developed concept of the priesthood of believers presented by Dederen in the book *Women in Ministry*, it may be expected that this will find its place in the official theological volume of the church that deal with ecclesiology. Topics such as, "The Church as the People of God" presents references such as 1 Peter 2:9 and Exodus 19:5, 6 as part of a reference list without elaboration (Dederen, 548, 563). A general overview of the works of theologians is given in a sweeping general way. No specific reference is given on the expressions of the theologians on the subject of the church. These views are given to give context to the thinking of the 19th and 20th centuries (Dederen, 2000:572-574). There is also a section on "Ellen G. White comments" at the end, in this section also there is no pointer to her views on the priesthood of believers (Dederen, 2000:576-580). No major work has been found on the priesthood of believers from 2000 onward.

4.6   Conclusion

This chapter has examined major developments on the priesthood of believers in Seventh-day Adventist ecclesiology. Specific theological works were considered based on their contribution to or serious neglect of the doctrine. The theological trends of the early stages of the development of Seventh-day Adventist ecclesiology are quite revealing. Through the analysis of the theological trends in the Seventh-day Adventist Church from the mid nineteenth century to 1874, it has been established that the same reasons that affected the development of mission also affected the development of the development and function of the doctrine of the priesthood of believers. Oliver's work had a theological section that Damsteegt did not cover. The evaluation of the theological section of this work gave some insight on the relationship between the development of Seventh-day Adventist ecclesiology structure and the priesthood of believers. The focus of these developments was still largely within the Seventh-day Adventist Church. A major shift is seen in the work of Olsen, who developed the concept of the priesthood of believers with the views of some theologians in mind. This study has highlighted some of the significant influences of these theologians in his work. It is concluded based on the expression of the concept of Baptism in a way that does not adequately express Seventh-day Adventist theology that Olsen was perhaps influenced by Barth. Edwards also acknowledged some theological views in the twentieth century theology and cited some theologians on the priesthood of believers. Edwards was leaning more toward maintaining Seventh-day Adventist theology while quoting from some theologians such as Manson and Lightfoot. This is seen clearly in the way he left out major arguments without taking a clear position. His work was leading the church towards a practical

application of the priesthood of believers within the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Dederen provides the most developed and balanced view of the priesthood of believers in his chapter in *Women in Ministry*. But his work is clouded by the context in which it is presented. The Seventh-day Adventist Church has come a long way in the development of the doctrine of the priesthood of believers. The volume on Seventh-day Adventist theology did not present any official view on the doctrine of the priesthood of believers. The daunting question remains: why did this doctrine not find expression in the *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*? This volume represents key developments in Seventh-day Adventist theology. The next chapter takes the development of the priesthood of believers into another context, the ecclesiology itself.

CHAPTER 5

PRIESTHOOD OF BELIEVERS IN ECCLESIOLOGY

5.1   Introduction

The foregoing chapter focused on priesthood of believers in theology from the nineteenth century onward. With the general overview of the research chapter 1, the examination of selected Biblical texts on the priesthood of believers in chapter 2, the priesthood of believers in history and theology in chapters 3 and 4 respectively, the stage is set for the evaluation of the development of ecclesiology in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. This chapter first looks at the priesthood of believers, with reference to various approaches. From there, the Free Church ecclesiology will be examined from the perspectives of the Methodist, Baptist and Seventh-day Adventist Churches with reference to the priesthood of believers.

5.2 The Priesthood of Believers in Ecclesiology: Various Approaches

This study proposes that various approaches to ecclesiology can be identified: political, hermeneutical, church polity and pragmatic. These approaches may have an influence on the model of church structure that is adopted by a particular church.

5.2.1   Political Approach

The English socio-political arena of the seventeenth century had its own dynamics and agents that led to a democratic rule. From the perspective of the Free Church movements Townsend paints the picture of this period:

The evolution of political democracy in Britain was a new emergent in history: the Christian value of man created a new idea of his social and political relationships. Neither Plato's Ideal Republic nor the conception of man in the republics of the Greek City States can compare with the Christian values, which led to political democracy in England. The idea and experience of freedom which gave birth to the Free Church gave birth also to the Free State…The inspirers of democracy in seventeenth-century England were the Anabaptists and the Independents and finally the Quakers. This, is not simply because they had taken more literally and centrally than others the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, but because they had insisted on the self-governing congregation.

(Townsend, 1949:193, 194)

Townsend therefore suggests that the self-governing nature of the English Free Churches underpinned by their firm belief in the teaching of the priesthood of believers became the precursor of democracy in England. Townsend seems to be aware that there are other factors of a political nature that are just as important in ushering in a democratic society in England. He states: "the history of the Free Churches bears witness to the claim to resist tyrannical rulers in Church and State. The classic illustrations are the Civil Wars and the Revolution of 1688. Neither of these events would have occurred on political grounds alone" (Townsend, 1949:198). Townsend continues to depict a scenario of mutual dependency between the church and state, and how this relationship kept both the religious and political freedom at bay. "The Church feared that religious freedom would lead to the destruction of the State; the State feared that political freedom would lead to the destruction of the Church: so they 'used' each other to resist religious and political freedom: they would have continued to use each other to maintain their own interests unless Free Churchmen had challenged the principle of utility in the Church-State

relationship" (Townsend, 1949:210). The political views of the churches under discussion will now be examined after this historical backdrop that has been given.

5.2.1.1 Baptist Political Perspectives

Given the foregoing historical background and the history of the Baptist Church already covered in this research, it stands to reason that the Baptist Church would choose democracy as their guiding principle. "The Baptists are unanimous concerning their faith in democracy…Baptists declare that the polity of their denomination is the most extensive experiment of pure democracy in all history" (Harrison, 1959:157). Madox, (1996:153), reasons that "it is still important to emphasize how close in its origin the modern political contract idea was to the church covenant. Although it might be fanciful to construct a chain of causation for an idea with so many legitimate antecedents…". The claims that the Baptist Church makes and those that are attributed to it by others with reference to democracy cannot be denied. The legitimacy of their contribution cannot be called to question. However it seems in my view that the Baptist Church may have acted as a catalyst in this instance but still maintained a separation of Church and State. The direct claim for political involvement is lacking, what seems to be prominent is a modelling of democratic governance within the context of the Church and individual participation in the ushering in of a democratic society. Therefore one cannot speak of political participation of the Baptist Church as a corporate body, although individuals may be playing their role according to their political interests in society. While the position of the Baptists on the matter of Church and State relationship is clear there seems to be no connection established between the priesthood of believers and politics.

No Biblical or theological discussions seems to surface that throw light on the link between the teaching on the priesthood of believers and politics. The 1988 Southern Baptist Convention buttresses this point. The issue of Church and State was discussed as well as the priesthood of believers but as two separate issues without reference to each other. The Baptist resolutions on the priesthood of believers in 1988 are as follows[104]:

> Whereas, None of the five major writing systematic theologians in Southern Baptist history have given more than a passing reference to the doctrine of the priesthood of the believer in their systematic theologies;
> and Whereas, The Baptist Faith and Message preamble refers to the priesthood of the believer, but provides no definition or content to the term;
> and Whereas, The high profile emphasis on the doctrine of the priesthood of the believer in Southern Baptist life is a recent historical development; and
> Whereas, the doctrine of the priesthood of the believer has been used to justify wrongly the attitude that a Christian may believe whatever he so chooses and still be considered a loyal Southern Baptist; and Whereas, the doctrine of the priesthood of the believer can been used to justify the undermining of pastoral authority in the local church. Be it therefore resolved, That the Southern Baptist Convention, meeting in San Antonio, Texas, June 14-16, 1988, affirm its belief in the biblical doctrine of the priesthood of the believer (1 Peter 2:9 and Revelation 1:6);
> and Be it further resolved, That we affirm that this doctrine in no way gives license to misinterpret, explain away, demythologize, or extrapolate out elements of the supernatural from the Bible; and Be it further resolved, That the doctrine of the priesthood of the believer in no way contradicts the biblical understanding of the role, responsibility, and authority of the pastor which is seen in the command of the local church in Hebrews 13:17,
> "Obey your leaders, and submit to them; for they keep watch over your souls, as those who will give an account;"
> and Be finally resolved, That we affirm the truth that elders, or pastors, are called of God to lead the local church (Acts 20:28).

> (Johnstons archhive)[105]

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[104] From these resolutions one can also glean the issues which the Baptist Church was grappling with.
[105] See also the Baptist start web page and Jerry Sutton in members web page.

On the other hand discussions on religion and politics in the same conference are expressed in the words of Cloe:

> We believe we have to be involved in all areas...Jesus said 'you are the salt of the earth.' That means we have to participate in every aspect - political, social, scientific and medical." Cloe said that it is their responsibility to enforce morality and the idea that "we can't legislate morality is false. All legislation is either moral or immoral. No person has the right to be immoral.

> (Cloe, in the examiner)

This takes us to the next English Free Church for consideration, the Methodists.

5.2.1.2 Methodist Political Perspectives

In the history of the Methodist Church, there have been marked changes in thought on the question of church and state. In my view this self-confessed statement of a shift of thinking is not very significant. For example it is stated: "We are essentially a modern Church, i.e. we came to birth with the European enlightenment. Our ethos is therefore markedly different from our Free Church colleagues who originated in the period of classical dissent in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and also from Anglicanism and from Catholicism" (The Church and Society in Methodist website). While one may acknowledge that the modern Free Church is different from the classical one to some extent, the following statement coming from a Methodist source may not make sense on the surface: "Methodists abhor democracy as they abhor sin. But the Primitives, and many Wesleyans, thought otherwise. After nearly a century of debate around this theme, all the main branches of Methodism had come to a common mind on the authority of democratic decision-making in a Representative Conference" (The Church and Society in

Methodist website) The very next paragraph of the same report has a statement that seems in my view to contradict the previous paragraph for it is stated:

> In modern Methodism (i.e. since 1932), it is fair to say, we have more overtly allowed democracy to shape our decision-making than many if not most other Churches. We have therefore treasured our place in a wider democratic society. We have tried to play our part in the democratic processes which shape the formation of public policy and parliamentary law making. We do this through participation in Government consultation processes; in lobbying and campaigning on issues we hold dear; through encouraging people to vote in an informed way in elections; in supporting Methodists to stand for elected office; in resourcing debates and discussions at every level of the Church on public affairs - local, national and international.

(The Church and Society in Methodist website)

Although it may not be easy to solve this apparent contradiction of statements, it is evidently clear that the difference in context played a very important role in the different perspectives. In the context of the classical Reformers of the sixteenth century the English Free Church operated in an environment where there was a state church. The modern Methodist Church operates in an environment where there is freedom of religion. Therefore it is easier for the modern church to participate in political related activities and still maintain a position of a separation of church and state. Whereas in the seventeenth century England, it may not have been that easy to discuss separation of church and state among the Wesleyans because, Wesley himself remained an Anglican till the movement that he started extended to America. For example "according to English law, non-Anglican worship services and church buildings were to be allowed, but they must be officially registered as such... in 1787, after great hesitation, Wesley instructed his preachers to register, and thus the first legal step was taken toward the formation of a separate church" (Gonzales, 1999:215). On Wesley's ministry Madox (1996:183) adds:

Moreover, there is a special affinity between Methodism and the democratic story through the overwhelming concentration in Wesley's ministry upon the plight of the poor and the far-reaching consequences this concern had for the emergence of universal political representation. Viewed from a political standpoint, nevertheless, the Methodist movement founded by the brothers John and Charles Wesley was pocked with contradiction…Methodism began with apparently no interest in political action whatever, yet its first emergence was irrevocably bound up with the politics of the day.

This therefore sums up the position of the Methodist Church on political issues. But just as we have observed with the Baptist Church, there is no reference to the priesthood of all believers when matters of church and state are discussed.

5.2.1.3 Seventh-day Adventist Political Perspectives

Among the Churches that have been examined so far the Seventh-day Adventist Church seems to be no exception on the question of politics and the priesthood of believers. In a very apt statement taken from the official statements issued by the General Conference that reflect the position of the Seventh-day Adventist Church on various issues, it is stated that, "the Seventh-day Adventist Church believes it is necessary to distinguish between sociopolitical activity of individual Christians as citizens and involvement on the corporate church level. It is the church's task to deal with moral principles and to point in a *Biblical direction*, not to advocate *political directives*" (General Conference, 2006).[106]

The biblical rationale for this stand and the parameters within which the Church can deal with political matters are clearly stated in this statement "While Adventism will sow

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[106] This statement appears in the official website of the Seventh-day Adventists under the title"Seventh-day Adventists and the ecumenical movement" and under the sub-title "Ecumenical Understanding of Sociopolitical Responsibility".

seeds that will inevitably *influence* society and politics, it does not wish to be *entangled*

in political controversies. The church's Lord did state: 'My kingdom is not of this world'

(John 18:36), and like her Lord the church wishes to go 'about doing good' (Acts 10:38).

She does not wish to run the government, either directly or indirectly" (General

Conference, 2006).

This point is illustrated by Morgan against the backdrop of the American context: "The

experience of Seventh-day Adventists, who in American cultural conflicts have been

more likely to align themselves with groups advocating civil liberties and pluralism than

those advocating a "Christian (or Judeo-Christian) America," suggests that

"premillennialism may take a variety of forms with a variety of political outcomes"

(Morgan, 1994:235). Morgan a Seventh-day Adventist historian serving in a public

university takes a critical view of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. His assessment may

not be taken wholesale but deserves to be given attention particularly as it relates to how

he views the political stand of the Church from the American context. His assessment

cannot be conclusive since it only studies a particular social context.

> An apocalyptic theology of history – a form of premillennialism – was
> the impetus behind the launching of Seventh-day Adventism in the
> mid-nineteenth century and has in large measure given coherence and
> direction to the church's development ever since… The story of the
> emergence of Seventh-day Adventists as dissenters in the Protestant
> empire revolves around the themes of millennialism and social reform
> so pervasive in the mid-nineteenth century. Apocalyptic Scripture was
> the matrix in which Adventists formed their sense of identity and
> mission in relation to the religious and political forces around
> them…while their apocalypticism made them politically passive in
> their earliest years, Adventists in the final decades of the nineteenth
> century channelled some of their fervor into political action, albeit on a
> fairly narrow range of issues…Apocalyptic interpretations of
> nineteenth-century events continued to form the prism through which

Adventists in the twentieth century viewed American public life

(Morgan, 1994: 235, 244, 248).

The researcher has found Morgan's critique to be balanced and true to the position that the Church has taken. This is particularly true on the point of the Church's focus on the mission more than political action. He further observes:

> The rigidity with which Adventists have held to the particulars of their apocalyptic outlook in the twentieth century has contributed to a narrowness of vision that has limited the ways in which they have acted for freedom. Preoccupied with Sunday laws, they have had little to say about the nation's performance regarding human rights in its foreign policy, or in relation to political radicals, women, or racial minorities. Penetrating critiques of governmental departures from the nation's ideals such as found in the nineteenth-century protests against slavery and imperialism were seldom expressed after the turn of the century. On the other hand, adherence to their interpretation of history has helped Adventists maintain a clear sense of mission and identity in the interplay of American religious and political forces. It has impelled them to resist the linkage between fundamentalist religion and conservative nationalism that some premillennialists have forged in their programme for saving Christian civilization in America. And the conviction of being specially placed in history to be a faithful remnant, called to uphold the "commandments of God and the faith of Jesus" and the right of all human beings to choose their own way of response to God, has contributed to the staying power of their commitment to liberty and a pluralistic public order – the features defining their vision of a truly Protestant America.

(Morgan, 1994:249)

The conclusion that may be drawn from the foregoing position as presented by the official body of the Seventh-day Adventist Church world wide and Morgan's perspective of the development of the church's political view in the American context, is that while there are theological and biblical allusions there is no link that points in the direction of the priesthood of believers on this matter.

Developments in the relationship between the Seventh-day Adventists and the American Republic have been observed by Butler. He focuses mainly on the period from 1840-the mid-1880s. (1) He describes the early relationship (1840s) with the state as apolitical apocalyptic. By this he meant that all political relations were frowned upon as unacceptable. (2) He claims that there was a shift from this position in the 1840s to the mid-1870s to what he calls a political apocalyptic, which is still negative towards the State but uses a contemporary political language is used to proclaim its impending doom. (3) The final wave of change in this period is in the 1880s where there is involvement in the political process. He calls this phase the political prophetic, meaning that they believed in marginal involvement while critical of the state rather than forecasting its ruin (Butler, 1974:174). He also cautions that there may be a variety of ways with which the Free Churches deal with the social and political order (Butler, 1974:174, 175).

As it has been pointed out in chapter 2, the South African context had its unique problems of political nature that directly affected the Church. A process in the direction of a corrective measure was taken from the 1980s to address the division of the Church along racial lines, which reflected the socio-political context at the expense of the important biblical principle of unity. At no point was any connection made between this socio-political context and the teaching of the priesthood of believers even in the South African context.

The three churches that have been examined have set their own parameters on matters of church and state, the similarity in their historical heritage is striking. Because of the tension between church and state, the application of the priesthood of believers in a political context also remains in tension. Therefore the matter remains open to debate

within the Seventh-day Adventist Church. This is particularly important when one considers the tension between individual participation and corporate participation of the church as a priesthood of believers. To what extent should the church participate in politics as a corporate body? What is the individual responsibility of each member of this priesthood in a political context? These are practical questions that should confront anyone dealing with the application of the priesthood of believers in a political context. Cloete has modelled such a practical approach to the priesthood of believers in a political context (Cloete, 1998:8).

5.2.2 Hermeneutical Approach

One of the teachings that have polarized the Christian Church is the teaching of the priesthood of believers. Starting from the practice of the Roman Catholic Church where priests were given an exalted status and the reaction of the Reformers against this practice. The Radical Reformation and the Magisterial Reformation differed on this teaching. Chapter 2 of this research has already given a historical mosaic of this teaching. The exegetical study of the passages still leaves much to be desired towards a unified view. The critical issue at this point is the hermeneutical premise on which the meaning of the priesthood of believers is based. From the polemic debate between Jerome Emser 1477-1527 (Catholic) and Luther (Reformer) on the priesthood of believers, that finally among other issues of debate led to Luther's expulsion from the Roman Catholic Church, to the heated intra-denominational debate of the Southern Baptist Church in the 1988 conference on the same issue, the question of the meaning of the priesthood of believers seems far from being settled. There are divisive views both inter-denominationally and

intra-denominationally. In order to understand the meaning of the priesthood of believers, we have to grab the hermeneutical bull by the horns. It appears that the meaning of the priesthood of believers hinges on the hermeneutical choices that are made by individuals, churches and traditions whether intentional or unconsciously. This broad subject of which the teaching of the priesthood of believers is but a single tread still deserves our attention in this study.

5.2.2.1 Methodist Hermeneutical Approach

Starting with John Wesley, we find that his approach to the interpretation of Scripture was based on taking Scripture in its literal sense as a general rule (Burtner and Chiles, 1982:20). On the matter of the authority of Scripture Wesley states: "In matters of religion I regard no writings but the inspired…In every point I appeal 'to the law and the testimony,' and value no authority but this…The Christian rule of right and wrong is the Word of God, the writings of the Old and New Testament" (Burtner and Chiles, 1982:21). This is the foundation upon which the Methodist Church has been built. There seems to have been unity of teaching. The World Methodist Council admits that the denomination is "faced with the reality of plural traditions, which name themselves after Wesley and the original Methodist movements. We increasingly sense the embarrassment that often there has been more dialogue between the various Methodist/Wesleyan traditions and other confessional traditions than among the plurality of our traditions that we have to face honestly but also the very notion of tradition itself " (Meeks, 1985:23). The Methodist Church experienced divisions within its own ranks, even though Wesley had tried to prevent this from happening. He looked critically at Luther and Calvin for

what he called an "open separation from the Church…Their vehement tenaciousness of their own opinions; their bitterness towards all who differed from them; their impatience of contradiction, and utter want of forbearance, even with their own brethren" (Meeks, 1985:104). Little did Wesley know that the same challenges were going to face the Wesleyan movement, in the nineteenth century after his death.

> The British Methodists experienced five years of turmoil after Wesley's death before their first schism broke wide open. Thereafter in America and England, schism followed schism in controversy after controversy over a bewildering variety of issues: ecclesiastical authority, racial equality, lay representation, slavery, the status of the episcopacy, the doctrine of holiness, and many another. When the first Ecumenical Methodist Conference was held in London in 1881, there were 10 separate denominations from the British side, eighteen from America – all Methodists.

> (Meeks, 1985:105)

Among the issues that divided the Methodist Church there are issues that are underpinned by the teaching of the priesthood of believers, such as the issue of ecclesiastical authority and lay representation in particular. These issues relate to church polity and pragmatic issues which will be discussed under polity and pragmatics in this chapter. There were a number of reunions that were formed and the Methodist Church participated and contributed in the World Council of Churches in a direct way (Meeks, 1985:106).

5.2.2.2 Baptist Hermeneutical Approach

The Baptist Church also claims to derive its teachings from the Bible. The Baptists consider "Scriptures as being the sole authority for belief and practice" (Morris, 1994: 27). For Baptists Scriptures are the inspired Word of God and the purpose of this written Word, is salvation. The ultimate revelation of God according to Baptist beliefs is in Jesus

Christ. The Holy Spirit enlightens believers to understand Scripture (Morris, 1994:27).

The Baptists also have the Bible as their starting point with presuppositions that accept

the Scriptures as authoritative and normative. There are however points of difference that

make Baptists different from Protestants, Evangelicals, and Fundamentalists. Baptists

believe that they have the dissenting groups "against the practices and polity of the

church, swerving away from the simple teaching of Jesus and the New Testament"

(Morris, 1994:15). The position on which these dissenters grounded themselves is their

belief in:

1. The Scriptures being the only rule of faith and practice for a believer
2. The sacredness of the individual which makes each person competent to relate to God through Jesus Christ.
3. Baptism by immersion of only believers.
4. The autonomy of the local church with a democratic congregational form of church government.
5. Religious freedom of the individual and the church from control of all outside forces including the state.

(Morris, 1994:15)

The Baptists differ from Protestants because they believe that Protestantism

"hinders the autonomy of the local church and its practices and polity" (Morris, 1994:16).

They depart from evangelicals because "they do not intend to compromise doctrinal

position on the things which they consider to be essential" (Morris, 1994:16). The

autocratic method of the Fundamentalists they find unacceptable (Morris, 1994:16).

Based on their presuppositions and understanding of Scripture, Baptists "reject church

governments which deny the individual the right to be involved in decision-making.

Making a distinction between the clergy and laypersons is considered a violation of the

equality of believers. Separation of church and state is considered to be an essential factor

in fulfilling the competency of the individual to determine his relationship to God" (Morris, 1994:77). Having given consideration to both the Methodist and Baptist Churches we will now explore the perspectives of the Seventh-day Adventist Church within the polemic debates.

5.2.2.3 Seventh-day Adventist Hermeneutical Approach

The year 2006 has marked another milestone in the hermeneutical perspectives of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Another volume was published, a second following the 1974 publication on hermeneutics. Seventh-day Adventist scholars from around the world have contributed to this important guideline. It begins with a foundational statement: "Seventh-day Adventist faith and praxis rests on the Scriptures as final authority, evidenced by the fact that a statement on the Bible heads the official statement of church beliefs" (Reid, 2006:xi). With the Bible as the rule of faith and practice, Seventh-day Adventists also believe that presuppositions play an important role in biblical interpretation. Hasel (2006:27), observes: "no one is able to approach the biblical text with a blank mind. Presuppositions delimit the boundaries within which biblical interpretation can and should properly function. They also determine the method and, through the method, also influence, to a considerable degree, the outcome of our interpretation." Hasel uses the priesthood of believers in a different sense that stretches the hermeneutical debate beyond the level of scholarship. He propounds that

> The consistent example of the Bible writers shows that Scriptures are to be taken in their plain, normal, literal sense, unless a clear and obvious figure is intended or a symbolic passage is employed. The clarity of Scripture assumes the priesthood of all believers rather than restricting

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the interpretation of Scripture to a select few, the clerical priesthood, or the community of trained scholars. This means that the study of Scripture itself, rather than secondary sources and commentaries about Scripture, is to hold priority.

(Hasel, 2006:39)

Even when we approach Scripture in its primary and final form Ceaser observes that our "conscious, subconscious, or unconscious *a priori* commitments to self-vindication and against the other in Bible reading challenge the authority of sacred Scripture and compromise the transcendency of the *sola scriptural* principle" (Ceaser, 2006:279). The teaching of the priesthood of believers may be hijacked by such preconceived positions, and may lead to Scripture being used as a rubber-stamp of personal or even group agendas. Ceaser warns that "it is both dangerous and distorted that one's own experience become the basis or litmus test for Scripture's vindications" (Ceaser, 2006:279). In the midst of the polemic debate, often the Seventh-day Adventist Church is accused of having another extra-canonical body of writings by Ellen G. White. Seventh-day Adventists believe that they are the "remnant church of Revelation 12:17 and that God has graciously provided it with the gift of prophecy as manifested in the life and in the work of Ellen G. White" (Pfandl, 2006:309). Writing on Ellen White's own self-claims, Pfandl (2006:309) states:

Ellen G. White understood her role to be that of a special messenger of God to the Seventh-day Adventist Church, pointing men and women to the Bible as the inspired and authoritative Word of God. Throughout her writings, she emphasized that the Bible is 'God's voice speaking to us, just as surely as though we could hear it with our ears. It is the only rule of faith and doctrine' in the church…Since the church does not accept degrees of inspiration; it must acknowledge that her inspiration, though not her authority, is of the same type as the inspiration of the Old and New Testament prophets. Therefore when using and interpreting what she has written, we must apply the same

hermeneutical principles to her writings as we do to Scripture. Both are inspired literature; therefore, both must be interpreted by the same principles.

The Seventh-day Adventist scholarship is divided on the use of the historical-critical method of interpretation. The presuppositions that undergird the historical critical method have led to its Official rejection in the Annual Council of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in 1986.[107] An example of such presuppositions is the apocalyptic interpretation. "The historical-critical approach to biblical apocalyptic deprives it of any predictive element. In this view, the nature of that type of literature is determined by the cultural needs of the people to whom it was addressed" (Rodriguez, 2006:347). Hermeneutical presuppositions and methods become very important for Seventh-day Adventists, one of the reasons for this is that the Church does not subscribe to a Creed. "It is true that many evangelical scholars who have a high view of the Bible have been using a modified historical-critical method in their study of the Bible"[108] (Rodriguez, 2006:347). The challenge that faces the Seventh-day Adventists who take this route is that:

> Among Adventists the absence of a creedal statement of a permanent and unalterable nature makes our doctrinal statements vulnerable to significant change and modification if our hermeneutic changes. This is not the case in most Christian denominations. Therefore the use of the historical-critical method has posed less threat to churches with creedal documents. The fact that the Bible is our only creed means not only that we believe in the principle of *sola scriptura*, but also that we recognize the Scriptures to be unique. They should judge not only doctrines and lifestyle but also any biblical methodology.

(Rodriguez, 2006:349,350)

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[107] A document under that title *Methods of Bible Study* was put together, which notes the reasons for the rejection of the historical-critical method among others as the presuppositions.
[108] This is an attempt to suspend some of the presuppositions of the historical-critical method in the interpretation of Scripture.

Based on these presuppositions, the Seventh-day Adventist Church would view the priesthood of believers from a different perspective than a denomination that subscribes to a different set of presuppositions.

This survey from Reformation to present of the selected Churches and reformers has served to inform this study of the different hermeneutical positions within the Reformation movement and the Free Churches. This explains the unending polemical debates on the priesthood of believers as throughout the history of Reformation into the present times. At this point in this research it is vital to give consideration to church polity and the meaning of the priesthood of believers.

5.2.3   Church Polity Approach

In this section, the polities of the Lutheran, Reformed, Methodist, Baptist and Seventh-day Adventist Churches will be surveyed briefly in the light of the meaning of the priesthood of believers as it is translated in church organization.

5.2.3.1 Lutheran Polity

The basis of self-understanding for the Lutherans is based on the Augsburg Confession 7 which states that the church is "the assembly of all believers among whom the gospel is preached in its purity and the holy sacraments are administered according to the gospel" (Kuhn, 1999: 492). The necessity of ministry that is set apart has always been recognized by the Lutherans as an important element of church polity. Lutherans follow an Episcopal form of church government (Kuhn, 1999: 492). According to Ritta (1999:485), in Luther's theology "the priesthood of all believers was simply an implication of

justification by faith alone." This implies that the priesthood of believers did not have significant meaning with reference to the structure of the Lutheran Church. Ritter (1999:485), buttresses his view by pointing to the fact that it had no place in the Augsburg Confession.

5.2.3.2 Reformed Polity

The Helvetic Confession deals with the priesthood of believers with reference to the ministry. It states the following "Christ's apostles call all who believe in Christ, priests but not on account of an office, but because , all the faithful having been made kings and priests, we are able to offer up spiritual sacrifices to God through Christ" (Rohls, 1997:237, 238). The polity of the Reformed Churches provides that "as to the true church, we believe that it should be governed according to the order established by our Lord Jesus Christ. That there should be pastors, overseers, and deacons" (Rohls, 1997:240, 241). Coertzen (1998:22), writing on the subject of church governance propounds that "the order that the church devises for itself must also be in the service of the Word, just as the government of Christ through the Word must be fully maintained in the practical management of church order." This statement is qualified in order to clarify any misunderstanding "this obviously does not mean that church meetings must consist of an accumulation of biblical texts or that the church does not have the power to make rules for which there are no biblical references" (Coertzen, 1998:22). He adds another safety valve against misapplication of the guidelines found in Scripture, he states: "these guidelines and grounds in the Scripture are not simply a collection of regulations and legalistic rules that can or must be applied in a mechanically biblical or fundamentalist

way" (Coertzen, 1998:223). It is upon these premises that the Reformed Churches have set guidelines for the understanding of church polity. The priesthood of believers should therefore be applied circumspectly even on matters of church polity.

5.2.3.3 Methodist Polity

The Methodist understanding of Church polity in the light of the priesthood of believers is expressed aptly:

> The Church is really and truly a people, made up of individual persons, but of individual persons bound together into a corporate whole by their love of Christ and their loyalty to him. It is not primarily an institution, though it has to have an organization and a constitution and a balance sheet and paid officials; still less is it an association of clergy and ministers with laypeople as their supporters and adherents though clergy are part of it. It is a community of people, the people of God. This means that the ministry of all Christian people, laypeople and ministers together, is even more important than the ministry of those who have a special ministry by being ordained to the ministry of the Word and Sacraments.
>
> (Davies, 1988:39, 40)

An observation made by Durnabaugh (1999:496), places the Methodist Church at variance with Free Churches especially with reference to church polity. He states: "despite having certain features in common with free churches, Presbyterians and Methodists do not share the characteristic free church emphasis on discipleship, nor do they have the same church offices or nonliturgical style of worship." Wesley himself stated:

> As to my own judgment, I still believe the Episcopal form of Church government to be both scriptural and apostolical… ever since I read Dr. Stillingfleet's *Irenicon*. I think he has unanswerably proved that neither Christ or His Apostles prescribed to any particular form of Church

government, and that the plea for the divine right of Episcopacy was never heard of in the primitive Church.

(Burtner and Chiles, 1982:256)

The current view of Methodists on church polity seems to be polarized. There are churches that subscribe to the Episcopal form and also the United Methodist churches who claim to be evangelical and catholic. More than unity of structure there seems to be an emphasis on the mission of the church. "The structures of the church are intended to enable and enhance our love for one another and all persons. The urgent needs of the world and its peoples are uppermost in our minds as we seek to understand the way Methodism can be free to be about God's work of deliverance, mission, and unity" (Meeks, 1985:137). The next church for consideration under church polity is the Baptist church.

5.2.3.4 Baptist Polity

The Baptist Church is immersed in discussions around the subject of the priesthood of believers. The main concern here is how they relate this to their church polity. One of the resolutions that were taken by the Baptist Church at their 1988 annual session was couched as follows:

> Whereas the priesthood of the believer is a necessary foundation to Baptist congregational church polity in which authority resides in the local congregation. Be it therefore resolved that the messengers to the 1988 annual session of the Baptist General Convention of Texas meeting in Austin affirm their belief in the doctrine of the priesthood of the believer and be it finally resolved that we vigorously undergird the priesthood of the believer in Baptist life, in local church, associational and state convention activities.

(McBeth, 1990:522)

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Baptists are particularly concerned about the involvement of laity in the church government structures. Morris enumerates some key points that form criteria for an acceptable church governance among the Baptists.

> Church governments which deny the individual the right to be involved in decision-making are not acceptable to Baptists. Making a distinction between the clergy and lay persons is considered a violation of the equality of all believers. Separation of church and state is considered to be an essential factor in fulfilling the competency of the individual to determine his relationship to God.
>
> (Morris, 1994:77)

It is evident that the Baptists maintain a position that church polity is related to the teaching on the priesthood of believers. In fact the priesthood of believers teaching seems to determine the polity the Baptists follow.

It is important to also note that the Baptist Church operates along democratic lines in their church polity. "The idea of democracy in the local church is based upon the doctrine of the priesthood of believers, or the right of every individual to believe and act for himself as a redeemed person" (Morris, 1994:162).

The Baptist Church operates on a Congregational form of church governance. Some of the key elements of such a polity are the following:

1. Authority resting with the congregation
2. Each church is autonomous and self-governing
3. Decisions are made by vote of the congregation
4. Each congregation handles its own affairs
5. Each member of the congregation has equal rights and privileges
6. The pastor is regarded as the spiritual leader
7. All officers, including the pastor, are elected by the congregation and accountable to that congregation.

(Morris, 1994:149, 150)

The Baptists have a firm belief that "this form of polity is the polity taught in the New Testament" (Morris, 1994:150). This brings us to the next church for our consideration the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

5.2.3.5 Seventh-day Adventist Polity

Seventh-day Adventists believe the church organization should be based on divine principles.

> The Saviour's commission to the church to carry the gospel to all the world (Matthew 28:19,20; Mark 16:15) meant not only preaching the message but ensuring the welfare of those who accepted that message. This involved shepherding as well as housing the flock and also meeting problems of relationships. Such a situation called for organization.
>
> (Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual, 2005:25)

The development of organization in the early church is indicated by the offices that evolved as the church grew in membership and as its spread to the different parts of Palestine and Asia Minor: Apostles (Acts 6:2; 8:14); Deacons (Acts 6:2-4); Elders (Acts14:23) and conferences in specific regions such as found in (Gal 1:2) (Church Manual, 2005:25).

It took about twenty years for the Seventh-day Adventist Church to decide to organize (1844-1863). The first Church Manual was only published in 1932.[109].

> As the General Conference met year by year in session, actions were taken on various matters of church order in an endeavour to spell out the proper rules for different situations in church life. The 1882 General Conference Session voted to have prepared instructions to church

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[109] It should be noted that the date of the first church manual as recorded in the 2005 Church manual is not accurate, and needs to be corrected. See General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist Archhives, with manuals from 1932 archhived.

officers to be printed in the Review and Herald[110]. This action revealed the growing realization that church order was imperative if church organization was to function effectively, and that uniformity in such order required its guiding principles to be put into printed form

(Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual, 2005:xx)

On the form of church governments the church manual lists four options: the Episcopal, Papal, Independent (Congregational) and Representative. The Church opted for the fourth form of organization which is defined as:

> the form of church government which recognizes that authority in the church rests in the church membership, with executive responsibility delegated to representative bodies and officers for the governing of the church. This form of church government recognizes also the equality of ordination of the entire ministry.

(Church Manual, 2005:26)

This structure ensures the maximum participation of the membership of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

> Every member of the church has a voice in choosing officers of the church. The church chooses officers of the state conferences. Delegates chosen by the state conferences choose the officers of the union conferences, and delegates chosen by union conferences choose the officers of the General Conference. By this arrangement every institution, every church has a voice in the election of the men who bear the chief responsibilities in the General Conference.

(Church Manual, 2005:25)

To buttress this participatory approach in the church polity of the church the manual sets it on a biblical foundation which not only gives opportunity to have a voice in choosing officers but also to have every member share in the ministry of the church.

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[110] The official Church paper.

"The biblical word *laos* from which we derive the word laity includes the entire people of God, including the clergy. It can be used to mean associates in ministry. Not upon the ordained minister only rests the responsibility of going forth to fulfil this commission. Everyone who has received Christ is called to work for the salvation of his fellow men" (Church Manual, 2005:67).

Although the Seventh-day Adventist Church manual does not refer to the priesthood of believers, it may be observed that the principles of this teaching undergird its church polity. The participation of all members not only in the decision making but also in the mission and ministry of the Church is clearly reflected in the church polity. The global approach to organization also gives the corporate meaning of the priesthood of believers rather than an individualistic approach. But this is implicit and not clearly spelled out.

5.2.4 Pragmatic Approach

The ambiguity of the term pragmatic necessitates a definition for the purposes of this study. The way the term stands can either mean pragmatics, pragmatism or pragmatic. According to the *Random House Dictionary of the English Language* and *Webster's Third New International Dictionary* pragmatics[111] is a "branch of semiotics dealing with the causal and other relations between words, expressions, symbols and their uses", pragmatism[112] means "character or conduct that emphasizes practicality, a philosophical

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[111] This concept has been applied in Biblical Hermeneutics in Jim Harries "Biblical hermeneutics in Relation to the Conventions of Language Use in Africa: Pragmatics Applied to Interpretation in Cross-Cultural Context" ERT (2006) 30:1, 49-59. Pragmatics is an "important theoretical foundation in this article". Harries uses sports to illustrate how pragmatics works. Each sport has different terminology. A soccer player canot use soccer terms to explain how cricket is played. Cricked must be explained in its own terms. He then applies this to biblical hermeneutics (50). While pragmatics in its technical sense may have some value it falls outside the scope of this study.

[112] "Pragmatism has come into use since 1898, when the word first occured in William James's work....the term had been coined twenty years before by C.S. Peirce in order to express the scientific need of testing

movement or system having various forms, but generally stressing practical consequences as constituting the essential criterion in determining meaning, truth, or value" and pragmatic as used in this study is a simple adjective "pertaining to a practical point of view or practical considerations". The last view is adopted in this study. In this sense the priesthood of believers may be used at a praxis level without due considerations to the biblical, theological, and ecclesiological implications. This pragmatic point of view may also be seen in historical accounts that deal with the subject.

5.2.4.1 Reformed Approach

Cloete in his dissertation has as his main motivation, the development of a model that has been applied to a Dutch Reformed congregation in South Africa. His aim is to help churches that desire to encourage their members to be engaged as God's priests in the world (Cloete, 1998:8). With chapter 1 as introduction, in chapter 2-4 Cloete surveys various theories on the priesthood of the believer, in chapter 5 he develops an ecclesiological model, and chapter 6 he dwells on how the model functions in praxis. Cloete takes into account both the Old and the New Testaments in his biblical foundation for the model (Cloete, 1998:99-111). Coertzen (1998: 23), in his *Church and Order A Reformed Perspective* gives an important guideline, that any reformation in the church that is deemed necessary can only go in a single direction toward the Scriptures. Coertzen

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the meaning and value of our conceptions and terms by their use...He insisted, therefore that the truth of every conception depended on the difference which it made in a scientific situation." F.C.S. Schiller "Pragmatism" in Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics volume X edited by James Hastings. Edinburg: T&T Clark 1974, p. 147, 148. see also H.S. Thayer "Pragmatism" in The Encyclopedia of Philosophy vol 5 edited by Paul Edwards. London: Collier McMillan Publishers 1967, p 430-436. While pragmatism also seems attractive with its focus on meaning in a specific situation, it is beyond the scope of this study to use it. The reason for not including these technical approaches is that there is no evidence of any church or scholar dealing with the priesthood of all believers using these technical terms. This study is also not dealing with linguistics in a technical sense and such philosophical views.

also gives a balancing statement that takes into account the biblical context, literary genre of the passage, sociological circumstances etc., thereby avoiding a legalistic, mechanical, and fundamentalist approach to Scripture (Coertzen, 1998:23). While Coertzen is not dealing with the priesthood of believers in this section his word of caution is apt and relevant for the subject at hand and also in view of Cloete's work, and has import beyond the Reformed circles. This view also expresses the same sentiments from the sixteenth century Reformers albeit before and even after that century the *sola Scriptura* principle was echoed by Martin Luther, John Calvin and Reformers that came after them.

5.2.4.2 Methodist Approach

Garlow in his book *Partners in Ministry* takes the route of a pragmatic approach to the subject of the priesthood of believers. He did his Ph.D. at Drew University and wrote on "John Wesley's Understanding of the Laity as Demonstrated by His use of the Lay Preachers" for his dissertation. While his book promises a balanced view on the subject his focus is more on how this works practically and there is merit to this, but it is not the whole picture. In his biblical foundation he states: "there was a time in biblical history when the priesthood was limited to the descendents of Aaron. Not so in the New Testament. The Book of Hebrews tells us that the Old Testament rites were temporary and that a day would come when a new priesthood would be formed. That day has come! We are that priesthood" (Garlow, 1981:18). There are obviously some serious gaps in the foregoing statement about priesthood. The first problem is that the book of Hebrews is concerned about the priesthood of Christ. The author does not show how the priesthood of Christ is connected to the priesthood of believers. Quoting Exodus 19:6, Garlow's

view is that "in verse 6 God calls the children of Israel 'a kingdom of priests.' He is not referring simply to those in the professional priesthood. He is saying that Israel as a nation as a people was called to service, was called to ministry." (Garlow, 1981:19). This statement seems to contradict the earlier statement. Even his explanation seems to leave some questions unanswered. His assessment is that "Israel's problem was that they became confused about their call. They did not understand that they were called, not to status or to honor or to a position of privilege, but rather to servanthood or ministry" (Garlow, 1981:19). It is not clear how the Israelites would have been confused about status, position and honour. Garlow (1981:19), quotes Isaiah 61:6 "The prophet Isaiah reminds us that 'you will be called priests of the Lord, you will be named ministers of God'. The fulfilment of this ancient dream is occurring today in the Church. It is occurring now in us. We are all ministers." The fact that Garlow starts with the biblical foundation is commendable. From this he moves to theology, history and then the practical application. Half of the book deals with the practical application. He further makes a significant point that connects ecclesiology with theology, he states succinctly: "If we are to have a proper theological system which includes lay people, many of us need to rework our ecclesiology" (Garlow, 1981:29). This chapter has demonstrated clearly that it is important to have a sound biblical foundation for the priesthood of believers. This will then flow into the theology, ecclesiology and application. Garlow chooses to follow John Wesley as a model for the practical application of the priesthood of believers. As a pragmatist himself on this subject Wesley did not develop any clearly defined position on the priesthood of believers. He simply applied it as Garlow puts it "British Methodism would not have existed without its extensive utilization of the laity.

From its beginning, it was primarily a lay movement. Its uniqueness was not so much in the fact that it used the laity, but in the extent to which they were used" (Garlow, 1981:72).

5.2.4.3 Baptist Approach

The Baptists in their discussion on the priesthood of believers have what they call competency as an practical application of the principles of the priesthood of believers. First the biblical foundation is laid on the teaching of the priesthood of believers. Drawing from these principles they hold that each member as a priest has some responsibilities which include:

> Bringing others to Christ and assisting them in developing their gift to serve him. Making intercession for others is a primary concern of the priest. The right of supporting financially the work of God is an evidence of commitment to the work of God. Participating in a local and autonomous body (the church expresses the individual responsibility of the priest.
>
> (Morris, 1994:77)

With this application flowing out of the understanding of the passages of Scripture, comes the competency of the individual which is said to cause Baptists to:

> Reject the wrong use of the rite of baptism. Church governments which deny the individual the right to be involved in decision-making are not acceptable to Baptists. Making a distinction between the clergy and lay persons is considered a violation of the equality of all believers. Separation of the church and the state are considered to be an essential factor in fulfilling the competency of the individual to determine his relationship to God.
>
> (Garlow, 1981:19)

Kraemer gives a critique of the way the priesthood of believers has been viewed. He is particularly critical of the attempts to focus on the "vocation of the layman as deeply religious as that of the priest and that, in fact, it is too a priestly vocation. Various ecclesiologies (e.g. the Baptist) put great stress on it" (Kraemer, 1958:94). He also admits that this is a good biblical doctrine, and moreover it is "inherent in the being of the Church, God's people" He also views it as "one of the ferments of a theology of laity" but he turns around and surprisingly states: "Yet I would dissuade from taking it as a starting point….The insistence on it as the key to understanding the meaning of the laity seems to me ill-advised, because it is a too partial approach. Moreover it has acquired more and more an individualistic accent, wholly alien and even contrary to the biblical notion which is the priesthood of the whole church" (Kraemer, 1958:94).

5.2.4.4 Seventh-day Adventist Approach

The Seventh-day Adventist reflection on the subject has been varied between pragmatic and theological. Russell Burrill in his reflection on the priesthood of believers places priority over the pragmatic implications of the teaching. He emphasizes the exclusivity of the Old Testament priesthood and the inclusivity of the New Testament priesthood (Burrill, 1979:23, 24). This drives a wedge between the Old Testament view and the New Testament understanding. Rex Edwards follows suit, with no reference to the Old Testament priesthood at all (Edwards, 1995:66, 67). The two authors have as their goal to establish the position that believers are ministers, and they elaborate on the practical implications of this status for the mission of the church.

5.3   Doctrinal Criticism and the Priesthood of Believers

There is a need to develop criteria for evaluating the priesthood of believers as it is applied to ecclesiology. McGrath raises some pertinent questions on the issue of "reappropriation of the doctrinal heritage of the Christian tradition" (McGrath, 1990:vii). He outlines the task of doctrinal criticism as a "discipline that seeks to evaluate the reliability and adequacy of the doctrinal formulations of the Christian tradition, by identifying what they purport to represent, clarifying the pressures and influences which lead to their genesis, and suggesting criteria – historical and theological – by which they may be evaluated and, if necessary, restated" (McGrath, 1990:vii).   According to McGrath (1990:22) "the theological significance of the Christian experience is articulated at the communal, not the individual level." He also argues:

> While the doctrinal tradition of the church is publicly available for analysis, however, allowing its allegedly 'unchangeable' character to be assessed critically, religious experience remains a subjective, vacuous and nebulous concept, the diachronic continuity and constance of which necessarily lie beyond verification or – as seems the more probable outcome – falsification.

> (McGrath, 1990:22)

Another observation by Carnett also contributes towards a contextual study of the doctrine of the church and the priesthood of believers. He states: "doctrines such as the priesthood of the believer and the local church autonomy, along with Baptist association structure, coincided with the growing democratic and egalitarian ethos that the revolution fostered" (Carnet, 2000:6).

Dulles offers a set of criteria for evaluating models of the church. This chapter has revealed that there are different models in the application of the doctrine of the priesthood of believers. He lists the criteria as follows:

1. Basis in Scripture
2. Basis in Christian tradition
3. Capacity to give church members a sense of their corporate identity and mission
4. Tendency to foster the virtues and values generally admired by Christians
5. Correspondence with the religious experience of men today
6. Theological fruitfulness
7. Fruitfulness in enabling church members to relate successfully to those outside their group

(Dulles, 1974:191-192)

There is a potential tension between the first and the second point. If the Sola Scriptura principle advocated by Cloete is followed in the evaluation of the doctrine of the priesthood of believers, then the Christian tradition may not be a basis for evaluation. The fourth point is also clearly defined. There is a need to add another safety valve so that there are clear boundaries to be followed. The researcher would propose therefore, fostering virtues and values that are based on Scripture. For number 5 in place of correspondence, relevance and application to the contemporary situation may be considered. Therefore the proposed criteria for the evaluation of the application of the doctrine of the priesthood of believers in the Free Church ecclesiology is:

1. Basis in Scripture

2. Drawing from Christian Heritage

3. Capacity to give church members a sense of their corporate identity and mission

4. Tendency to foster the virtues and values that are based on Scripture and generally admired by Christians

5. Relevant and applicable to contemporary situation

6. Theological fruitfulness

7. Fruitfulness in enabling church members to relate successfully to those outside their group

(Adapted from Dulles, 1974: 191-192)

Evans correctly observes that in the church decision-making has been the source of contention. His discussion has relevance in the evaluation of the application of the priesthood of believers in an ecclesiological model. He states that:

> Two interacting decision-making processes have gone on throughout the history of the church. One is formal, involves meetings of the church's representatives or pronouncements by leaders, and results in statements (degrees and resolutions). The other is informal, involves the whole people of God, and consists in their active reception (and sometimes their call for the modification or development) of such decisions. The relationship between the two has always operated ad hoc and defacto. We are not yet in a position to agree which makes a matter of faith or order binding on the faithful, though it is hard to see how the answer can be other than both together.

> (Evans, 1994:251)

Fackre offers an explanation of the doctrine of the priesthood of believers in relation to epistemology and ecclesiology. He claims that the meaning of the priesthood of believers in epistemological terms places the whole community of believers on the same level of privilege. According to Fackre this epistemological priesthood of believers is appropriated from the Protestant heritage (Fackre, 1997:197). Fackre is very critical of individualism that is often associated with the priesthood of believers. For him the "hermeneutical priesthood of believers is a corporate reality…in the free church tradition, the local church becomes the hermeneutical community, on the grounds that the Holy Spirit is distributed to all the members gathered in covenant" (Fackre, 1997:197).

This study therefore proposes that the application of the doctrine of the priesthood of believers to ecclesiology needs to be studied with a specific set of criteria in place. The next section examines the priesthood of believers as it is applied to the ecclesiology of

the free churches. For the purposes of this study only the first three criteria will be used to evaluate the application of the priesthood of believers in the English Free Churches and the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The reason for the choice is that the selected set of criteria is more relevant to the current study, whereas the rest seems to fall outside the scope of this study.

5.4 Priesthood of Believers and the Ecclesiology of the English Free Churches

The focus of this section will be on how the priesthood of believers relates to the doctrine of the church with reference to the English Free Churches and the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

5.4.1 Priesthood of Believers and the Ecclesiology of the Methodist Church

This section will focus on the Methodist church of Ireland, while it will not ignore similarities and differences with Wesleyan Methodists elsewhere. The reason for this choice is the clarity of self-identification by this particular Church and its strong Wesleyan ties that draws from the English Reformation. In the framework of the Methodist ecclesiology the priesthood of believers does not emphasize the function of individual believers but the whole community of faith is in view. The implications of this understanding of the priesthood for individual Christians are as follows:

> Every Christian can approach God directly without any human intermediary, each can receive the forgiveness of God without any priestly absolution. Within the church there are different gifts or functions, but all are included in the "priesthood of all believers." There is however, no sacrifice for other priests to make because Christ has made the one sufficient, perfect and unrepeatable sacrifice. All that

we as individuals, and as a church can do is to follow the sacrificial example of Christ.[113]

(Methodist Belief, para. 9)

According to the statement above the Methodist church does not recognize any human mediators as priests. The priesthood of believers encompasses both the laity and the clergy. This teaching is based on the Old and New Testaments (Exodus19:6; 1 Pet 2:9). This demonstrates that the Methodist Church bases the concept of the priesthood of believers on Scripture.

The Methodist church also draws from the Reformation heritage: "The reformers taught, however, that there was 'a priesthood of believers;' not primarily that each individual believer has a priestly function, but that the Church as a whole exercises a priestly role" (Methodist Belief, para. 9). The teaching is also drawn from the Reformation heritage.

The Methodist church structure blends in the involvement of the laity and clergy in church administration. The representative session made up of the equal number of ministers and lay members makes this balance between laity and clergy possible (Methodist Belief, para. 9). The sharing of leadership is not only found in administration but it may also be traced in the area of mission.

> Local preachers are lay people called by God to preach, having been trained, examined, approved and appointed. They are referred to as "local" preachers, because they generally preach only within the area that they live and work, in contrast to the ordained itinerant preachers, who go where they are sent by the annual conference. While to some extent this system arose out of the practical needs of the early Methodist societies where the numbers of ordained ministers were limited, Wesley recognized the office as a means of encouraging people in their Christian calling and a ready witness to the priesthood of all believers.

(Methodist Belief, para. 9)

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[113] This perspective is from the Irish Methodist church, which claims to follow Wesley's teaching closely.

Therefore the priesthood of believers couched in the Methodist ecclesiology is indeed able to give the members a sense of identity and mission as a corporate body. The foregoing discussion seems to give a picture of what holds in all Wesleyan Methodist churches. For example Larsen observes:

> The office of the ruling elder in the Methodist New Connection is the distinguishing feature between it and the parent body. The administration of an officer so called to the exercise of power alongside the teaching elder, so as to give ministers and laymen equality of authority in all deliberative and legislative assemblies, is the sole point remaining out of the many causes of dissension and final rapture in the struggle for Methodist reform one hundred years ago.

> (Larsen, 2004:135)

In addition Larsen also makes reference to the principle of lay representation that identifies the Irish Methodist church as discussed above (Larsen, 2004:135). Scholars in general seem to accept it as a known fact that Methodist ecclesiology follows the principles of the priesthood of believers. According to Carmody, "from the late eighteenth century Methodist churches were organized according to principles developed by John Wesley. Their ecclesiology stressed the priesthood of all believers" (Carmody, 1986:91). The Anglican-Methodist covenant reflects this view:

> The Methodist Church holds the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers and consequently believes that no priesthood exists which belongs exclusively to a particular order or class of persons but in the exercise of its corporate life and worship special qualifications for the discharge of special duties are required and thus the principle of representative selection is recognized. All Methodist preachers are examined tested and approved before they are authorized to minister in holy things. For the sake of church order and not because of any priestly virtue inherent in the office of the minister of the Methodist Church are set apart by ordination to the ministry of the word and

sacraments

(Anglican-Methodist Covenant, 2001: 167).

Another important observation is that:

> Ordained ministers, or presbyters, in Methodism can be women or men. All candidates for the ordained ministry must first be fully accredited local preachers before undergoing a long selection process. Candidates approved by Conference are then given appropriate theological and practical training and a period of probation on circuit, during which further study and training take place.
> After this the person is ordained at Conference, by prayer and a ceremony of laying-on of hands by the President and other ordained ministers.

(Methodist Belief)

The question of women in ministry and ordination of women is a critical one with reference to the principle of the priesthood of believers and its application in ecclesiology structures. It may be observed that:

> There are two categories of ordained Methodist ministers: Itinerant and Local Non-Stipendiary Ministers. All ministers agree to go wherever Conference may direct, carrying on the tradition of those who first assisted John Wesley as travelling or itinerant preachers. All ministers are appointed to their "stations" each year, but the normal term for an appointment is understood to be eight years. If, however, a request is made to extend an appointment, an appraisal can take place in the seventh year, and every third year after that, with a view to allowing such an extension. Itinerant ministers are paid what is know as a stipend, which is reviewed annually by the Conference to ensure that it is sufficient to meet personal living costs, together with those of spouse and family. Allowances are also given for expenses such as travel, and accommodation is provided. Local basis in specified local churches, and do not receive a stipend or accommodation, although expenses are met.

(Methodist Belief)

From the foregoing discussion on the Methodist Church and the priesthood of believers, it has been found, based on the available information, that the first three criteria[114] that relate to the application of the priesthood of believers are supported by the Wesleyan Methodist churches. The Baptist Church will now come into focus.

5.4.2   Priesthood of Believers and the Ecclesiology of the Baptist Church

For Baptists the starting point and the basis of the priesthood of believers is Scripture. The Baptist dominant understanding of the concept of priesthood is that of a 'general priesthood' which incorporates both the corporate and individual notions of Christians as priests. (White, Deusing and Yarnell, 2008: 175 fn 45). Carolyn Blevins expresses this fact as follows:

> All believers are called to be priestly and holy. Why? So that others will know the work of God. Priestly deeds are not limited by gender, age or social status. Peter reminded the crowd at Pentecost that God would pour out his Spirit on men and women, young and old, slave and free (Acts 2:17-18). God's gifts are not confined to a particular group within Christianity. Everyone must use individual gifts for God's work and for God's glory.
>
> (Carolyn D. Blevins; Bill Leornard)

The quotation above is based on Exod 19:6 and 1 Peter 2:9. Blevins traces the story of the Israelite priesthood from their exile in Egypt through to the New Testament. These passages anchor the Baptist teaching of the priesthood of believers on Scripture. The Baptist church does not only trace its teachings biblically, there is also a claim made to the Reformation heritage. Blevins traces the doctrine of the priesthood of believers from Martin Luther, a "faithful German monk who rediscovered the biblical emphasis that all Christians had equal access to God" (Carolyn D. Blevins). The early Baptist leaders

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[114] See 5.5 of this chapter for the criteria.

embraced this teaching whole heartedly. John Smyth and Thomas Helwys who among other teachings taught the doctrine of the priesthood of believers "led a group of people in England to separate from the Church of England" (Carolyn D. Blevins).

The Baptist Church also teaches the importance of community and individual contribution for the priesthood.

> All believers are priests in two ways. Being a priest is an individual commitment and a community commitment. For an individual, priesthood is personal. It is about a person's relationship with God. No person can interfere with that relationship.
>
> Every individual must keep an up-to-date relationship with God through Bible study, prayer, and personal commitment.
>
> (Carolyn D. Blevins)

The first of the two ways in which the believers are priests, deals with the relationship between God and the believer. The emphasis here is placed on the fact that there is no need for a human mediator to access God. There has been heavy criticism of the position taken by the Baptist Church that blended the teaching of soul competency with priesthood of believers. This was challenged from within the ranks of the Baptist Church itself by W.S. Hudson a Baptist church historian. He warns against the negative impact this concoction would have on Baptist ecclesiology, he writes:

> To the extent that Baptists were to develop an apologetic for their church life during the early decades of the twentieth century, it was to be on the basis of this highly individualistic principle. It has become increasingly apparent that this principle was derived from the general cultural and religious climate of the nineteenth century rather than from any serious study of the Bible. . . The practical effect of the stress upon 'soul competency' as the cardinal doctrine of Baptists was to make every man's hat his own church.
>
> (Neil, 2006)

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In the *1994 Report of the Presidential Theological Study Committee,* an attempt is made to set the record straight on this matter. The idea of access to God is emphasized and a warning is sounded against falling into the trap of modern individualism and theological relativism while propagating the teaching of the priesthood of believers. The second way of being a priest suggests:

> Being a priest is also a community endeavour. Priests need to worship together, plan together, work together, support one another, and participate in the business of their church. Believers must commit themselves to minister through the community of priests. Community nurtures the individuals for ministry. In community, people work together, not alone. In community, individuals work as equals realizing the strength of combining personal gifts of ministry. We work as individual priests through a community of priests (Ibid).

The paragraph above expresses a sense in which a community of believers with a common goal and identity work together. Blevins also emphasizes mission which is done by equals who combine their gifts. The Baptist Church position on the role of ministry is as follows: "that elders, or pastors, are called of God to lead the local church (Acts 20:28)" (1988 Resolution on the Priesthood of the Believer). The priesthood of believers in the Baptist church polity does not do away with the importance of the pastoral office. According to Sayles:

> A Baptist ecclesiology takes its shape from these dynamics of voluntarism and covenantalism: In part, freedom has been eroded in the SBC because its ecclesiology lacks the emphasis on the covenant that has historically been part of the Baptist heritage. The idea of the church as a covenant community has deep roots in both the biblical and free church traditions. The covenantal nature of this free church ethos may be described as a covenantal people live under the law of God, dedicate their lives to the purposes of God… God is the source and sustainer of the covenanted ecclesia. Though the initiator of the covenant is God, the Church is also in a sense a voluntary community. People must choose to be active members. Without the nurture and discipline of covenantalism voluntarism becomes the mask for private

self-interest. . . .

(Sayles, 1991:108)

The paragraph above describes the ecclesiology of the Baptist church. Covenantalism and voluntarism are not Biblical terms. Thus when these terms are used they must be used in context. Sayles does not explain what he means by these terms clearly. The question still remains, how do they relate to the priesthood of believers? Bill Leornard seems to address this in his brief account of the history of the priesthood of believers within the Baptist Church. Leornard summarizes the Baptist teaching of the priesthood of believers in this official pamphlet published by the Historical Commission of the Southern Baptist Convension, 1989:

1. Baptists teach that the priesthood of all believers is founded on the mediatory work of Jesus.
2. The priesthood of all believers helps one to understand salvation by faith. Every believer has both freedom and responsibility when it comes to matters of faith.
3. Baptists discuss the priesthood of all believers along with the teaching of soul competency. The priesthood of all believers does not give one freedom to believe anything or live anyway they wish. The freedom implied by the priesthood of all believers engenders responsibility.
4. The teaching of the Baptists on the priesthood of all believers propagates the notion that all believers are priests and they minister to one another. The Baptist Church from the early years in their history ordained ministers while at the same time taught that all believers are called to Christian ministry.
5. Baptists have a balanced view of the priesthood of all believers, that it does not only relate to individuals but it also has reference to believers as priests of Christ as members of the community of priests, the Church.

(Leonard, "Priesthood of All Believers" www.mercer.edu/baptiststudies)

This section has examined the teaching of the Baptist Church on the priesthood of believers. The Baptist Church bases her teaching on the priesthood of believers on Scripture and Christian heritage. It also advocates a sense of community that engenders freedom and responsibility to each other. It was also found that there are two approaches

to the application of this doctrine that have been advocated by some, the individual and the corporate application.

5.4.3 Priesthood of Believers and the Ecclesiology of the Seventh-day Adventist Church

The Seventh-day Adventist Church teaches the principles of the priesthood of believers. Norskov Olsen a Seventh-day Adventist historian sets out to explore the theological and ecclesiological aspects of the priesthood of believers and its impact on ecclesiology (Olsen, 1990:4, 5). Olsen defines the church as a "community or society and as such it must necessarily have a structure, but the nature of its structure is not comparable to any secular society" (Olsen, 1990:5). This statement places the foundation of ecclesiology on Scripture by implication. The conflict between clergy and laity is not necessary if our understanding of the priesthood of believers is based on Scripture (Olsen, 1990:5). Olsen acknowledges that there are differences in ecclesiology structures, and this has been considered as a dividing line between churches. On the other hand Olsen observes that it is not only the question of the pattern of ministry that has divided Christian churches, but also the theological and soteriological views. Therefore Olsen propounds that "the changes in the pattern of ministry and church structure, which have taken place during the history of Christianity, have gone for better or worse hand in hand with theological developments" (Olsen, 1990:5). Olsen further situates the foundation of both ecclesiology and the priesthood of believers in Scripture (Olsen, 1990:7, 34). Olsen's work focuses on the Biblical foundations for ecclesiology and the priesthood of believers and also traces the history of the application of this teaching up to the time of the Reformation. Therefore

the Seventh-day Adventist Church has explored both the Biblical foundations and claimed the Reformation heritage on the priesthood of believers.

There were some tensions that developed in the formative years of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Barry Oliver observes that there were two different ecclesiological models of church organization that divided the denomination in the 1890s. One model was an ontological christocentric form that emphasized the priesthood of believers, the headship of Christ, the church as the body of Christ and spiritual gifts. The other focused on a functional form of organization that emphasized the corporate nature of the church (Oliver, 1989:136-40). This tension eased-up when the church moved in the direction of the functional model in the reorganization of 1901 (Timm, 2002:293).

La Due (2006: 134), in his evaluation of the Free church ecclesiology has found that there is an emphasis on the local congregation. The congregation has full authority there is no need for a bishop. He claims that the limitation of the Free church model is that "it tends to restrict the vision of its adherents to their own individual group and often fails to focus on the Christian worldwide mission.

The 1901 reorganization of the Seventh-day Adventist ecclesiological structure marked a shift from an emphasis on the congregational model to a representative functional model of church organization. Timm, summarizes the form of church government in the Seventh-day Adventist Church from 1913 as follows: "The denomination was already under the following five levels: (1) local churches (2) local conferences (3) unions (4) division and (5) general conference. But in 1918 the Division Conferences were abolished as independent conferences to become actual extensions of the General conference (Timm, 2002:293). The structure of the Seventh-day Adventist Church has

remained unchanged until the 21st century. Rex D. Edwards in his book *Every Believer a Minister*, makes a claim that "throughout our history Seventh-day Adventists have held the doctrine of priesthood of believers as one of our cardinal beliefs and most cherished distictives" (Edwards, 1995:63).[115] On the other hand Edwards laments that the Seventh-day Adventists not withstanding their embrace of this doctrine "have seriously misunderstood and certainly inadequately expressed the full meaning of this doctrine" (Edwards 1995:63). For Edwards this failure is demonstrated by a misunderstanding of the role of every believer to perform ministry as a priest (Edwards, 1995:63). By way of application to the church Edwards expects that "at the very least the doctrine anticipates the full participation of all Christians in the evangelistic action of the Church" (Edwards 1995:79). In this statement Edwards acknowledges by way of implication that there is much more to the application of this doctrine than the involvement of the laity in evangelism. Hence he pines for a theological foundation of the priesthood of believers (Edwards, 1995:65). Edwards seems to place the full grasp and application of this doctrine beyond his work:

> The future will record whether we will be successful in recapturing and applying the doctrine. This is not simply a desirable doctrine, this is the key by which we can accomplish our mission in the world and make the impossible possible. At least, to capture the New Testament emphasis on the ministry of the laity would mean no less than a revolution in the conception of the Church, in relation to its members and its relation to the outside world, if it were realized in its full consequences.

(Edwards, 1995:80)

Edward's focus throughout the book is on the mission of the church and the involvement of believers therein. In tracing the history of the doctrine he seems to focus only on

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[115] This book was published by the ministerial association of trhe General Conference of Seventh-day Advnentists as a module for the continuing education for pastors.

Luther unlike Olsen who examines the Reformation in a more balanced manner. If there is anything that Edwards accomplished it is to whet the appetite for further exploration and to identify some gaps in the investigation and application of the doctrine. His work falls short of recognizing the connection with the Old Testament. The emphasis on the theological foundation rather than the biblical foundation as the first step may be a handicap to Edward's approach. While Edward's treatment of the doctrine lacks on background it does certainly reflect the trend of the church from the 1901 reorganization namely: the focus on the mission of the church.

Juan Millanao proffers some indicators that are necessary for a Seventh-day Adventist view on the priesthood of believers:

1. The doctrine of the priesthood of all believers for the Seventh-day Adventists must consider the whole biblical revelation not only some books of the Bible. It may be noted that the passages that make reference to the priesthood of the Christians do not speak about Christ as priest, and the book that develops Christ's priesthood (Hebrews) does not speak expressely about the priesthood of the Christians.
2. The Adventist doctrine of the Priesthood of all believers is intimately joined to one of the fundamental doctrines of the Church, sanctuary and atonement. The priesthood of the believers is derived from the priesthood of Christ and his intercessory ministry as our High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary.
3. In view of 1 Peter the doctrine must be christocentric.
4. This doctrine must present in balance both the privileges and the responsibilities of the priests called by God.
5. This doctrine must take into consideration the universality or catholic nature of the Church described in 1 Peter. This is critical for the Seventh-day Adventist Church at the beginning of the 21 century. From a wider perspective, the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers should support the unity of the world church, especially in aspects of ecclesiology. From the perspective of the local church, this doctrine seems to be fundamental in favoring the interdependent relationship between pastors and laymen concerning the mission of the church.
6. It is necessary that the different applications of the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers reflect the Biblical meanings and the writings of E.G. White on offering spiritual sacrifices.
7. This doctrine must be attributed the importance that it deserves. If the teaching of justification had important consequences for the doctrine of God and man in Protestantism, then the priesthood of all believers is of equal importance on the

meaning of the church and especially the relation between the ministers and laymen.

(Millanao, 2002:210, 211)

The pertinent question that deserves attention at this stage is: how does the priesthood of believers relate to the ecclesiology of the Seventh-day Adventist Church? Millanao raises a number of issues and points to a direction that may be followed. He does not resolve the problems in his essay. He proposes that the doctrine of the priesthood of believers should among other things be in harmony with the teaching on the unity of the church, universality of the church and with the ideals expressed in Scripture about the relationships between pastors and laymen. He also highlights a view that the priesthood of believers is important for understanding the meaning of the church.

The focus of this study is to trace the application of the priesthood of believers in the Seventh-day Adventist ecclesiology and explore the prospects for future studies. There are two areas that deserve attention, the church structure and ministry. Does the nature of church organization in the Seventh-day Adventist Church reflect the teaching of the priesthood of believers as Millanao proposed it should? Does the priesthood of believers reflect in the ministry within the Seventh-day Adventist Church?

5.4.3.1 Priesthood of believers within the Seventh-day Adventist Church Structure

The earliest discussion on the structure of the church and the priesthood of believers may be traced from the beginning of the twentieth century in the developments of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. This is significant to note because it was about 38 years after the formal organization of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in 1863. Alonzo T. Jones became the main advocate of this doctrine as it relates to the structure of the church. His

views became more pronounced during the discussions on the reorganization 1901-1903. There were two opposing views that gained support during this time. The proponents of the theological approach to ecclesiology were A.T. Jones, E.J. Waggoner, D.J. Paulson, P.T. Magan, and W.W. Prescott. According to Barry Oliver (1998:220), these theologians and church leaders agitated that 'the priesthood of believers, the headship of Christ, the church as the body of Christ, and spiritual gifts determine the form of organization." Oliver argues that they focused on aspects that emphasized the local level of the church and did not develop their views further than the local church. On the other hand there were some who advocated for a universal unity of the church as a priority consideration for church organization. These were A.G. Daniels, W.C. White, and W.A. Spicer. Oliver makes it clear that they did not deny the importance of these teachings (Oliver, 1998:220). The former advocated for a theology of the church that informed its mission and the latter proposed for the nature of church organization (Oliver, 1998:220).

According to Oliver, A.T. Jones and his supporters claimed that "reorganization, therefore, was not so much a function of the corporate church as it was the responsibility of the individual church member. Reorganization was related not only to the structures of the denomination, but to the inner life of the individual" (Oliver 1989:224; A.T. Jones). By 1903 the direction taken by the denomination was moving away from what Jones was proposing. His insistence that the headship of Christ must be seen in the actual organization of the church was not accepted (A.T. Jones). While the church agreed with his theological teaching the applicability of his theological views on the structure of the church was nebulous.

As the tensions were mounting between these two opposing groups both with strong opinions, Ellen G. White gave a balanced view. She expressed her conserns on "(1) the headship of Christ, (2) the priesthood of believers, (3) the corporate nature of the church, (4) the church as a building with Christ as the foundation, (5) the missionary nature of the church, and (6) separation between the church and the world" (Oliver, 1989:267). By highlighting the views from both sides Ellen White brought a balanced view into the discussion. Her insistence on both the theological and pragmatic views showed that the doctrine of the priesthood of believers was not completely lost because of the decision to focus on the mission of the church. There were two views on the ecclesiological structure at the beginning of the 20th century within the church, some supported a congregational form of organization others a hierarchical form of church organization. The former focused on diversity and the latter on unity (Oliver, 1989:270). According to George Knight "the final product of the 1901 and 1903 sessions was a church organization based on the pragmatic necessity of the denomination's mission rather than on an unchangeable structure that could never be modified as the condition of the church and the world it served changed" (George Knight).

5.4.3.2 Priesthood of Believers and Ministry in the Seventh-day Adventist Church

The work of Norskov Olsen seems to base itself on the Biblical and historical foundations for ministry. He touches on the critical aspects of the ministry and the priesthood of all blelievers Biblically and historically. There are two observations that need attention: the notion that "the New Testament does not describe a single pattern of ministry which might serve as a blueprint or continuing norm for all future ministry in the Church. In the

New Testament there appears rather a variety of forms which existed at different places and times"[116] (Olsen, 1990:119). A second observation that Olsen makes is that "whenever ministerial functions and offices developed outside the framework of the nature of the ministry and the doctrine of the priesthood of believers – as described in the New Testament…the structure of the church and ministry changed" (Olsen, 1990:90). These observations are drawn from the study of both the New Testament patterns of ministry and the historical patterns that developed through the centuries after the New Testament period. Olsen makes another observation which is significant for any discussion on ministry: the rite of ordination "is not so clearly and directly defined in the New Testament as expected…" (Olsen, 1990:148). These observations open up a variety of options that are open for a development of ecclesiology and the doctrine of the priesthood of believers. Rex D. Edwards argues: "Seventh-day Adventists, who hold the doctrine of the priesthood of believers as one of their distinctives, must understand that the unqualified teaching of the New Testament concerning this doctrine is that every Christian has a ministry which under God he *or she* must fulfill" (Edwards, 103 italics mine).

5.4.3.3 Priestood of Believers and Women Ordination in the Seventh-day Adventist Church

There have been numerous discussions on the question of the ordination of women in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Of relevance to this study is how this relates to the doctrine of the priesthood of believers (General Conference of Minutes 1995 Session;

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[116] This observation is drawn from the Faith and Order Commission's Document on Ministry.

see also Women and the Church). An essay authored by Raoul Dederen appeals specifically to the priesthood of believers for the support of the ordination of women. Dederen argues Christ's "priestly standing before God is imputed to every Christian believer" (Dederen, 1998:17). He also claims the "the vision of the priest-people remained waiting to become the 'priesthood of believers' under the one New Testament High Priest the Lord Jesus Christ" (Dederen, 1998:11). This view seems to under-cut the role of the priestly nation in the Old Testament as the people of the covenant. This study has demonstrated that the covenant played an important role in the making of a people and their role in serving and representing God to the nations. Dederen also isolates baptism as the sign of our universal call. He sites Col 2:12 and Romans 6:1-4. There is clearly no emphasis on the covenantal relationship which is clearly stated in Col 2:11 as the circumcision of Christ. Dederen seems to confuse the corporate priesthood and individual priesthood. The emphasis on equality does not find any support in Scripture. Dederen's attempt is well intended and appreciated but still demands further evidence.[117] This is clear from a direct response to the essay by Gerhard Damsteegt. He raises a pertinent question: "does the priesthood of all believers mean that since Christ's death on the cross all role differences between male and female have been abolished? (Damsteegt, 2000:116). Another objection raised is that the distinction between gifts and functions or roles is not addressed adequately because some leadership roles at least are gender specific. Damsteegt balances his view by asking a rhetorical question: "does this mean that women cannot lead out in a church office? Certainly no." (Damsteegt, 2000:119). It is therefore clear that there is an agreement that women may be involved in ministry on any office of the church. In the 1995 General Conference session in which the proposal

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[117] See Dederen's arguments for ordination at the 1995 General Conference in Utrecht.

for the ordination of women did not receive the support of the larger part of the constituency, the greatest concern was the unity of the church more than the issue of ordination itself. The question of ordination should deserve its own study. The researcher concurs with Avis and Avis that it is a daunting task (Avis and Avis, 2005). In the Seventh-day Adventist Church today, women serve in all levels of church organization without being ordained. The ordination question has not been resolved but women as part of the corporate body of priesthood are engaged in ministry.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church should teach the priesthood of believers as it is based on Scripture, the reformation heritage and includes responsibility of every Christian as part of the body of Christ in mission.

In summing up the discussion so far, it may be observed that the Methodist and the Baptist churches focused on Scripture as the foundation for the application of the priesthood of believers. There was evidence that these churches draw from the Reformation heritage as well. The priesthood of believers was identified by both churches to give a sense of corporate identity to the members as the body of Christ operating as priests in a corporate sense. The application of the priesthood of believers in the church structure and ministry however differed. The study of the priesthood of believers and the ecclesiology of the Free Churches has revealed that the application of this doctrine on ecclesiological structures and the ministry has yielded a variety of models. This owes to a lack of a blue print on ecclesiology in the New Testament. The New Testament itself displays a variety of organizational patterns. The Seventh-day Adventist Church has not attempted to make the priesthood of believers a dominant principle for their church structure like the Baptist church has. However, it is accepted as

one of the Biblical principles on which ecclesiology is built. On the other hand the Baptist church is not as concerned about the balance of power in the structure as the Methodist church. Both the Methodist and Baptist churches may not be as concerned about the mission aspect of the priesthood of believers as the Seventh-day Adventist Church seems to emphasize. This evaluation is based on the sources available to the researcher at the time of the research. Therefore while the churches may meet the criteria set the emphasis may be different, and that may make a difference in the church structure, ministry or approach to mission. Therefore, in an attempt to put the pieces of the puzzle together there are three areas of focus that are critical for the application of the priesthood of believers in ecclesiological structures: the church structure, ministry and mission. The first, focuses on the nature of the church, the second on the nature of ministry and the third has to do with the purpose of the church. It may appear that there is no lack of consensus on the identity of the priesthood of believers among the English Free churches. Although some have focused on individual identity and others on corporate identity these should be viewed as two sides of the same coin.

5.4.3.4 Mission and Priesthood of Believers in the Seventh-day Adventist Church

David Bosch, discussing the missionary paradigm of the Protestant Reformation points to Luther as the catalyst (Bosch, 1994:239). We have already noted the contribution of other Reformers such as John Calvin on the teaching of the priesthood of believers. This doctrine is mentioned among the five features of a Protestant theology of mission expounded by Bosch. He further asserts: "to talk about the priesthood of believers was to reintroduce the idea of every Christian having a calling and a responsibility to serve God,

to be actively involved in God's work in the world…" (Bosch, 1994:243). From the Reformation time there is a clear evidence of an emphasis on mission as it relates to the priesthood of believers. The Anabaptists for example "were among the first to make the commission mandatory for all believers" (Bosch, 1994:246). Although some historians do not find a passionate missionary zeal during the Reformation, Bosch traces the reflection on missionary theology throughout the Reformation period (Bosch, 1994:243-261). A significant period of renewal was ushered in by the Great Awakening during the enlightenment period. Bosch lists three factors that converged to effect a spiritual renewal in the English-speaking world: "the Great Awakening in the American colonies, the birth of Methodism, and the evangelical revival in Anglicanism" (Bosch, 1994:277). These forces of change had an impact on missionary developments. The Seventh-day Adventist Church was born in the later years of this period of renewal in particular during the wave of revival that started about the mid-nineteenth century.[118] The second coming of Christ was the main motivation for mission for Seventh-day Adventists (Bosch, 1992:316). This background gives indicators of the emphasis that the Seventh-day Adventist Church had on the teaching of the priesthood of believers. Admittedly the theological reflection is lacking as it has been pointed out but the application of the teaching on the ecclesiology of the Seventh-day Adventist is evident. Mission became the motivating force for both mission and organization. The missionary aspects of the priesthood of believers has been denied by some scholars as it has been noted. This missionary emphasis and the involvement of believers in the mission of the church, has been the central focus of the understanding and teaching of the priesthood of believers in the church from the time of its inception to the present. Recently there have been some calls for the renewal of the

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[118] See chapter one, 1.2.1.3.

church's identity in the light of its mission. An article has appeared in two parts in the Ministry magazine of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Dybdahl claims that mission and theology are not to be separated. Theology should lead to mission. The main focus of the first part of the article is a call to mission consciousness (Dybdahl, 2005:19). The second part is a call to a redefinition of Adventist identity in the light of mission renewal. The author makes some proposals for a future identity of the Seventh-day Adventist Church: (1) Adventism is a pan religious movement drawing a remnant from all religions

(2) Adventism as a movement that is more than a denomination

(3) Adventism as a world religion (Dybdahl, 2005:19). This ambitious vision was embraced by some, for example Wilma Zalabak, expressed a keen interest. However a Seventh-day Adventist historian Borge Schantz expressed some concerns in this direction. He found this to have a potential to compromise the theology of mission and self-understanding of the task of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the world (March, 2006:3). This article falls short of acknowledging the foundational teaching of the priesthood of believers. There are reflections that share the same direction that are helpful in the strengthening of this theological reflection. The priesthood of believers as it applies to the Seventh-day Adventist Church ecclesiology means that all the members of the church have no other mediator besides Jesus Christ. Each member is charged with the responsibility to minister and proclaim God's message of salvation to all humans (Growing consensus: church dialogues… 1995:167). This is a call from God for participation in the mission of the church (Harris 2001:162). This means that the growing trend of active ministry and passive laity needs to be reversed for the church to fulfil the ideals for which it was founded (Guthrie 2002:365). On the other hand the degree of

involvement may not be the same since the full-time ministers have their place in the church (Lienemann-Perrin, Vroom and Weinrich, 2004:101). The priesthood of believers does have importance for reflection on church structure. The corporate mission of the church is done in the context of a corporate structure. "The ultimate goal of the priesthood is the joint service of believers in unified mission to a lost world" (Norman 2005:99). The theology of mission must lead to a full participaton of the members in the work of the church (Marsh 2004:32; Pennenberg 1993:373). Regarding the meaning of the mission of the church Damsteegt, proposes that there has been some developments. "At first the mission of restoration was seen as a mission to restore certain spiritual principles. Later the restoration aspect began to be interpreted in the context of man's spiritual and physical restoration as necessary preparation for Christ's return. Finally it led to the realization that their mission was to proclaim a message of the complete restoration of 'the principles that are the foundation of the kingdom of God" (Damsteegt, 1977:296). The reflection on the development of the theology of mission shows a development from a narrow view of the proclamation of spiritual principles to a much wider view that aims at the restoration of the kingdom of God. This big picture should not be lost sight of in the application of the doctrine of the priesthood of believers within the Seventh-day Adventist Church. In the light of this bigger picture Damsteegt also points out that the Seventh-day Adventists "did not consider themselves the only true Christians on earth and as far as their view of other ecclesiastical organizations was concerned, they in time came to realize that most of God's people were still to be found in the other Christian churches" (Damsteegt, 1977:297). Therefore the understanding of

the kingdom for the Seventh-day Adventist Church is beyond the denominational boundaries.

5.5   Conclusion

This chapter examined the priesthood of believers from the perspective of ecclesiology. It was found that there are different scholarly opinions on the question of the missionary aspect of the priesthood of believers. Some scholars emphasize the community characteristic of the church and confine the priesthood within that community. Other scholars advocate for both community and missionary aspects of the priesthood. There are also voices that are critical of the individualism that is often associated with the priesthood of believers. The free churches emphasized the importance of the priesthood of believers both as a self-identity of the community of believers and as an organizing factor of their church structures. The free churches that emphasized the priesthood of believers have tended to move toward a decentralized church structure and focused on involving laity in the ministry and administration of the church as well as an emphasis on the missionary aspect of the church. It has been found that the Seventh-day Adventist Church has applied the principles of the priesthood of believers in its structures even though there is not much reflection on the biblical and theological reflection. This study has provided a historical and biblical framework around which such a reflection may be based.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

6.1   Summary of the Findings

The research in this dissertation focused on the question of how the teaching of the priesthood of believers developed in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, as it relates to the Church's ecclesiology. In order to answer the question, the teaching of the priesthood of believers was critically analyzed and evaluated. Conclusions can now be drawn from the Biblical, historical, theological and ecclesiological contexts.

The development of the doctrine of the priesthood of believers was first discussed in light of its Biblical foundation. The second chapter of this research aimed at showing the importance of linking the development of the doctrine with Biblical scholarship. In the critical analysis of the usage of Biblical passages the selected texts were taken from both the Old and New Testaments. An interpretation that came out of a process of textual investigation became the standard against which the doctrinal teaching was evaluated. Therefore the development of the doctrine was measured against Scripture through a process of interpretation of selected Biblical Passages. The researcher therefore concludes that a continuous process of evaluation is possible in the Seventh-day Adventist Church doctrinal system. There is a need to highlight the importance of the covenant in the interpretation of the doctrine of the priesthood of believers in the Seventh-day Adventist commentary. This means that even though the doctrines may be written they are not cast in concrete they are subject to evaluation with Scripture as a standard. This is what chapter 2 has demonstrated in relation to the development of the

doctrine within the Seventh-day Adventist Church and developments in Biblical scholarship.

The development of the doctrine of the priesthood of believers did not happen in isolation it may be seen within a historical context. Is the Seventh-day Adventist Church a Free Church? The findings of chapter 3 in this research answer this question in the affirmative. This has also proved the hypothesis made under 1.2 of this research to be true. There are important historical links that were established. This was an important question to ask of the Seventh-day Adventist ecclesiology because all other Free Churches seem to have the development of this doctrine coming in their early stages of development. In exploring the historical context of the priesthood of believers in chapter 3 of this research, it was found that there were discussions on church organization in which it could be anticipated that a discussion would come up on the doctrine of the priesthood of believers, but it did not. Two historians, George Knight and Barry Oliver allude to the priesthood of believers as one of the motivations for the reorganizational model offered by E.J. Waggoner and A.T. Jones, but no explicit evidence was found. Even with the sermons and writings of these Seventh-day Adventist pioneers there is a dearth of serious deliberation or even hints in the direction of this doctrine. It is only from 1950 onward that an observation is made of some significant developments in Seventh-day Adventist ecclesiology. Much of what was assumed in Seventh-day Adventist ecclesiology was beginning to form part of ecclesiological discussions. The climax of ecclesiological developments in the history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church was the development of the doctrine of the church (Dederen, 2000). Therefore The researcher concludes that this development created an anticipation to anyone who knows the Free Church doctrines and its emphasis of the

priesthood of believers. This chapter has shown how Free Churches have incorporated the doctrine of the priesthood of believers, but in the Seventh-day Adventist Church this is not clearly expressed. Therefore based on historical developments of the doctrine in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, it became evident that the Seventh-day Adventist Church took a while longer before they could include the doctrine of the priesthood of believers. No adequate explanation is given from the historical context to justify this late development. It was demonstrated in chapter 3 of this research that the development of the doctrine of the priesthood of believers in the history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church was very gradual. This chapter therefore dealt with the issue of establishing whether the Seventh-day Adventist Church is to be considered a Free Church. This proved the hypothesis that the Seventh-day Adventist Church shares the same heritage with the Methodist and Baptist Free Churches to be true. This question was important because it is observed that Free Churches have expressed the doctrine of the priesthood of believers explicitly, but the expression of this doctrine in the Seventh-day Adventist Church came quite late in its development. The following chapter builds on these findings to offer an explanation for this late development from the theological context. In the process of research, it was found that the theological context had some plausible rationale to offer for the way the teaching developed in the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

In analyzing the theological context in this study it has also been found that theology with reference to the priesthood of believers in the Seventh-day Adventist Church did not develop in isolation. The theologians from different traditions and backgrounds were briefly highlighted to demonstrate that there was a theological discussion going on during

the nineteenth century and further in time. Why is it that there was little theological discussion on the priesthood of believers in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the early years of its development? It was found that there were internal obstacles that prevented the development of the doctrine of the priesthood of believers in the earlier years of Seventh-day Adventist ecclesiological development. These obstacles were mainly theological. In the same way that the "shut door" concept affected the development of mission theology the theology of the priesthood of believers was affected. This conclusion is arrived at after a careful analysis of the development of mission theology and a comparison between mission theology and the theology of the priesthood of believers. There are also early developments that may not have received the attention they deserved. For example as it was found that from as early as 1849, Ellen G. White had already started to make a contribution toward a concept of mission that would resonate well with the doctrine of the priesthood of believers. The opening of the Seventh-day Adventist Church to mission was gradual, it related to its development of mission theology. Preoccupation with organization in the early development of Seventh-day Adventist ecclesiology clouded the path to the development of the priesthood of believers. As the missionary thrust grew stronger so did the need for exploring the development of the doctrine of the priesthood of believers in Seventh-day Adventist ecclesiology. This interest is seen in the theological discussions and contributions from the 1990s. However this development pushed mainly by individual theologians did not have sufficient impetus to see the doctrine into the official Seventh-day Adventist theological volume. In Chapter 5 the priesthood of believers was analysed and evaluated as a doctrine operating within an ecclesiology.

Chapter 5 divided the views on the priesthood of believers into political, church polity, hermeneutical and pragmatic perspectives. This offered a structure which forms a backdrop against which each church tradition is analysed and evaluated. Each church tradition was analysed and evaluated according to these different perspectives. The evaluation of various approaches to the priesthood of believers in different ecclesiologies has revealed how diverse the views are on the matter of application of the doctrine in ecclesiology. This assessment created a need for a critical evaluation of the doctrine in ecclesiology. A set of criteria was adapted from Dulles, which became the guide for developing the doctrine as it is expressed in an ecclesiology. In the Seventh-day Adventist Church the discussions on the doctrine have surfaced in critical times that threaten church unity as a result the church has opted for unity rather than developing this doctrine. It was not the doctrine of the priesthood of believers that threatened church unity but its use as it has been shown in chapter 4 and 5. It is alleged by Seventh-day Adventist Church historians (Knight and Oliver) that this doctrine under girded the arguments of a group of early pioneers of the Seventh-day Adventist Church that were opposing organization. At another critical time the priesthood of believers surfaced in the discussion on the question of the ordination of women. When the doctrine was used by Dederen in this way, the researcher concludes that it was thrown out with the ordination issue. This may be re reason why it did not find its way into the official theological volume of the church.

The contribution of this research therefore can be found in the uncovering of the expression of the doctrine of the priesthood of believers in Seventh-day Adventist ecclesiology as a life of service in the church and in the world. This view is seen to be

developing from about 1849 within Seventh-day Adventist ecclesiology but its height of maturity has not yet been seen.

The problem that was presented in the study was the lack of consensus on how the teaching of the priesthood of believers should function in the Churches. The Seventh-day Adventist Church was used as a point of reference for this lack of consensus. It became evident that there is no official theological statement on the priesthood of believers in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The need for such a statement was seen at some stages of the development of Seventh-day Adventist ecclesiology.

Doctrinal development in the Seventh-day Adventist Church has always come through a rigorous study of Scripture as a starting point. This study has proved in chapter 2 that the emphasis on Exodus 19:6 as the only Old Testament foundation for the priesthood of believers is far from adequate. The study of Hosea on the priesthood by Old Testament scholars is not new, but the recognition of this passage in building the foundation for the doctrine of the priesthood of believers is a new direction in the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The history of the church is also important in the development of doctrine. The study of the priesthood of believers in light of the history of the church in chapter 3 of this study, has placed the Seventh-day Adventist Church within the Free Church heritage. The approach of this study was not limited to one church historical movement. This has helped to see the development of the priesthood of believers in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in its proper church historical context. Both the magisterial and radical Reformations are significant in tracing the history of doctrine. The history of the priesthood of believers in Seventh-day Adventist history and ecclesiology revealed the

focus and expression related to the mission of the church to be performed by all believers. The political involvement of believers does not seem to have any place in the Seventh-day Adventist expression of the priesthood of believers. This emphasis and choice of approach was influenced by the Churches' position on matters of relationships between a state and church as was shown in chapter 5 (see 5.2.1.3). The Seventh-day Adventist Church was not left untarnished by the political tensions that existed in the past. The church does have official statements on political involvement but these are not related to the priesthood of believers.

The expression of the priesthood of believers in theology has underscored the variances not only in emphasis but also the tensions that are there. For example there are theologians that expressed the importance of mission as evangelism without giving an equally balanced view of the way believers express the priesthood of believers in the world. Some theologians tend to focus on the political aspect at the expense of the proclamation of the gospel. A need was observed in the Seventh-day Adventist ecclesiology, to express the priesthood of believers in a balanced manner, by emphasizing both the involvement of the believers in the church and in the world, as a priesthood. This means that in couching the doctrine of the priesthood of believers both the mission and moral responsibility in the world are to be adequately expressed (1 Peter 2:9, 12; Matthew 5:13-15; cf. chapter 4 of this study).

In looking at how the priesthood of believers would function in the structure of the Seventh-day Adventist Church this study suggested some criteria for developing church doctrine. The criteria ensures the adequacy of the process of developing a doctrinal statement that will not conflict with what happens in praxis. The other ecclesiologies that

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were discussed are not a bench mark, but they indicate that we are fellow travellers toward an ecclesiology that will fully accommodate this important doctrine in practice. Scripture remains our bench mark for both theology and ecclesiology. Therefore the hypothesis in 1.2 that stated that the priesthood of believers is an underutilized key to understanding Seventh-day Adventist ecclesiology is not true. The priesthood of believers is an underdeveloped teaching in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, this is based on the findings of the theological obstacles discussed in chapter 4. The last part of that hypothesis stated that the impact of the teaching can be seen in both the theology and ecclesiology. This impact cannot be seen in the Seventh-day Adventist Church because of the marginal nature of the doctrine. A broader view of the role of the church in the socio-political and ecumenical contexts is not fully developed in the teaching of this doctrine in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. But the focus was placed on mission without linking this theology of mission with the priesthood of believers. This research in chapter 4 has shown that there is a relationship between the theology of mission and the teaching of the priesthood of believers. This makes the early reflections on mission relevant for the development of the priesthood of believers in the Seventh-day Adventist ecclesiology.

In Summary the five hypothesis in 1.2 reflect as follows in the findings:

(1) The Biblical foundation was proved to be important for the development of the teaching of the priesthood of believers in Seventh-day Adventist ecclesiology. An in depth study of the context of each text used cannot be dispensed with because of the diversity of views on the texts.

(2) This study demonstrated with selected passages the need for a study of every passage that is used in supporting the doctrine of the priesthood of believers. The need for further exploration was thus affirmed.

(3) The investigation of the doctrine of the priesthood of believers from the perspectives of the different church traditions has shown that this was a valuable exercise. A broader view of the heritage from the different traditions has not benefited the Seventh-day Adventist Church in as far as the doctrine of the priesthood of believers goes because it has been sadly neglected.

(4) The tracing of the Seventh-day Adventist ecclesiology from a Free Church heritage was beneficial in the evaluation of the Seventh-day Adventist teaching on the priesthood of believers and its development in the Seventh-day Adventist ecclesiology.

(5) It has been confirmed in the historical development that at critical times such as the reorganization of 1901 and 1995 during the discussions on the ordination of women the doctrine did surface but was not utilized in a correct way and thus it became a casualty. However this has shown the importance of the doctrine for further development and official adoption in the churches' theology.

6.2   Recommendations for Further Study

6.2.1   There is a need for an ecclesiological model for the function of the priesthood of believers within the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

6.2.2   There is a need for a formulation of a doctrinal belief on the priesthood of believers.

6.2.3   Some strategic entry points into the ecumenical debate on the priesthood of believers could be explored in future studies.

6.3 Conclusion

The analysis and evaluation of the Seventh-day Adventist Church teaching on the priesthood of believers in relation to their ecclesiology has shown that this teaching is important in Seventh-day Adventist Church. However, as it has been demonstrated from the different contexts that have been analyzed that there is a neglect of the development of the teaching in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. While the theologians have done individual reflection yet no official Seventh-day Adventist theological statement is available on the teaching to date. This neglect of the doctrine, it was found, was due to tensions in ecclesiological development that affected the development of this doctrine negatively. This study has not found any negative views against the doctrine except the reactions on the way it was used. Therefore the assessment of the developments in Seventh-day Adventist ecclesiology have helped to identify problems that related to the development of this teaching within the Seventh-day Adventist Church and to suggest some ways of moving forward in the different contexts. The juxtaposition of the Seventh-day Adventist ecclesiology and theology with other church traditions has given further light into the relations that caused such association with the Free Church heritage to be lost sight of. This study has hopefully rescued the doctrine from entanglements of the past that have caused its slow development. There is also a need for expressing the doctrine in the light of the different contexts. The emphasis of the mission of the church with reference to the priesthood of believers for example needs to be affirmed. It has its

place and need not be replaced. There is a further need for the expression of living as a priesthood in this world. This has been expressed in other ways than the priesthood of believers in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. There is a need for that balance in the expression of this doctrine. The priesthood of believers in the Seventh-day Adventist Church may therefore be seen in terms of service to the church and to the world. This means that the expression of the priesthood of believers is not limited to evangelism but embraces other ways in which believers by living as a priesthood may render service to God in this world. Spiritual work of evangelization and living as a priesthood therefore are the essence of the mission of the church.

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