

**EXPLORING THE CONSEQUENCES OF PERCEPTIONS OF
THE DIVINE, AND THE CHURCH, IN THE MAKING OF
SELF-IDENTITY; A CASE STUDY OF CONGREGANTS FROM ROMAN
CATHOLIC AND CHARISMATIC COMMUNITIES
IN EAST LONDON, SOUTH AFRICA.**

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the impact and consequences of the teachings of the church, perceptions of The Divine [God] and of Mary, in the making of personal identity. In spite of secularisation and the prediction that the church would collapse in the face of modern science, recent evidence suggests that – in its various forms – religion, and belief in a higher power remain important and potentially powerful aspects in society.

A foundation stone of the Christian faith is the doctrine of *Imago Dei*: humanity created in the image of The Divine. Although not male, The Divine is repeatedly spoken of – and addressed - in anthropomorphic masculine terms, but perceived in gender-specific stereotypical terms. Alongside The Divine – in the Roman Catholic Church – is Mary, the mother of Jesus. She is spoken of in feminine terms, but is also perceived in gender-specific stereotypical terms. Although not officially considered to be divine, Mary fulfils important needs in the life of the believer and it is in this context that her influence is evaluated.

The role of the church as a community - and social institution – is also explored, based on Giddens' theories of identity development. Belonging to a church community can provide a context for relationship, continuity, and trust. However, this potentially positive environment can have negative implications on self-identity in that restrictions on self-expression and personal choice can be as limiting as the sense of belonging is liberating. The patriarchal nature of the church is deemed to be of immense relevance.

In order to establish the role of the church, The Divine, and Mary in the making of self-identity, in-depth interviews were conducted with twelve research participants belonging to Charismatic and Roman Catholic congregations, and Giddens' criteria for self-identity development was used as the standard for evaluating participants' personal sense of self-identity. Explored from the perspective of feminist theology, the findings of this qualitative research project suggest that it is more than gender language regarding The Divine that affects the agent's perception of The Divine, and that the role of the church in identity formation is not uniform in its influence. It also concludes that perceptions of Mary can be influential in the development of self-identity.

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research was born out of a long-standing personal question with regard to human identity, the patriarchal nature of the church, and masculine language used when referring to The Divine.

I am especially grateful to Prof Geoff Wood (formally of Rhodes University: East London) for introducing me to the discipline of Sociology, and more specifically the work of Anthony Giddens, who maintains that self-identity is made within the context of relationship and that un/acknowledged conditions reflexively affect the life of the agent. Seen in this context, the relevance of the potential authority of the church in the life of its members, and the influence of the conviction of the existence of The Divine, have – in my opinion - latent significance.

In this thesis I set out to explore the issues surrounding human experience and identity formation within the context of the church – a social structure exceptionally patriarchal in nature – and the impact of the doctrine of *imago Dei*; human beings created in the image of a Divine Being who is perceived in almost exclusively masculine terms. The impact of perceptions and the role of Mary, the mother of Jesus, is also considered.

In order to examine the implications of the above tendencies I chose to interview congregants from Charismatic and Roman Catholic Communities. This is because both denominations are patriarchal in nature, neither allow women to fulfill leadership roles, both offer a sense of community and the adherents of both denominations identify themselves strongly with their religious tradition. The views of both women and men were considered.

Three in-depth interviews with each of the twelve participants (lasting an average of two hours each) produced three hundred and ninety eight (typed - single space) pages of transcripts. A further contact with each participant confirmed and clarified detail. Interviews with the priest/pastor of each church, as well as participation in a number of the worship services of each church, further informed this research. I am indebted to the minister and congregants of each church, and specifically each research

participant for their interest and invaluable input, based on their life experience. I am grateful for the time given to the interviews, for the willing disclosure of personal experience, and wish to acknowledge – with thanks - their role in this research.

Because of the nature of the research question, analysis revolved around both the church and the individual participant. Since the architecture and furnishings of a church reflect something of its theology, photographs are included which portray the differences between the two denominations; especially the acknowledgement of the significance of Mary (Appendix 6).

Appendix 7 lists quotations of scriptural texts referred to in this research. Since each academic discipline has its own terminology – and this thesis includes both theological and sociological concepts – Appendix 8 provides a definition of terms relevant to this thesis. Each religion and denomination also has its own 'language' – or popular vocabulary. These are also explained in Appendix 8.

In order to accommodate the volume of material relevant to the individual participant, and further support the findings of the thesis, analysis of the data for each contributor - as an individual – is presented in a separately bound addendum entitled: *'The Consequences of Perceptions of The Divine, and The Role Of The Church, in The Making of Self-identity'*

In closing may I acknowledge – with thanks - a Human Science Research Council bursary for R 10 000.00 and my indebtedness to Rhodes University Grahamstown for the opportunity to complete my degree. Appreciation is also expressed to Dr. S Fourie for understanding my context and to Prof. F Hendricks for undertaking my supervision.

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*Dedicated to my late father
Alan Bradley*

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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

'Truth is the daughter of time, not authority'

Francis Bacon

(in Rosalind Miles, 1993:264)

1.1. RESEARCH AIM

Approached from the perspectives of structuration theory and feminist theology, this thesis is a case study exploring perceptions of The Divine, and the role of the Church, in the making of self-identity of Christian believers. In the light of the fundamental Christian belief that humanity has been created in the image of The Divine, the consequences of The Divine perceived as Father and patriarch are looked at, together with the role, status and influence of the Virgin Mary.

The influence of the church in its role as guardian of Christian spirituality and teaching, and as a social institution offering a place of belonging and security for its members - is also explored.

Twelve research participants have been drawn from the congregants of Roman Catholic and Charismatic churches (in East London, South Africa); six from each denomination, while acknowledging that all participants have histories located in church communities of which they have previously been a part. These denominations were chosen because they have similar theologies with regard to women, the concept of human sinfulness and consequent separation from The Divine (based on the myth recorded in Scripture in Genesis 3:1-13), and the omnipotent nature of The Divine. Both also have a relatively well-defined and 'exclusive' body of doctrine, although the belief system and life-style of the lay member is often divergent from official doctrine. Aspects of community and belonging/identification are important to both; both traditions thereby potentially contributing in equal degrees to the confidence and ontological security offered by tradition (cf. Giddens, in Beck *et al* 1994:80,81). Both traditions are also accepted within the norms of society, and share similar (leadership) structures to that of society.

A major difference, however, lies in the role of the Virgin Mary and her status in the Roman Catholic Church. While she is not considered divine according to official Roman Catholic doctrine, perceptions of the lay agent may be different. Statues and pictures of her are frequently displayed alongside those of her Son, Jesus, and many prayers are addressed through her. On the other hand, the Charismatic church makes no mention of Mary, other than that of her role as the virgin mother of Jesus.

The primary source of data is in-depth interviews, focusing on the perceptions and views of the individual. Although South Africa has a variety of cultures, this thesis is confined to the experience of English speaking, 'Western' women and men.

1.2. CONTEXT

1.2.1. Religion and Social Structures

The social engagement of humanity occurs within the framework of a number of social structures and institutions, each having an effect on society, and visa versa. Ellwood (1983:155) maintains that because of the interaction of society and religion, "religion and other social factors work both together and in reaction against each other to produce spirals of change"; religion as part of society and social structures retaining its place in society, despite the prophecies of former academics.

Although to differing degrees, all actors are aware of - and affected by - institutions controlling politics, health, education, finance, family, and religion. Each institution creates a culture (and language) of its own; a culture of learning, a culture of faith, a culture of political intrigue, *et cetera*, while the degree to which the agent engages with the substance of these institutions often dictates the extent of its influence in the life of the agent. Religion (and other institutions) also often create the illusion of empowerment of its adherents in a world where the average lay person (agent) would seem to have no voice; thus appealing to the oppressed and marginalised. However, religion can be equally as powerful in maintaining the subjugation of classes or groups of individuals – as will be seen with regard to patriarchy.

In the shaping of its culture, each institution develops norms and values which find common acceptance amongst its members. This acceptance provides impetus for the development of the specific institution; momentum being gained when its members conform to these norms and values and begin to accept the roles prescribed by the institution. In the case of religion, the idea of mission and outreach would contribute to the growth of the institution; while the degree to which a specific practice of religion retains currently accepted norms and values - and conforms to socially accepted practices - could facilitate or hinder the outreach programmes and the acceptability of that religion by society. However, whether acceptable or not, Ellwood (1983:156) maintains that religion – whether passive or active in the lives of its followers – "deeply affects the social and political values of the community".

History gives an insight into some of these relationships. Judaism and the Israelite nation were intended to be synonymous with one another, as was the Christian faith in the Roman Empire, under Constantine (in the early Fourth Century: 306 AD), although early Christianity had been a persecuted minority faith. Contemporary examples include the religions of the Middle East and India; the Islamic faith being the basis of social government in Iraq, while basic tenets of Hinduism sustain the social structure of India.

Recent history in the West suggests a tendency to break away from what remained of the Constantine Era and the marriage between the Christian religion and the state. The Enlightenment narrowed the scope of faith, providing scientific answers to many natural phenomena which had previously been believed to be the work of The Divine. Marx called into question the role of the church and religion in the continued subjugation of 'the people', viewing religion as "a product of a stage in human development ... [an] alienation between classes of society ..." and facilitating the exploitation of the masses who in turn accept their lot in anticipation of the world to come (Ellwood 1983:56). He, together with Hegel, believed that there comes a time when contradiction and conditions necessary for exploitation are resolved, leading to the disappearance of both the need and desire for religion (Ellwood: 1983:56).

1.2.2. The Ongoing Role of Religion in Self-identity Formation

According to Giddens (1990, 1991), social structures are also the simultaneous foundation and consequence of individual self-identity, each affecting the other and resulting in contexts that are at the same time conducive to, and inhibiting of, growth for society and its actors. It is suggested that the Church – as a social institution - can have an effect on this interaction. Giddens (1990:109) observes that most situations of modern social life with regard to religious cosmology and reflexively organised knowledge (that is, empirical observation and logic with regard to material technology and socially applied codes) appear incompatible. However, he does concede that with regard to the self, religion - and issues of a spiritual nature - have not suffered their predicted demise and states:

Not only has religion failed to disappear. We see all around us the creation of new forms of religious sensibility and spiritual endeavour. The reasons for this concern quite fundamental features of late modernity. What was due to become a social and physical universe subject to increasingly certain knowledge and control instead creates a system in which areas of relative security interlace with radical doubt and with disquieting scenarios of risk. Religion in some part generates the conviction which adherence to the tenets of modernity must necessarily suspend; in this regard it is easy to see why religious fundamentalism has a special appeal. But this is not all. New forms of religion and spirituality represent in a most basic sense a return of the repressed, since they directly address issues of the moral meaning of existence which modern institutions so thoroughly tend to dissolve (1991:207).

Morals and values – embraced or rejected – continue to have an impact on society and to influence the world-view of the individual, while the church, as the socially accepted custodian of teaching with regard to the nature and desire of The Divine is, for the Christian believer, the source of these morals and values. Coming from an interpretive understanding of society, Max Weber acknowledges the power of tradition within the context of individual moral choice and action. The church, and its tradition, is therefore – for adherents to the Christian faith - a primary social institution within which self-identity is formed; a social system within wider society

which at one and the same time both concurs with, and rejects, the aspirations, goals and desires of the social structures within which it exists as a social institution.

1.2.3. Structuration Theory and Identity Development

At the heart of sociology lies two basic approaches to the practice of sociology and social research, namely the structural, and social action or interpretive (interactionist) traditions. In an attempt to develop a synthesis between these two traditions, Giddens, following (and influenced by) writers such as Elias and Heidegger, has developed a theory based on an interaction of the two – namely Structuration Theory. For the purpose of this thesis the work of Giddens enjoys priority in the light of his ideas on Structuration Theory and his theories on identity development.

According to this theory society is neither a pre-determined system, nor is it a system independently developed by the actions of social agents, but is the result of the reflexive interaction of the agent and social systems and structures. For Giddens (1991:32), changes in the intimate aspects of personal life are directly linked to the establishment of wider social connections. Likewise, the making of individual identity is neither predetermined by society nor wholly the choice of the individual, but is a reflexive relationship in which the options and influence of both agency and structure are considered equally relevant. Agents who are members of a religious organisation – in this instance, the Christian Church – experience this dual influence to some degree or another in all areas of their lives, including the making of identity.

With regard to identity formation, Giddens (1991:35) begins with the premise that to be human is to know, most of the time, in some description or another, what one is doing and why, and to be able to discursively relate the nature of, and reasons for, individual action. However, in making their own history, actors do not always know the initial conditions upon which the action is carried out since society functions through unspoken, unacknowledged, unconscious 'rules' which lay the foundation for normal, coherent interaction and interdependence between human beings. It is suggested that a second aspect of human action which unconsciously influences self-identity is the un/intended consequence of action which, together with unacknowledged conditions,

both maintains and alters the structures of society and their influence on identity formation.

In the light of the above, the development of self-identity is both a personal response to the world around us as well as a contribution to the changes that happen in the world. Human beings are not only creatures of society, but also its creators; all social actors being social theorists and altering their theories in the light of experience (Giddens, 1995:711; 1984:335). Social structures are neither the cause nor result of human action, but, in a sense, 'the human being in action'. Similarly, 'society' is not an entity with time-space presence, but exists "only as social practices reproduced in an indefinite diversity of milieu" (1995:12), while institutions are the structures reflexively created as a result of human action, often providing ontological security for (ongoing) human action and self-actualisation.

Ira Cohen (1989:18) notes that for Giddens, "social agents and not social theorists, produce, sustain, and alter whatever degree of 'systemness' exists in social life". This reflexive interaction would imply that stagnation of thought and a lack of change in the making of identity could lead to a persistence of established patterns – as an unintended consequence - and possibly a justification of the status quo. In the context of the reflexive nature of the making of identity in relation to the social structures within which this occurs, agency and structure are interdependent and serve to sustain one another.

1.2.4. Feminist Theology and Self-identity

One of the most fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith is the doctrine of *imago Dei*, that is: the idea that human beings are created in the image of The Divine, as opposed to other forms of created reality. In exploring the implications of this doctrine in relation to the rest of creation it is suggested that the following areas are affected by this doctrine:

- The idea of a soul or spirit (that is: something that lives on beyond the physical realm of the body)
- The idea of free choice and responsibility for choice (as opposed to 'animal instinct')

- A sense of direction and purpose in life and a conscious awareness of this
- Human ability to reason
- Creativity
- Ability to communicate (with The Divine and one another)
- The concept of community based on the doctrine of the Trinitarian nature of The Divine.
- A sharing – with The Divine – of the attributes and traits which express the nature of The Divine, and potential nature of humanity.

Feminist theologians suggest that there are further implications with regard to human dignity, gender identity and the power structures of society. The image of The One in whose image we are said to be created is itself an image largely created by humanity. Given the patriarchal nature of religious history it is suggested that this image is one which has been reflexively created by men, and used to support the status quo which is largely favourable to men.

1.3. LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

While general patterns with regard to the source and consequences of perceptions of The Divine for human agents may emerge, it is acknowledged these cannot be deemed conclusive and/or relevant for all church communities belonging to a specific Christian denomination, or for all individuals. The personal nature of the faith experience of individuals is at all times respected.

This research is also not concerned with the re-socialisation or identity-transformation processes which may occur as a result of conversion to any specific denomination or religion. However, where this has had an impact on the individual, it is addressed.

It is acknowledged that the sequence of perceptions of The Divine and the formation of self-identity may not be as suggested in this thesis; namely that perceptions of The Divine influence self-identity. It is possible that self-identity could influence perceptions of The Divine. Based on cognitive consistency theory, qualitative research conducted by Jerry Jolley & Steven Taulbee (1986:1140) and Peter Benson & Bernard Spilka (1973:306) found that self-esteem is positively related to loving

'Divine Being images', but negatively to rejecting, and controlling definitions of The Divine. In the context of this thesis the implication would be that the agent projects his or her perceptions of themselves onto The Divine; these perceptions being selective, and acceptable to the individual.

Although Giddens' theory of structuration could support the above, this thesis explores the notion that perceptions of The Divine, as imposed and taught through the Church, may, - in the light of the doctrine of *imago Dei* - have an initial effect on self-identity and self-perception of the individual, and that the consequences of these perceptions of The Divine reflexively affect society, confirming the status quo and supporting the norms of patriarchy. It is, however, impossible to state – as with the chicken and the egg – which comes first, since human beings are (according to Giddens) not only creatures of society, but also its creators. So too, in a sense, is the human being not only a creation/creature of The Divine, but equally the 'creator' – in terms of understanding – of the image and/or perception of The Divine.

1.4. DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS RELEVANT TO THIS RESEARCH

As in any research, there are concepts which need to be defined according to the way they will be used. Due to the interdisciplinary nature of this study, both theological and sociological language is used. The most important and frequently used terms and concepts are defined below.

1.4.1. The Divine

The term 'The Divine' refers to the triune God as worshipped within the monotheistic Christian faith tradition. The concept cannot be too narrowly defined since individuals experience The Divine in ways unique to themselves, but for the purpose of this thesis it needs to be agreed – as a starting point - that according to most Christian traditions The Divine is believed to be a transcendent, while at the same time immanent, Triune Being. Although believed to be one, the God of the Christian faith is also believed to be triune in nature; in essence presenting a threefold divine personality existing in one being or substance (Deist, 1984:177), and traditionally referred to as the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The implications of this are beyond the scope of this thesis.

Suffice to say that Christian believers tend to use the terms God, Father, Lord, and Jesus interchangeably – both in prayer and speech about The Divine - without really thinking about the words they choose to use, or the implications of their choice. The Divine is believed to be both the source and sustainer of all that is, has been or will be created, both spirit and matter, and seeks to be involved in the daily lives of created beings.

In the light of the above, the existence and influence of The Divine are not debated but taken as a given since the research is conducted within the context of believers of the Christian faith. It is, however, acknowledged that The Divine is Mystery and in the words of Saint Augustine: "If you have understood, then what you have understood is not God" (in Johnson & Rakoczy, 1997:17).

1.4.2. Perception of The Divine

Due to the nature of The Divine – as briefly alluded to above – it is impossible to know or to state any absolute truth about The Divine, although this has not stopped the Christian Church (and many other faiths) from making statements they believe to be true. These 'truths' are necessarily conveyed using human language and symbol, the cognitive appraisal and interpretation of which will differ from one agent to another – often depending on prior events and experiences, current emotional state and/or expectations. This means that perception of The Divine is more than religious language about The Divine, or symbolic representation of The Divine, but may include reference to the experience, life, history, dreams and destiny of the agent or Christian believer.

This implies that in spite of the fact that The Divine is believed to be a transcendent being who is 'totally other' and who cannot be experienced through any of the five human senses, one needs, nevertheless, to accord credibility to the perceived experience and conviction of Christian believers. One also needs to accept that The Divine can be perceived to be present and influential in daily life and that some form of communication, and often identification, can be perceived to have occurred between the believer and the Divine.

In the context of daily life, perceptions of The Divine can be the result of – among other things - hidden and/or visible, intentional and/or unintentional, and direct and/or subtle conditioning, teaching and discourse as expressed through religious institutions, the family, the media, or in day-to-day conversation; as internally appropriated by the agent. Although the influence of the Church is the primary focus of this thesis, these other sources of perceptions are not denied. Given the 'living' nature of the Christian religion, ongoing developments in theological discourse, and the belief in a Divine Being who is intimately involved in the life-history, dreams and destiny of the human race – yet is totally the other - it is important to remember that knowledge with regard to The Divine can never be considered complete.

1.4.3. The Church as a Social Institution

According to Giddens (1993:387) social institutions are the 'cement' (the grounding) of social life, providing the context within which human beings interact with one another. They are also, as a result of the reflexive nature of identity formation, the consequence of human action.

While it is true that religion is no longer central to human society, the Church - as a social institution and the historical and current collective 'body' of Christian believers, irrespective of denomination - remains an influential force in the lives of the adherents of the Christian faith, and in many western societies. As an established organisation, and one authority among many, it attempts to define norms and values, belief systems and codes of conduct for its adherents, and offers a sanctuary of hope to those who conform. Since erring members (or those not part of the Church community) are often deemed 'lost', 'unsaved' or 'sinners' - with eternal consequences- the power of the Church cannot be underestimated.

In the West, there are two major distinctions in the Christian Church – namely the Roman Catholic and Protestant traditions – the latter being an early offshoot of the former and differing in aspects of theology. There are further divisions within the above traditions, but for the purpose of this research these are not important. Unless specifically indicated to the contrary - 'the Church' refers to the catholic – or universal Church – and not to either of the above traditions.

1.4.4. Self-identity

According to Giddens (1991:53) self-identity "is not a distinctive trait, or even a collection of traits, possessed by the individual. It is *the self as reflexively understood by the person in terms of his or her biography*". This implies a sense of continuity across time and space; as Giddens notes, with reference to Charles Taylor, "a notion of how we have become and of where we are going" (Giddens, 1991:54). According to Calhoun (1994:10), identity is a construction and not a discovery and found "in the capacity to *keep a particular narrative going*" - the self forming a "trajectory of development from the past to the anticipated future" (Giddens, 1991:54,75). For the Christian believer this 'notion of becoming' is found in being created by The Divine, and in the image of The Divine, while the destination of life's journey is found in death and a return to The Divine Being, the past and the future being linked by an ongoing relationship with The Divine, a sense of dependence on The Divine and often a compelling urge to tell others about The Divine.

However, it is not just the sense of continuity across time and space which constitutes identity. Giddens (1991:53) states that what is important is the reflexive interpretation of this continuity (or story) by the agent. This means that a "person with a reasonably stable sense of self-identity has a feeling of biographical continuity which she is able to grasp reflexively and, to a greater or lesser degree, communicate to other people" (1991:54). This biography of the self "cannot be wholly fictive. It must continually integrate events which occur in the external world, and sort them into the ongoing 'story' about the self" (1991:54). Given this integration process, one can concur with Giddens when he says that "feelings of self-identity are both robust and fragile. Fragile, because the biography the individual holds in mind is only one story among many other potential stories ... robust, because a sense of self-identity is often securely enough held to weather major tensions or transitions ..." (1991:55).

According to Giddens (1991:53) this sense of identity includes the "cognitive component of personhood" implying that to "be a 'person' is not just to be a reflexive actor, but to have a concept of a person (as applied both to self and others)". The individual is able to accept the integrity of the self as worthwhile, there being "sufficient self-regard to sustain the sense of self as 'alive' – within the scope of

reflexive control, rather than having the inert quality of things in the object-world" (1991:54). In summary:

The 'identity' of the self, in contrast with the self as a generic phenomenon, presumes reflexive awareness. It is what the individual is conscious 'of' in terms of 'self-consciousness'. Self-identity – in other words – is not something that is just given, as a result of the continuities of the individual's action-system, but something that has to be routinely created and sustained in the reflexive activities of the individual (Giddens, 1991:52).

Manuel Castells, writing on the power of identity in a network society, would remind us that self-identity is not role and/or function orientated. While role or function may provide a transient state/status giving purpose, they do not necessarily give meaning to the individual, since meanings are created internally; identity being the agents' source of meaning and separate from the roles they assume (Castells, 1997:6,7).

However, the human agent is part of a community and the role and opinion of the 'other' cannot be ignored. Craig Calhoun (1994:20), in the context of social theory and the politics of identity, proposes that identity "turns on the interrelated problems of self-recognition and recognition by others", while issues in personal self-recognition are related to both recognition, or non-recognition, by others. Self-identity is, therefore, also that which is formed in relation to specific contexts (which provide ontological security for the formation and continuing of that identity), but is not restricted by the past or the current context. While it is possible that, as Giddens (1991:54) notes, a person with a reasonably stable sense of self-identity has, through early trust relations, been able to establish a protective cocoon which serves to 'filter out' many of the daily dangers and threats which, in principle, may threaten the integrity of the self, it would seem that this input (or lack of it) can be transcended.

The role of the Church in the life of an adherent to the Christian faith in providing an aspect of this context cannot be ignored.

1.4.5. Self-perception

For the purpose of this research the term self-perception refers to the perception of the agent as they see themselves in terms of their sense of worth or lack of it; that is "feelings of self-worth" or the opposite, "a sense of emptiness and despair" (Giddens, 1991:178); the agents' sense of self-esteem or lack of it.

It can be expected that if the agent is able to reflexively and discursively integrate feelings of self-identity with a coherent and consistent biography, as described above, a feeling of authenticity will emerge, this authenticity contributing to positive feelings of the self. Robert Ellwood Jr. (1983:4), in his book *Introducing Religion From Inside and Outside*, suggests that "religious thought and activity represents one's acting out, or *actualising*, who one thinks one really is deep within". However, he concedes that this is not necessarily the case for everyone: "For some, religion indeed seems more like acting out a false and made-up role than almost anything else they do" (Ellwood, 1983:15). He maintains that the difference between a 'somebody' and a 'nobody' is that a somebody has a sense of belonging and inner place or inner identity which can really be accepted on a deeper level, while a 'nobody' "feels like a wallflower in the dance of life ..." (Ellwood Jr. 1983:14).

According to Giddens (1991:41) self-worth is enhanced by "... the experience of creativity *as* a routine phenomenon ... a basic prop to a sense of personal worth and therefore to psychological health. Where individuals cannot live creatively ... chronic melancholic or schizophrenic tendencies are likely to result".

Self-perception – as an aspect of identity formation - is equally a subjective, personal perception which can be independent of the views of others, although it may be concurrently related to the 'perceived' view of others – especially 'significant others'. Self-esteem can – according to Giddens (1991:47) with reference to Goffman – be protected through the rituals of trust and tact as established in day-to-day life, or undermined by these same rituals if used in particular ways. The church – and the power it holds in the life of the Christian agent – can be the source of many of these rituals, some suggesting the self-worth of the individual, others contributing to a sense of worthlessness and leading to despair.

This could imply that those who have achieved creative expression, and have been recognised in that uniqueness, may have a stronger sense of self, and 'self-acceptance'; also that individuals are more likely to enjoy a positive sense of self if this self is commended by society – and in the context of this thesis – the Church. On the other hand, when one seeks to avoid the impact of dominant 'taken-for-granted' structures and create a unique self-identity, especially when it would seem to be 'against all odds', (and all energy is channelled into creative survival), the result could be an equally debilitating sense of despair rather than self-enrichment. For example:

A Black woman heading a single-parent household, however constricted and arduous her life, will nevertheless know about factors altering the position of women in general, and her own activities will almost certainly be modified by that knowledge ... she is virtually obliged to explore novel modes of activity, with regard to her children, sexual relations and friendships. Such an exploration, although it might be discursively articulated as such, implies a reflexive shaping of self-identity. The deprivations to which she is subject, however might make these tasks become an almost insupportable burden, a source of despair rather than self-enrichment (Giddens, 1991:88).

1.5. OUTLINE OF THE THESIS

In Chapter Two the qualitative, interpretive social science approach to this thesis is introduced and justified. The research question is outlined and data collection, recording and analysis methods explained and justified. Due to the personal nature of the subject under investigation, the role of myself as researcher, and my personal perspective and experience, are briefly acknowledged and outlined.

Chapters three and four explore:

- Perceptions of The Divine that influence - as hidden curricula - the patriarchal mindset of the church and which are often more powerful than the content of the teachings of the church, and which pervade most, if not all, aspects of society. This includes perceptions and consequences of the teaching of the Church with regard to the doctrines of *imago Dei*, The Divine as 'Father', and the role of Mary in the Roman Catholic Church (and as Theotokos).
- The role of the church as a place of belonging

- Aspects of free choice in the light of the omnipresence, omnipotence and omniscience of The Divine
- The influence of the above teaching on self-identity and self-perception
- The power of the Church as a social institution in the teaching of these principles.

REMOVE: ??In the light of structuration theory, as proposed by Giddens, the possible impact of these factors on society is examined in a primarily theoretical context to establish their contribution to the ongoing patriarchal nature of society. Since this thesis is written from a feminist theological perspective, a perspective which questions many of the basic tenants of mainstream (or male-stream) theology, it also highlights the implications of traditional theological views of The Divine for women.

In Chapters Five and Six the data is analysed primarily according to the churches from which the research participants have been drawn. However, the nature of some of the data is too individualised and has to be analysed for each participant as an individual. When this is the case, the personal story of each participant is related, including aspects of their understanding of The Divine and what it means to be created in the image of The Divine. Data with regard to the role of the church in identity formation is then presented. This is followed by an evaluation of the impact of The Divine and the Church on each participant in turn. The influence and impact of the above on personal identity inasmuch as they are hidden and unacknowledged factors in the making of personal identity.

The final chapter summarises the findings and suggests areas that could be improved if the study were to be repeated.

CHAPTER TWO
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND METHOD

The whole is greater than the sum of its parts

2.1. THEORY

2.1.1. Structuration Theory and Feminist Theology

This thesis is approached from the perspectives of structuration theory and feminist theology. As with all human endeavours there are different ways in which ideas are developed and expressed in both sociology and theology. A brief overview of the perspectives in both sociology and theology, and examples of theorists in each, follows. It is acknowledged that none of the categories or approaches are watertight.

2.1.2. Location of Structuration Theory within Sociology

Theory	Structural Tradition	Interactionist Tradition	Structuration Theory
Starting point in research:	Society has established stable patterns which can be discovered. Human beings are formed by the external forces of society.	Society is open to change and is created by human beings who determine its shape and content. Social agents determine their own identity.	Society and human agents interact as co-creators of each other; each influencing and changing the other.
Associated Methodology Options	Positivist social science	Interpretive social science, Critical social science.	Action research, Interpretive and Critical social science
Examples of Theorists:	Auguste Comte, Emile Durkheim	Max Weber, Wilhelm Dilthey	Norbert Elias, Anthony Giddens

2.1.3. Location of Feminist Theology within Theology

Source of Authority; Starting point in theology:	Imposed 'from above' – that is, Church Tradition and Scripture	Informed 'from below' – that is human experience of The Divine and the world in which agents live.
Examples of approach:	Fundamentalism, Evangelical Theology, Traditionalism	Contextual Theology, Liberation Theology (including Feminist Theology)
Examples of theologians:	Emile Brunner, Feuerbach, Karl Barth	Friedrich Schleieracher, Rudolf Bultman, Mary Daly, Carol Christ. South African: Simon Miamela, Denise Ackermann

2.2. RESEARCH PARADIGM: QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

2.2.1. The Nature of Qualitative Research

Qualitative research allows for the experience of the individual to be paramount. It begins with a topic, a few ideas and a research question and endeavours to study "human action from the insiders' perspective" (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:53).

Qualitative design unfolds as fieldwork unfolds, data analysis beginning early in the process, blending together empirical evidence and abstract concepts - some events having different meanings in different contexts. Analysis dimensions and patterns are allowed to emerge from the study without knowing in advance, and without certainty, what these patterns will be (Patton, M 1990:44).

2.2.2. Advantages, and Application, of Qualitative Research Principles in this Research

The following justifies the choice of a qualitative research paradigm:

a) Qualitative research facilitates the validity of personal experience.

According to Agnew & Pyke (1994:168) "qualitative methods are based on the assumption that humans do not so much respond to direct stimuli as they do to their interpretations of the information impinging upon them". This is relevant with regard to questions of faith and religious belief for individuals, especially for those for whom the existence of The Divine is a perceived reality and an authentic aspect of their daily lives. The transcendent nature of The Divine, and the uniquely personal and individual nature of faith experience, makes it virtually impossible for a researcher to establish exactly what has been experienced and how it should be interpreted. Religious phenomena can only be described in terms relating to both the personal nature of the experience and the personal, subjective understanding or interpretation of the experience. However, the use, and common understanding, of religious terminology can allow a person of faith to communicate the essence of an experience in a way that may be understood by others who are familiar with the relevant vocabulary (as defined in Appendix 6 of this thesis) and who may have shared, or witnessed, similar experiences.

b) Qualitative research facilitates the validity of personal understandings of experiences and events.

Personal interpretation is also important, given the nature of the church as an organisation. Although people listen to sermons, sing songs, participate in liturgy and recite the creeds, they do not always consider the implications of what they are saying they believe and often, when questioned, may indicate an idea contrary to what is considered the norm. This may be as a result of personal experience which does not coincide with what the church maintains, or perhaps the influence of a priest/pastor who has introduced a different idea at some stage of the individual's spiritual development. In this context, personal understandings and interpretations, as well as individual belief systems, can be more relevant than the official doctrine or teaching of the church to which the individual belongs.

c) Qualitative research facilitates revelation of personal opinions.

Just as individuals in modern society develop and/or function with the aid of self-help books, so too do adherents of the Christian faith – these books often suggesting ideas from different perspectives and opening the possibility for an idea different from that of the church to which the individual belongs, resulting in something similar to the above. Some churches are aware of the latter possibility and run libraries containing books considered 'safe'. Qualitative research allows for the individual to discursively communicate these differences, where they have originated and the impact they have had on their lives, identity development and possibly on the church to which they belong.

d) Qualitative research re-enforces the feminist principle of personal perceptions and experience.

A further advantage of the qualitative approach revolves around this research being conducted from a feminist perspective. According to Steward (in Creswell, 1998:84) "gender is a social contract that differs for each individual". This implies that although commonalities exist, gender identity is largely personal in nature. Therefore, any study of the concept requires a research methodology that facilitates the expression of this personal perception and experience and allows the researcher to study the experience of the agent, as understood by the agent.

2.2.3. Limitations of the Qualitative Research Paradigm

In spite of the above advantages, qualitative research has its drawbacks. In the context of this research, the following limitations have been identified.

a) The uniqueness of every encounter with The Divine

Each individual's encounter with The Divine will be distinctive in nature, content and interpretation, and can seldom be replicated, even by the individual whose experience is being investigated. This would also apply to the perceptions of The Divine, the understanding and interpretation of teaching about The Divine, as well as the impact of these teachings and perceptions. This implies that there is no yardstick against which to 'measure' individual experience and even the most unlikely understandings and/or experiences need to be given equal status. While this is a distinct advantage, it

could also become an area of concern if what is related to the researcher seems contradictory to all theoretical and empirical possibilities.

b) Independent confirmation.

The fact that the discussion and the context of the interview cannot be replicated can be problematic since the data cannot be confirmed in a 'neutral' context.

c) Limitation on research participants.

The nature of qualitative research imposes a restriction on the number of research participants since in-depth information and personal understandings need to be ascertained, necessitating numerous interviews with each participant. This precludes the possibility of building a more accurate representation of the constitution of the congregations being studied, and/or of the Christian Church as a whole.

d) Researcher Bias.

The possibility of researcher bias needs to be adequately acknowledged (Neuman, 1997:333,334). No single individual's experience is superior to another's - even if a specific participant's experience confirms what the researcher may wish to hear, or concurs with the personal experience of the researcher.

In spite of the above limitations, research within the qualitative paradigm remains the best suited approach for this research because of its emphasis on the experience of the individual and its ability to facilitate research on the level of exploration and understanding.

2.3.RESEARCH APPROACH

2.3.1. Interpretive Social Science

Interpretive social science provides the primary perspective from which this research is approached. It is acknowledged that the interpretive social science paradigm does not encompass all aspects of structuration theory and it is therefore critically engaged, as outlined in 2.3.2 [Advantages and application of interpretive social science to this research] and 2.3.3 [Limitations of the interpretive social science paradigm]

According to W Lawrence Neuman (1997:67-73) interpretive social science provides an underlying basic approach to society and social research which allows for understanding and 'movement', and emphasises a detailed reading or examination of *text*, referring to conversation, written words, or pictures (italics as per Neuman). In reading the text the interpretive researcher brings their own subjective experience to the text while endeavouring to discover the meaning embedded in the text. Interpretive social science gives credence to the everyday experience and perspective of ordinary individuals; not just what they do, but why they do it - the meaning attached to an action. Interpretive social science recognises that this meaning is something which has been constructed; its purpose, meaning and significance only becoming relevant when it is shared in the context of perceived reality. When viewed from an interpretive perspective, society is understood to be created through the actions and perceptions of people and is not a pre-existing reality waiting to be discovered. While this approach to society does not accommodate the interaction between society and agent, it does share, with structuration theory, society's openness to change and can accommodate the experience of the individual as well as its influence on the agent in providing the context for a shared meaning system which allows for the interpretation of socially relevant signs or actions.

Neuman (1997:67-73) further maintains that research findings based on interpretive theory should also give the reader an insight into the 'meaning world' of the research participants, producing data which reveals the meanings, values, rules and interpretive schemes for their social reality. The researcher attempts to discover the reasons and motives for individual action, even if these are irrational, deeply emotional and contain false facts and prejudices. This data must therefore be identified as 'truth' for the individual, and make sense to those being studied, while acknowledging that there can be multiple interpretations of similar events. The meaning, as understood by the individual, needs to be respected since the view of each person is as valid as that of the other and is the result of their own understanding, experience and assumptions of their world. 'Truth' is not something which can be measured and categorised into watertight, logical argument: all values need to be considered an equal and integral part of the world of the agent.

Since the concept of structuration theory anticipates the possibility of change, aspects of critical social science are acknowledged in that it is held that the agent has the possibility of creatively rising above a given set of circumstances and in so doing, changing the context within which they – and those who follow – will be reflexively involved. Also relevant is the underlying nature of power and the consequent possibility of conflict, as well as the unacknowledged hidden factors which often need to be exposed. Of specific interest to this study is the role of the church, perceptions of The Divine, and the power they hold.

However, it is not the intention of myself as a researcher to highlight these aspects for the research participant. Research participants will not be exposed to my views, invited to join me on my journey or become engaged in the research act. They must retain their 'story'. Nor will they be empowered in any way (except perhaps through thinking about the questions, *et cetera*). This research is therefore not 'action research', as one may expect from a feminist perspective, since feminism aims, among other goals, to empower women and in doing so, change the patriarchal nature of society.

2.3.2. Advantages and Application of Interpretive Social Science to this Research

a) Reflexive nature of agency and structure

Interpretive social science, being the "*the systematic analysis of socially meaningful action through the direct detailed observation of people in natural settings in order to arrive at understandings and interpretations of how people create and maintain their social worlds*" (Neuman, 1997:68), coincides with Giddens with regard to agency and reflexivity in that the lay agent participates in the creation of society. This approach therefore facilitates the exploration of the agent's understanding of her/his world and the implications of this understanding for the reflexive re-creation of social structures. With regard to the study at hand, the formation of perceptions of The Divine as understood by individual agents – most often in response to what has been received through the teaching and liturgy of the Church - are explored; as is the role of the Church as a place of security. The possible result of these perceptions for individual self-identity and the reflexive consequences of that identity with regard to the

re/creation of the Church as an institution, and consequently of society, are focused on.

b) Common sense (or practical consciousness) and unacknowledged, hidden conditions

According to the interpretive research approach, individuals develop a pragmatic orientation and set of assumptions about the world, which in turn lead to a sense of reality and provide a basis for 'common sense', from which agents are able to face daily life (Neuman, 1997:71). This concurs with Giddens' proposal that human agents function within the taken-for-granted, unconscious bounds of practical consciousness, without which the human mind would be so obsessed with the detail of daily life that it would be unable to function (Giddens, 1991:36). In the context of this study it is the 'availability' and role of the Church, and assumptions with regard to the existence and nature of The Divine (and the consequences of these assumptions), which are taken as the aspects of common sense and practical consciousness which inform the daily life and choices of a Christian believer. The interpretive approach also seeks to reveal underlying causes (and meanings), what Giddens refers to as unacknowledged, hidden, initial conditions in which social action occurs, and in the context of this thesis, in which the actor develops self-identity and self-perception. This facilitates exploration with regard to the role of The Divine (a transcendent but all-pervasive concept) as an often unacknowledged initial condition impacting on human life and society.

c) The personal nature of faith

Alongside the above-mentioned pragmatic orientation is an internal, subjective sense of reality which allows individuals to have unique and personal interpretations of reality and human experience. The interpretive social science approach accords equal respect to each individual, facilitating the accommodation of the phenomenological nature of the individual personal experience of The Divine and respects the individuality and validity of each person's experience in a non-judgemental way (although dependant on the degree to which the researcher is able to 'bracket' their own experience and expectations). This study, therefore, draws on the phenomenological premise that perception is regarded as the primary source of knowledge and a source that cannot be doubted (Moustakas, 1994:52). The phenomenological approach also allows one to perceive 'something-which-is-not'; in

Clark Moustakas' (1994:54) words: "We can easily perceive properties of a thing that it does not possess." This is particularly true when one is studying the teachings of the Church and the experience of individuals' perceptions of a transcendent being. The Church and Christian believers hold convictions relating to their understanding of the 'person', or nature, of The Divine, these often being expressed in anthropomorphic terms, which although inadequate and 'something-which-is-not', are sometimes the most meaningful point of reference available (for example: God the Father). In similar vein, the most common form of expression with regard to these perceptions is human language – an inadequate, often inaccurate means of articulation.

d) The role of values

Interpretive social science does not attempt to be value free, and acknowledges that values are an integral part of social life but that no group's values are wrong, only different" (Neuman, 1997:83). One is therefore able to recognise and respect the impact of the values of religion on research participants, as related through the Church as a social institution, and the consequence of these values in the decision-making process of the individual. Values may also play a role in identity formation in that common values may provide a sense of belonging, this belonging being conducive to the formation of a healthy self-identity.

e). The role of language

According to Neuman (1997:69) the interpretive social science approach to social research maintains that social life is maintained through ongoing interaction, communication and negotiation. Since identity formation occurs within the context of the discourse of social life, the interpretive approach supports the study of the relevance and impact of the language used when speaking of The Divine, the influence of the relationship and how this affects the individual and consequently, society.

f). The emotional aspect of religious faith

In acknowledging the phenomenological nature of data to be gathered, the interpretive approach facilitates discussion, exploration, findings and communication on an emotional level. At the same time it is able to accord scientific value, validity and credibility to the experiences as related during the in-depth interviews; experiences

which, due to the nature of religion, occur on an emotional level, be it a sense of healing, forgiveness, wholeness *et cetera*.

g) Experience and women

Lastly, the emphasis and validity of experience is especially important for research conducted from a feminist perspective. According to Victoria Erickson (1992:35) feminist social theory seeks to understand gender power relationships; feminist scholars desiring "to liberate and empower women, to discover, create, re-create and reclaim women's experiences". Feminist theologians concur, and lament, as will be seen in the literature review, that theology and Church doctrine have been based solely on the male experience of The Divine. While this research does not seek to empower women, it does endeavour to explore – and give credence to – women's experience of The Divine.

2.3.3. Limitations of the Interpretive Social Science Paradigm

While the above justifies the use of the interpretive social science approach to this research it is acknowledged that the following limitations apply.

a) The place of critical social science.

As a feminist with a burden for the empowerment of women, the critical social science approach which "smashes myths and empowers people to radically change society" (Neuman, 1997:83) would be an attractive option. However, it is recognised that spirituality is a fundamental and personal experience and, given the current context of this thesis, the personal views of research participants need to be respected

b) The risk of the influence of personal agendas

Because the interpretive researcher approaches the text in an empathetic way it is possible that personal agendas and experiences can override the neutrality of the research. This needs to be guarded against.

c) The limitations of language

Experiences are often very difficult to communicate. Since the findings of this research are largely based on experience, they could be inaccurate if the phenomenon researched is not adequately communicated and understood. With regard to analysis

of sexism, Pretorius (in Vorster, 1984:142,143) notes that phenomenological research (as an aspect of interpretive social science) is not only subjective, but also 'context bound', implying that not only does it make comparison and generalization difficult, but also future planning.

d) Interpretive social science and structuration theory

It is also acknowledged that the interpretive social science approach does not accommodate all the implications of structuration theory.

In spite of the above limitations, the interpretive approach best facilitates the investigation of the perceptions of The Divine - and the consequences of these perceptions - as they have been presented by the church and perceived by the individual.

2.4. RESEARCH DESIGN

2.4.1. Introduction: Research Question

Being qualitative in nature, this research begins with a question, namely: What is the relationship between perceptions of The Divine and the re/making of self-identity and, in the light of structuration theory, the reflexive consequences for the church and society? In order to explore this dynamic it is necessary to begin with the source of perceptions of The Divine, primarily the impact of the teaching of the Christian Church for individual believers. It needs to be noted, in spite of having been exposed to the same (or similar) liturgies, teachings and writings, individuals will each have their own 'picture', perception, and understanding of The Divine, based on their own experience. As a possible counter to the patriarchal, often anthropological nature of perceptions of The Divine, the role of perceptions of Mary – as a woman strongly associated with The Divine - is also briefly explored.

2.4.2. Selection of Research Participants

The scope of this research is confined to a case study, focusing on the perception of the triune God/ess of the Christian faith as experienced by research participants drawn

from the congregants of two Roman Catholic Communities in suburbs of East London, and a congregation belonging to the more Charismatic stream. The charismatic church, which was referred to in the proposal, has since withdrawn from the IFCC (International Fellowship of Charismatic Churches). In the light of this, and a difficulty in accessing the members, another charismatic Church was chosen – one which holds a very similar outlook to the IFCC Churches, but also stresses the aspect of community. This suited the study since members of the Roman Catholic Church also perceive a sense of community which, although different in nature, is similar in consequence. Two Roman Catholic Churches were approached since they were, individually, smaller in congregational size and served smaller geographical areas than that of the charismatic church. When put together their composition was more equal to that of the charismatic church.

It is acknowledged that these churches are not fully representative of the Christian faith, and that they represent diverse views. However, both offer a sense of belonging and community and both have restrictions with regard to their view on the role of women, although the Roman Catholic Church's view and emphasis on the role of Mary is very different. Adherents of these two denominations also identify themselves strongly with their religious tradition.

Purposeful sampling secured a relatively small group of research participants who appeared to be information rich. The Pastor/priest of each congregation (as the gatekeeper) was asked to allow the distribution of a letter (Appendix 1), together with a 'personal particulars' document (Appendix 2), and a letter facilitating response from potential research participants (Appendix 3). These were distributed through the communication channels in each church, and returned directly to myself via a sealed 'ballot type' box placed at the entrance of each church, over a period of a month. The purpose of the 'personal particulars document' (Appendix 2) was to allow those who might be interested in participating in the study to indicate their willingness to do so, while at the same time providing personal details to facilitate the choice of participants.

It was intended that this choice would have been made according to homogeneity and that the group of participants would have reflected similar backgrounds, for example,

be between the ages of forty and fifty, married, be parents, have a similar education level and so on. Unfortunately responses were too limited to allow this selection, only twenty-nine forms being returned. An attempt was therefore made to establish two homogenous groups – one for each denomination – each group comprising three men and three women. Selection depended on a process of evaluation and elimination, based on the information given by those who had returned the personal particulars response forms.

It is acknowledged that relying on people who volunteer to participate (by responding to the above letter) may have provided research participants who have agendas of their own. However the research participants were to be asked questions about their personal lives and faith, and only those really willing to participate would be prepared to share at the required level, with a frank and honest disclosure of their experiences. The finer detail of the research was also not revealed, making it unlikely that research participants would have been able to provide answers and share experiences which would have intentionally derailed the study. In the light of this, the possible disadvantage of personal agendas was considered - in the context – to be less important.

2.4.3. Operationalisation: Framing the Interview Schedule

The interview schedules – as per Appendix 4 – were compiled within the context of views on identity formation as expressed by Giddens, and the content of the literature review. The lists of words (Appendix 5) were compiled after the first two interviews and were in some part confirmed by the first two interviews. Although they appear to belong to a quantitative approach, this is not the case; their purpose is explained later.

In the interview schedules the same question is often approached from a different angle in order to provide opportunity for more fuller without asking leading questions. With regard to perceptions of The Divine, a description of what would have been drawn had the participant been asked to draw The Divine, was also asked, since to visualise something opens the possibility of deeper understandings. Associations with the world of the participant were also explored, for the same reason.

2.4.4. Data Collection

2.4.4.1. Semi-structured, in-depth interviews

The primary source of data is in-depth interviews, guided by interview schedules comprising open-ended, neutral questions (Appendix 4). These interview schedules (or guides) facilitated focus on areas that had been predetermined, while allowing for spontaneous conversation and further exploration (Patton, 1990:283). In order to facilitate access to the perspective of the person being interviewed questions avoided predetermined phrases or categories (1990:290, 278), except for an aspect of (Appendix 5) of the last interview.

Interviews were conducted at a time and place most convenient to the participant. In all but three instances, this was their home. The locations were conducive to the interview process, relatively free of interruptions and were considered a safe place by the research participant. The environments facilitated the informality required for in-depth interviews, and a relaxed atmosphere was created. Research participants were offered the option of avoiding any question they felt uneasy about answering and/or terminating the interview should they feel the need to do so. A non-judgemental approach was taken and they were assured that there were absolutely no correct, incorrect, desirable, undesirable or expected answers, but that their sharing of their own personal thoughts, feelings and experiences would be valued. Because the request for participants was channelled through (and sanctioned by) the pastor or priest of each congregation, participants felt safe and a degree of trust was automatically established. Participants assumed that I would know what they were talking about and would be able to relate to their experiences within the Christian faith. As the researcher I endeavoured to be aware of all personal preconceived notions.

As mentioned, interviews were conducted using a phenomenological approach, as an aspect of the interpretive social science method. This entailed an emphasis on the real life experiences and personal understanding of individuals, with the aim of holistically understanding human experience in a context-specific setting (Patton, 1990:37). Sensitive questioning and sympathetic/empathetic listening often secured more information than was necessary for the research. If conscious non-reporting was

suspected this was explored with a question such as "You seemed to have been thinking about something ..." or "What was it you nearly said?" To have addressed the situation more directly would have involved the use of leading questions, although questions of clarity were sometimes used. At times I may have benefited from further questioning to probe or facilitate clarity in a specific area, but to do so could have been perceived as challenging their views, or could have resulted in a theological debate. Given the context, this meant that at times I decided to abandon a line of discussion rather than risk confrontation, the possibility of creating doubt in their minds, or exposing my own personal views. To counter this, the last interview was structured differently.

After the initial two interviews with all participants (the shortest being forty minutes, the longest about one hundred and five minutes, most being between seventy and ninety minutes each), a third was conducted (between forty and sixty minutes each – excluding the responses to the 'word lists'). During this interview, areas which needed further clarity were explored, as well as issues which had so far emerged in the analysis process. Because the initial interviews had avoided leading questions, it was possible that not all possibilities had been expressed. Lists were therefore drawn up and presented to each participant (Appendix 5), participants being asked to mark words which were most relevant/irrelevant to identified stages of their life. It was stressed that they were free to comment on, clarify or qualify any of their responses and that they were not bound to the lists as they were presented. No major discrepancies in perception were revealed and it appeared that the interview process had facilitated sufficient disclosure. A final contact was made to confirm perceptions with regard to the participants' gender-stereotypical understanding of the qualities/traits associated with maleness and femaleness in order to supplement what had already been received in this regard, but which was considered by myself to be, in some instances, inferred rather than clearly stated.

Advantages of data collection through semi-structured in-depth interviews included:

- In-depth interviews facilitated the collection of data as it was relevant to the individual and afforded the opportunity to further explore related issues which may not otherwise have been included in the research findings.

- In-depth interviews involved exploration of the participants' beliefs, feelings, motives, attitudes and experiences, allowing individual experience and understanding to be accepted as valid.
- Research participants were able to speak in their terms and express their experience without having to compromise or alter them to fit pre-determined ideas or concepts.
- As the researcher, I had the freedom to use initiative in covering all the areas in whatever order seemed most appropriate during the course of the interview, sometimes returning to an aspect in a different way.

Disadvantages of data collection through semi-structured, in-depth interviews included:

- The context could not be re-created. If something important was missed there is no way of retrieving it.
- It is impossible to corroborate the answers given as the individual was being asked to express a personal opinion. The plausibility of an experience could only be checked with the participant and ultimately needs to be accepted as valid - even if considered highly unlikely.
- It was difficult – although possible - to disengage myself from the pain often expressed by research participants. Since a primary aspect of my 'normal' role is that of a counsellor, I had to constantly remind myself of my current role, namely that of researcher. As such I avoided becoming involved in the lives of the participants, but often found it difficult to de-brief myself since confidentiality did not allow me to discuss the interviews with anyone.
- In an effort to avoid exposing my own views – and the more 'in-depth' purpose of the research - it is possible that areas could have been missed; but an attempt to address this was covered through Appendix 5 - being presented as being a summary of all the interviews and a consequence of the study to date.

In spite of the above disadvantages, semi-structured in-depth interviews remained the primary source of data collection because of the nature of this research.

2.4.4.2. Participation in worship

Agnew & Pyke (1994:169) maintain that qualitative methodologists "assume that, to fully understand the issue under investigation, they must participate at some level in the meaning world of the research participant". As someone raised within the Christian faith, an automatic degree of identification already existed. This was expanded through attendance of church services in each of the churches from which research participants were drawn. Because of the nature of Christian worship it was not necessary to receive permission to gain access to these services. A visit to a relatively local Schoenstatt Shrine was facilitated by one of the research participants in order to better understand the strong Marion influence of the movement. (Appendix 6: Photograph 1)

The advantages of this participation include:

- Identification with research participants with regard to concepts, events, *et cetera*.
- An opportunity to experience the world of the research participant with regard to Sunday worship in their denomination.
- An opportunity to note the art, décor and architecture of the buildings since this reflects aspects of the theology of the church/denomination being studied. For example, a Charismatic church does not place emphasis on Holy Communion and therefore has no altar or communion rail. On the other hand, the Catholic church places great emphasis on Mass, the holiness of the consecrated elements, *et cetera*. This is reflected in the separation of the 'Altar area' from the rest of the church, the burning light to denote the presence of consecrated elements *et cetera*. (Appendix 6: Photographs 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7).
- An opportunity to observe the interaction between the Pastor/priest and the congregation.
- Limited exposure to the teaching and doctrine of each congregation, and the manner in which this is conveyed.
- Exposure to the liturgy, form and content of the service.

Unfortunately the nature of a worship service did not easily allow for the taking of notes and recording of observations. Although my presence was noticed by some of the research participants, this did not pose a problem since I had mentioned to them

that I would be participating in their services in order to better understand their experiences, and they had not expressed any reservations.

2.4.5. Data Recording

Two tape recorders were used to record the interviews, transcripts of the interviews being made within a short while after the interview. This facilitated the inclusion of body language, non-verbal response, *et cetera*. These transcripts amounted to just on four hundred pages, single spacing. Each participant was accorded a different colour and all data relevant to that participant was made using 'their' colour paper.

2.4.6. Data Processing and Analysis

a) In an attempt to study the understanding, experience, and point of view of the research participants from a perspective of 'empathetic neutrality' (Patton, 1990:54,55), that is, not objectivity in the sense of a cold distance, or subjectivity through over involvement, it was necessary to separate myself as the researcher at this point in order to avoid the temptation to identify only the data which resonated with my own experience or point of view, or to make value judgements.

b) However, although analysis needed to be exploratory in nature and not seek to impose pre-existing expectations (Patton, 1990:44), the personal insight, feelings and perspectives of myself as the researcher needed to be used to an advantage, namely in facilitating understanding of the information received, while clearly stating the vantage point from which I approached the data (Neuman, 1997:334). (See 2.5.2 below).

c) Because of the importance of the context of language (in this case, religious terminology which can mean different things in different denominations) the understandings of concepts as used by the research participants and researcher are clarified where necessary in footnotes, and again presented as a 'Glossary of Terms'; Appendix 7)

d) It was necessary to look for negative evidence and for non-appearance of events that may have been important. Attention was also given to the frequency and strength of convictions relating to the perception and experience of the research participants. During analysis it became clear that the data received from Appendix 5 – intended to expose non-appearance and/or hidden perceptions of The Divine - was not going to make any significant contribution to the research as it had already emerged within the context of the interviews, and in more meaningful and contextual ways. It was also apparent that the research participants had different ways in approaching the form, making the data less reliable. In the light of this, the data from Appendix 5 was not used.

e) Transcripts, notes and other data were read to identify major themes that recur throughout the data for each participant and which had a bearing on the theoretical concerns and research questions of the thesis. Coding was facilitated through the use of coloured self-sticking dots – each colour representing an aspect of the research question, for example a purple dot in the margin indicated reference to the research participants' perception of The Divine. Analysis involved scanning the interviews for the relevant 'code', the dialogue then being re-read in the broader context of the coded statement/reference. The relevant data was then incorporated in the research document as per the above outline.

f) There were a number of ways in which the data could have been approached and arranged. It would have been possible to state what appeared to be the view of each denomination and support it with reference to the interviews. However, this would not have facilitated the assessment of perceptions of The Divine and the influence of the church with regard to the self-identity of each participant. A second possibility would have been to present the data under the headings of the research areas, but this would also have detracted from the experience of the individual. Information is therefore arranged in a combination of these two approaches: personal profiles and faith journeys (including perceptions of The Divine), and individual evaluations are presented for each individual agent, while data which is more related to church doctrine and experience is presented in the context of the churches from which the research participants were drawn. A comparison of this information concludes the chapter.

2.4.7. Relevance of Analysis

Since, according to Earl Babbie (1998:297), the most basic analysis is the identification of norms and differences, or similarities and dissimilarities, this research attempts to contrast contexts (that is, different denominations and perceptions of the Divine) and results (self-identity and self-perception) as well as the consequences of different perceptions of The Divine, both for the individual agent and reflexively, for society.

It is possible – in the light of existing feminist theology - that the perceived existence of a patriarchal Divine Being will be seen to benefit men in their self-identity formation, and disadvantage women in that they have no feminine image of The Divine to whom they can relate. Since it is men who are in power in both the denominations from which research participants have been drawn, structuration theory would imply that the status quo is likely to be maintained for the individual, the church, and, to the degree to which the church and the individual have an influence in society, society itself.

A possible exception may be found in the influence of Mary, the mother of Jesus, for members of the Roman Catholic Church. Although this influence may at present be restricted to the individual, a strong sense of personal identity may empower women (and men) to make a difference in the social contexts within which they find themselves; an influence which may become evident in the church at a later date. On the other hand, patriarchal perceptions of The Divine (as an un/acknowledged hidden curriculum within the church) may be found to have little or no influence on personal self-identity formation, and – within the norms of structuration theory – no impact on society.

Should this research find that patriarchal perceptions of The Divine benefit men and maintain patriarchal society, the findings would be motivation for attempts to influence the churches with regard to their patriarchal stance with regard to The Divine, and the consequences for women and society. It would be hoped that exclusive language would be avoided, that women would be able to fulfil their calling as received from The Divine, and that they would begin to enjoy the status accorded

to them by The Divine. It would also raise awareness of the personal implication for women with regard to their *imago Dei*, and make women aware of the bias and influence currently been lived and taught. It is hoped that this would encourage them to think for themselves, to step beyond the boundaries set for them and to become all they were intended to be. Lastly, it would be good if the church could admit its bias, and the negative impact of that bias, apologise to the generations of women who have suffered under it and offer teaching and doctrine which seeks to empower both men and women.

2.5. ETHICAL ISSUES AND RESEARCH DANGERS

2.5.1. Ethical Issues

a) Voluntary participation and no harm to subjects

In this research it was imperative that the relationship between the research participant and their God (The Divine) and religious community was in no way tampered with. Interviews at all times only reflected the views of the research participant and the truth, validity or credibility of their experience was not questioned or doubted. To do so could have created doubt, and/or engendered negative feelings toward their Church, and/or questioned their personal experience of The Divine. In order to confirm that participation was voluntary, research participants were asked to sign a form (Appendix 3) acknowledging this, as well as giving permission for the recording of the interviews and the use of their experience in the research findings, under a pseudonym.

b) Confidentiality and anonymity

As mentioned by Patton (1990:356) the nature of qualitative research takes one into the private, personal and interpersonal world of the research participant; a place of vulnerability and often pain. When expressed, these feelings were respected, as well as the confidentiality of the interview. Unfortunately, East London is a relatively small community and by relating the full biography of certain participants it could be possible to identify them. For this reason some biographies are limited or very vague in their detail, and the specific churches are not identified.

c) Non-disclosure of personal views

As a researcher who is also a religiously orientated person it was imperative that at no time did I share my personal experience, although I had asked that participants make themselves vulnerable and relate their experiences. During the interview process acknowledgement of the validity of each research participant's view could have been perceived as agreement with it, and, therefore, as deceiving, especially if it was later used in a framework which presented an experience as a negative finding in the light of the context of the research. Both of these factors raise ethical issues for which there is no real answer.

Only the basics of my research question have been explained to the gatekeepers and each participant, not the specifics with regard to the areas as mentioned in the literature review. To do so could have introduced phrases and suggested answers which might have impacted on participants' answers - leading to a less accurate response.

2.5.2. Research Danger: Own Perspective and Experience

As has been seen, it is expected that the researcher participates - at some level - in the meaning world and experience of the research participant. This does not mean that the researcher was able to equally identify with each participant.

With regard to personal insights (those present as predispositions and those generated through the research process) Patton (1990:475), quoting Scriven, points out that it is "tragic" if and when a social scientist refuses to treat their own behaviour as data from which one can learn. Quoting Denzin, Patton (1990:476) notes that because value free interpretation is impossible and all researchers take sides, it is necessary for researchers/scholars to state beforehand their prior interpretations of the phenomenon being investigated and also to acknowledge their values, making these explicit in the report.

Since one needs to be aware of personal bias with regard to information collected during interviews, and the processing of collected data, it is necessary to state the influences that have been reflexively part of my background and have had an impact

in the construction of my current self-identity. Patton (1990:472) states that "*[t]he principle is to report any personal and professional information that may have affected data collection, analysis, and interpretation - either negatively or positively - in the minds of users of the findings*".

In the light of the above - my personal story is as follows:

I was born a white, middle-class South African girl child into a home, and during an era, which expected women to become wives, mothers and full-time homemakers. In my late twenties I registered for a BTh degree through correspondence with UNISA (University of South Africa), followed by an Honours Course in Religious Studies through UCT (University of Cape Town).

During this period I became increasingly aware of the pervasive subjugation of women in almost all aspects of their lives and many areas of social discourse. Having been involved in the church from a very early age, being married to a minister of religion, an accredited Lay Preacher myself, recently involved in leadership in the Eastern Cape region, having on occasions represented my church at national level and currently being part of the Connexional (National) Doctrine Ethics and Worship Commission, I cannot avoid noticing the impact that I perceive religion to have on the lives of people - especially women and the roles they are expected to assume. Neither can I deny my own frustration at being referred to as a 'brother', 'a son of God', a member of 'mankind', or of having to address The Divine in masculine terms according to the creeds, liturgies, hymns, and scriptures which form part of a worship service.

My personal faith journey includes experience of traditional, evangelical, academic, social awareness, charismatic, feminist, creation and contemplative traditions/spiritualities, as well as inter-faith dialogue. Although my theology is more liberal than that of the formal church, I am still aware of the existence of The Divine and perceive myself still to be in relationship with The Divine; although possibly post-Christian.

Questions with regard to attitudes toward suffering, the acceptance or rejection of personal responsibility, the concept of the human being as a 'sinner', the nature of The

Divine as implied through the popular Substitution Theory of atonement and the language of the Trinitarian formula have all influenced my current position in relation to the established church and traditional dogma. In the light of this I have had to caution myself with regard to maintaining respect for established ideas and the way these are incorporated into the self-identity of research participants.

CHAPTER THREE
THE DOCTRINE OF *IMAGO DEI* AND THE
MAKING OF SELF-IDENTITY

*"In the beginning God created man in his image - since then, man
has been trying to return the favor"*
(Archbishop Desmond Tutu)

3.1. INTRODUCTION AND FOCUS

Giddens, in his books *Modernity and Self-Identity* (1991:16-20) and *The Constitution of Society* (1984), highlights a number of elements of modern social life in relation to the traditional ordering of society. He maintains (among other things) that human interaction in the latter was bound by the situatedness of place, and the imposition of the 'truths' of tradition; both of these providing a sense of security, although placing limits on the elements of free choice and often the development of an individual identity. Modern interaction on the other hand is, according to Giddens, characterised by:

- a) The role of practical consciousness and unacknowledged hidden conditions.
- b) The separation of time, space and place and the introduction of disembedding mechanisms.
- c) Anxiety as a consequence of:
 - i) Disembedding
 - ii) Free choice
 - iii) The unstable nature of 'truth'
 - iv) Potential global destruction
 - v) The nature of pure relationships
- d) The reflexive nature of identity development, and consequently, the nature of society

According to social theories of identity formation, it is in this context of uncertainty and insecurity that identity issues become both more significant and more difficult. With reference to Giddens (and others) Sasha Roseneil (University Principal Research Fellow in Sociology and Director of the Centre for Interdisciplinary Gender Studies.

University of Leeds) and Julie Seymour (Lecturer in Social Research: School of Comparative and Applied Social Sciences. University of Hull), (in 1999:3) point out that issues of identity really start to matter as uncertainties increase, tradition loses its hold and – with reference to Calhoun – as "all-encompassing identity schemes" are destabilised.

While it is true that the making of self-identity is not a social action *per se*, it is nevertheless the developing of an identity within a social context. Although agents may have a reflexive and discursive awareness of what they are doing, and why, they do not always know the initial conditions upon which the action is carried out. This is because these initial conditions often function at the level of practical consciousness, these elements being assumed as 'given'. It is the acceptance of these aspects of daily life – together with day-to-day routines - which enable the agent to move forward. Alongside practical consciousness are the un/spoken, un/acknowledged, un/conscious 'rules' in which society functions, which together with un/acknowledged conditions, sometimes result in un/intended consequences. In the context of identity formation it is suggested that self-identities could also be affected by unacknowledged conditions – aspects of self-identity and self-perception sometimes being an unintended consequence of these unacknowledged conditions. Structuration theory suggests that the resultant identity would reflexively affect society.

Although it is generally acknowledged that society is, and has been for thousands of years, patriarchal in nature, it is only recently that the consequences of this patriarchal orientation – as a hidden condition affecting self-identity - are being explored. Giddens (1992:52) admits that for many years sociology was practiced as if gender divisions were irrelevant, in spite of the fact that gender refers to a learned sexual identity. He concedes, in part, - and in answer to Linda Murgatroyd - that his theory could well provide an

'excellent theoretical context for analysing the social relations of gender in contemporary Western society once the sexist blinkers were removed and if it were reworked accordingly; the more so because these cannot be adequately analysed without considering other dimensions of the social system ...' (in Held and Thompson, 1989:149)

He also acknowledges that he has not accorded gender issues the attention they deserve and further agrees that, given the unconscious feelings and imagery influencing gender identity, the perspective of structuration theory is directly relevant in regard to gender issues (in Held and Thompson 1989:282, 285).

Albeit that health, physical appearance, mental ability, race and creed all have an impact on life, none is as determining as that of being a man or a woman. It is almost always the first question asked and answered with regard to the birth of a child, and the announcement of that birth. Although many parents may not want to admit that the gender of their child is of any consequence, as seen by the popular statement: "I don't mind if it is a boy or a girl, so long as it is healthy." it seems that reality could be different. Modern science is currently able to determine the sex of a conception through processes of sperm-separation or embryo biopsy; both methods indicating the lengths to which couples will go in their attempt to have a child of a specific sex. John Nicholson (1984:16) notes that in studies conducted in 1954 and 1970 in America, for those couples for whom the sex of their first child mattered (two thirds of those asked), more than ninety percent expressed a preference for a boy. While acknowledging that this may not be a worldwide phenomenon, results of a study conducted in London showed that first time mothers who gave birth to a boy felt a greater sense of achievement than those who had given birth to a girl (1984:17).

Nicholson goes on to say that the sex of a child also determines the way the child is viewed. Babies perceived to be girls are described as "lovely, sweet, gorgeous and cute" while babies perceived to be boys are described as "cheeky, mischievous and strong" – even by total strangers who are asked to comment on the same child (1984:18). Behaviour was also interpreted differently, depending on the perceived sex of the child. A baby presented as a boy was seen to become restless and in need of play; the same baby presented as a girl and presenting the same behaviour was seen to be "upset and in need of soothing" (1984:18,19). Although it is acknowledged that mothers may not necessarily treat their own children according to the above stereotypes, but according to their personality, studies do show that baby daughters are held and soothed more than sons, and that each sex is socialised differently (1984:19).

Given the above, it would come as no surprise to note that, according to research conducted by Nicholson (1984:22,23) "men and women alike value most masculine characteristics more highly than most feminine ones". Children themselves confirm this bias. According to Nicholson (1984:105) there is some evidence that even from an early age women think less highly of their own sex than men do of theirs. In a kindergarten class, one in five girls was prepared to become a boy, while no boys had any desire to be a girl. Although none of the girls who were prepared to change thought that the boys were more clever than themselves, more than half thought that their fathers were more clever than their mothers.

The church, as a social institution, is not innocent concerning the disregard of women and their experience. Among the discourses affecting the daily life of the woman believer is a constant referral to women as 'men', 'brothers', and 'Sons of God' (according to liturgies, hymns and scripture), and reference to The Divine in almost exclusively masculine terms. This is particularly relevant – given the concept of *imago Dei*. While recognising that even fairly young children have already been affected by culture, (and independent of Nicholson as referred to above) Stuart Charmé (1997:30), conducted research to assess the gendered responses of young school children to the biblical story of Adam and Eve. Findings revealed that although only a few boys wished to be someone other than Adam, nearly one third of the girls were "gender defectors"; 82% of the boys identifying with Adam, but only 63% of the girls identifying with Eve. About half of the children thought that God created Adam first, because "God is male (or a man) and therefore prefers men" and because men are stronger and better than women (1997:31).

The church also offers itself as a place of belonging, as a community within which the individual can find the necessary security to facilitate the formation of self-identity. However, this offer of security does not come without a cost attached to it. For the Christian believer this cost is inevitably linked to the concept of obedience, primarily to The Divine, but often as expressed through the church.

3.2. THE DOCTRINE OF *IMAGO DEI*

In relating the implications of teachings and perceptions with regard to The Divine for self-identity, it needs to be said that it is almost impossible to develop a logical argument, since each aspect is a facet of the whole and there is no starting or ending point. As in structuration theory, the whole is constantly being re/constructed by its own parts.

3.2.1. *Imago Dei* and the 'Human' Divine Being

Human beings are said to be created in the image of The Divine. However, no one has seen, heard, touched or experienced The Divine in such a way as to know – with certainty – exactly who or what constitutes The Divine and what this means for human agents. Because of this 'not knowing', human beings have had to rely on their own experience in the formulation of these doctrines. Theorists from differing traditions concur. With reference to Durkheim (*The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*), Giddens (1995:95) writes that collective representations embodied in religion tended to be the expression of the self-creation of human society, and not an external imposition on the creation of society; as are lay beliefs not merely a description of the social world but "the very basis of the constitution of that world, as the organized product of human acts" Giddens (1995:234). In similar vein, Kimberly Adams (1996:46) refers to 19th Century German philosopher Ludwig Feuerbach, as lauding Christianity as the religion most responsive to human need, because it "worships a God made in the image of the human being ...". Also with reference to Feuerbach, Giddens (in Cassell, 1993:73) notes that The Divine is presented as an "idealized projection of man [sic] himself; God is the mythical projection of man's [sic] most cherished values, man [sic] alienated from his [sic] own (potential) self-perfection" [Note: For the purpose of this paper the truth of this statement lies in *perception* of The Divine – not *existence* of The Divine.]

Feminists suggest that it is not only that The Divine has been created in the 'image of humanity', but specifically 'male humanity'. In the light of the above, Arlene Swidler (in Metz & Schillebeeckx, 1981:75) suggests that it is not that The Divine is said to have created humanity in "his" [sic] image, but rather that "human beings, seeking an

image of God to which they could relate, projected what they considered the highest human traits onto this Divinity and created a male, or Father, God image". This has implications for both women and men with regard to self-identity.

Catherine Madsen (1989:103), in her introduction to a round table discussion on the nature of The Divine as presented from a feminist perspective, explores a similar theme. She correctly notes that even although women may now be trying to project their feminine experience onto The Divine, this remains inadequate. "... God the Mother as nurturer, healer, caretaker, peacemaker ... narrow[s] God's role to the traditional feminine virtues ..." (1989:103), and still does not allow The Divine the mystery and autonomy necessary if humanity is not to seek to control The Divine, "to try to discover a God they *can* bend to their will" (1989:103).

In the light of the above, it is necessary to acknowledge that there are severe limitations regarding the accuracy and usefulness of human language when speaking about The Divine. Created creatures are attempting to speak of a Divine Being who is mystery and who, although believed to be partially revealed through Scripture and the incarnation in Christ, nevertheless remains beyond the full grasp of human experience, comprehension and language. According to Rita Gross (in Christ & Plaskow, 1979:169), to speak of The Divine is among the most "difficult and audacious things" human beings do, while to address The Divine is even more difficult.

However, humans can be freed from the limitations of experiences of what can actually be seen, heard and felt. Feminist theologian Sallie McFague (1982:24) notes that models and metaphors give us something to think about when we don't know what to think and a way of talking when we don't know how to talk. But these metaphors are not neutral in themselves. Words associated with the metaphors used to speak about The Divine are part of a language; they have pre-ordained meaning and they convey a message. And, says McFague (1982:24) "they can also be dangerous, for they exclude other ways of thinking and talking, and in doing so they can easily become literalized, that is, identified as *the* one and only way of understanding a subject".

Theorists from differing contexts also agree with regard to the power of language. Language does more than facilitate communication with others. Giddens (1993:715) writes that Mead - in the context of symbolic interactionism - maintains that language allows humans to become self-conscious beings, aware of their own individuality. Vivien Burr (1995:49), in the context of discourse analysis, states that "discourses, through what is said, written or otherwise represented, serve to construct the phenomena of our world for us, and different discourses construct these things in different ways"; each discourse claiming to be the truth. These claims to truth and knowledge are important issues and lie at the centre of discussions of identity, power and change.

With regard to women, Rita Felski (1989:222), with reference to Genevieve Lloyd, states that feminist theorists have "amply demonstrated that language does not constitute a neutral medium, but bears the marks of male defined cultural history and philosophical tradition which has privileged the masculine as universal and has defined the feminine as its complimentary or negative pole ...". Feminist theologian Letty Russell (1987:45) maintains that linguists have, since the eighteenth century, been aware that language influences the way we think and that language is in turn shaped by the culture of the speakers: language, culture and thought being dynamically interrelated. She notes that:

The feminist movement has discovered that naming ourselves has to do with claiming our own identity, thought and action. Women struggling for equality understand that what Adrienne Rich calls the "theft of language" is part of women's condition of relative powerlessness. ... Changing sex-exclusive language is no longer some whim of a few fringe women with what one Harvard linguistics professor described as "pronoun envy ...". It is a serious, well-researched political action to change sexist language and social structures. The generic "he/man" was a result of the politics of grammarians who convinced the English Parliament to make it a law in 1850 because men should "naturally" take precedence. ... With other oppressed groups, women have discovered that language is powerful, and they take these words from linguist Barry Thorne very seriously: "The social consequences of language – in daily use by hundreds of millions of people – which tends to depreciate or

ignore a whole class of human beings, and to set them apart by their usage, are devastating ..." (Russell, 1987:45/46).

Russell (1974:93) further maintains that in Christian church tradition, the symbols and words have become "so encrusted by their formation in a sexist and racist Western culture" that the language itself can become a barrier to communication in that it reinforces patterns of prejudice and exclusion, and is not evolving with the perceptions of people's selves and the world in which they live. More modern translations of Scripture claim to be gender inclusive with regard to language but The New International Version of the Holy Bible, whose features are said to include "[r]evised inclusive language in line with recent advances in linguistic use and scholarship", (Back Cover) still refer to The Divine using the male pronoun 'he'. The Divine is commonly addressed as 'Our Father', while hymnbooks and liturgies are inundated with masculine imagery and language with regard to The Divine. In this context The Divine has been presented in almost absolute, 'power-related' masculine terms as Father, Lord, King, and Master, while the universal (masculine) Trinitarian formula of Father, Son and Spirit re-enforces a supposedly divinely sanctioned and binding standard which unites all Christian tradition.

Feminist theologian Mary Daly (in Christ and Plaskow, 1979:56) notes that although "sophisticated thinkers" never actually intellectually identify God with an elderly parent in heaven, these images have a way of surviving in the imagination, even when very abstract conceptualisations of God are formulated in the mind. Thus, according to her, one can speak of The Divine as Spirit but at the same time imagine "him" as belonging to the male sex. Denise Ackermann and Mary Armour (1989:55,56) state that few issues raise a more heated response than the call for The Divine to be addressed in terms other than those using the prevailing masculine vocabulary. Personal experience confirms this and it is not uncommon for people to react emotionally – even women are often unable to image The Divine as anything but a Father and are reluctant to even discuss the issue. For those who doubt the strength of the all pervasive nature of masculine imaging of The Divine, it may be helpful to pause a while with Asphodel Long (1992:5) and note the immediate – almost universal – emotional reaction to feminine terminology of The Divine. Long observes that when The Divine is addressed not as Lord, Father or King but as 'Our Lady', 'Mother God' or 'Queen

Goddess', "the situation becomes highly charged. Often women weep, and men become angry and hostile". These reactions are quite contrary to what one could expect if one were to assume – as many try to claim – that speaking of The Divine in masculine terms is no more than a matter of convenience, since we all know that The Divine is – after all – not a male!

Since gender rests in some part on unconscious feelings and imagery (Giddens, in Held, *et al* 1989:285), and the Christian believer holds The Divine as the One in whose image they have been created, it is suggested that the predominantly masculine images and metaphors of The Divine (as referred to above) have a profound influence on self-identity and self-perception. Human language with regard to gender perceptions of The Divine is not neutral in its implications, and neither are the metaphors. According to Russell (1987:53), the "metaphors we use are powerful God-talk, for they determine the way we think about God and about ourselves as men and women, created in God's image". According to Catholic feminist theologian Elizabeth Johnson (1993:38), speech about The Divine "in the exclusive and literal terms of the patriarch is a tool of subtle conditioning that operates to debilitate women's sense of dignity, power and self-esteem", while feminists Carol Christ and Judith Plaskow (1979:4) say that our image of The Divine is, "at once, the most obvious and the most subtle sexist influence in religion".

Women have no Divine image with which to associate themselves. Catharina Halkes, referring to Daly (in Metz and Schillebeeckx, 1981:103,104) notes that not only are The Divine (and 'his' Son, Jesus of Nazareth) imaged in masculine language – but also with masculine traits; "attributes and qualities of being that have been taken from a one-sidedly male world of experience". She continues to say that this "emphasis on power, transcendence and supremacy evokes associations of the opposite characteristics – impotence, subjection and inferiority – among those who are dominated" (1981:104).

Phoebe Swart-Russell (1989:43) claims that as "long as God is upheld as masculine, women's share in the imaging of God is denied, and women are degraded as inferior human beings". Carroll Saussy (1991:17), in her book *God Images and Self Esteem: Empowering Women in a Patriarchal Society*, (based on research conducted from

both quantitative and qualitative perspectives), maintains that when "women image Deity in exclusively male terms, they relate to God (that is, male Deity) as 'like the other but not like me' ", while Connie Zweig (Editor of a collection of articles written by psychologists, Jungian analysts and feminists) (1990:14) maintains that as "girls and women in a society that offers no female face of God, we have been bereft". Penelope Deutscher (1994:88), quoting French feminist philosopher Luce Irigaray, writes that the

only diabolical thing about women is their lack of a God and the fact that, deprived of God, they are forced to comply with models that do not match them, that exile, double, mask them, cut them off from themselves and from one another, stripping away their ability to move forward into love, art, thought, toward their ideal and divine fulfilment. (Luce Irigaray, *Sexes and Genealogies*)

According to Saussy (1991:59) many women are realising that monotheism, as currently practiced in terms of the worship of a wholly masculine image of The Divine, is blocking their discovery of any unique expression of The Divine. In the light of this, one ought not to be surprised when Michael Roe *et al* (1986:31), in their enquiry 'Phenomenological Exploration of Feminism and Christian Orthodoxy' report that, "women have expressed the need to validate and value female experience and perceptions in general", while many women have changed their view of God, expressing what they perceive to be The Divine's longing for them to be whole (1986:34). For them, The Divine can no longer be the old man with the beard. As women are beginning to voice a protest against a Divine Being whose attributes and nature would seek to reject their experience of themselves and their understanding of The Divine, the participant in Roe *et al*'s research could be speaking on behalf of many when she states

... no my God, you have to also be female if I am truly made in your image. You have to be my mother as well as my father. If you aren't, what does that say about how you perceive me and how I am to act towards you? (1986:34).

For men on the other hand, The Divine – in 'his' presentation – serves as an ideal model. With reference to Irigaray, Deutscher (1994:93) writes that "a particular conception of God is also necessary to the production of masculine identity", which is

accomplished at present through the perception of The Divine in masculine terms. This masculine perception serves as a "guarantor" of masculine identity as it also provides an "identificatory figure for masculine perfection ... Man is able to exist because God helps him to define his gender ...". With continuing reference to Irigaray, Deutscher (1994:93) states that

Divine figures provide an ultimate horizon approached by the 'man of reason' in his systematic pursuit of knowledge. This is a pursuit in which man displaces his material, passionate, unreliable and sensuous nature onto the figure of the feminine.

In this way anything that is 'good' is associated with the masculine divine, while anything undesirable is perceived to belong to the feminine – man's negative alter ego (1994:93,94). It is not implausible for women to feel that they have a 'second hand' image of The Divine; the loss (and lack) of divine feminine symbols of power denying women the opportunity to develop their self-consciousness. While men are able to relate to The Divine as 'one of their own', and in doing so find a self-identity and self-esteem that concurs with what is stated to be the original intention of the Creator, women have to 'see' the image of The Divine, and therefore the blueprint of their own self-identity and self-esteem, through the lens of 'maleness'.

3.2.2. The History of Women as 'Less than *imago Dei*'

However the idea of men alone as enjoying the privileges of imaging The Divine has not developed in a vacuum. Johnson (1993:70) notes that while it is true that central to Christian anthropology is the doctrine of *imago Dei*, and that both men and women have been created in the image of God,

a deep ambiguity has afflicted the *imago* doctrine throughout the Christian tradition. While affirming that human beings generically are created in the image and likeness of God, theology has adopted the hardy form of gender dualism found in Hellenistic thought. It was not a long step from the identification of men with mind, reason, and spirit and concomitantly of women with bodiliness and passion in a metaphorical sense, to a stance that casts actual men alone in the representative role of headship, the primary image of all superior qualities and therefore of God, while women were

relegated to secondary status in nature and grace ... projected to be the symbol of evil, the anti-image of God ...

Scripture offers two creation narratives with regard to humanity. In the first account (Genesis 1:26,27) The Divine is said to declare their intention to create humanity in "... our image, after our likeness ... God created human beings in his [sic] own image; in the image of God he [sic] created them; male and female he [sic] created them". In the second Biblical account, The Divine is said to have created 'man' first, followed by the animals and lastly, using a rib taken from the man, woman (cf. Genesis 2:4-24). When this second account of creation is held to be valid it has implications for women with regard to their '*imago Dei* identity'. Women were created second, and owe their existence to men. Further evidence of inferiority is said to occur in the story of 'the fall' (Genesis 3:1-7) in which it is claimed that the woman was deceived first, and led the man into sin. The prolific New Testament writer Paul uses the second account of the creation of humanity, and the supposed initial deception of the woman, to justify the subordination of women to male authority. In his letter to a fellow believer, one named Timothy, Paul is recorded as saying:

I do not permit women to teach or dictate to the men; they should keep quiet. For Adam was created first, and Eve afterwards; moreover it was not Adam who was deceived, it was the woman who, yielding to deception, fell into sin. But salvation for the woman will be in the bearing of children ... (1 Timothy 2:12-15).

In another letter Paul calls into question the degree to which women are created in the image of The Divine and maintains that:

A man must not cover his head, because man is the image [image, resemblance, likeness (Zodhiates, 1993:512)] of God, and the mirror of his glory ["by metonymy that which reflects, expresses or exhibits dignity" (Zodhiates, 1993:478)]; whereas the woman reflects the glory of man. For man did not originally spring from the woman, but woman was made out of man; and man was not created for women's sake, but women for the sake of man ... (Corinthians 11:7-9).

but continues, saying:

... Yet in the Lord's fellowship woman is as essential to man as man is to woman. If the woman was made out of man, it is through the woman that man now comes to be; and God is the source of all (1 Corinthians 11:11,12).

Unfortunately, although both passages are meant to enjoy equal authority since they are both included in the canon of Scripture, the reality is that the second Corinthians passage is all but ignored.

The view that women were inferior to men was further developed by the early Church Fathers, who, from the time that the Christian Scriptures were formulated until about the 8th century, continued to deal with the role and status of women. Feminist theologians have recovered these views, highlighting the history of women in church tradition. It is relevant to note that these men, as products of their culture, were also adherents to the scientific, biological truths of their age. Johnson notes that Aquinas accepted the Aristotelian heritage that "the male seed carried all the potency for new life". The woman was no more than an incubator. The birth of a daughter was said to indicate that "the man was not up to par at the time of intercourse; the female child being something 'defective and misbegotten', perhaps because his seed was damaged, or he was short of energy ..." (Johnson, 1993:24).

Catholic Feminist theologian Marié-Henry Keane (1988:4) refers to John Damascene as describing women as "a sick she-ass ... a hideous tapeworm ... the advance post of hell", while for St John Chrysostom woman was more harmful than the most savage of beasts (1988:4), a "necessary evil, a natural temptation, a desirable calamity, a domestic peril, a deadly fascination, and a painted ill" (Gage, 1985:74). Women were also to be feared because of the power they could exert with regard to sexuality. Lust, according to Augustine, "was a side effect of 'Eve's' sin" (Keane, 1988:7).

According to the early church fathers, women were also not considered created in the image of The Divine. Keane (1988:6) states that: "'Woman', said Augustine, 'was merely man's helpmate ... She is not the image of God but as far as man is concerned, he is by himself the image of God ... the woman *together with* her husband is the

image of God' so that 'the whole substance is one image' ..." (italics as per quote). The words of Augustine were later to lead Thomas Aquinas (1225-74) to the conclusion that not only was woman not made in the image of The Divine, but that her soul was inferior and that she was only made to assist with procreation (in 1988:6). According to Tavadre, (in Keane 1988) neither Diodorus nor Chrysostom include women in the natural image of God, "since this image is one of *power* and *dominion* of which woman has been deprived by God of society" (Keane, 1988:6). 20th Century Swiss theologian Emil Brunner (1949:374) notes that at "times the church has over-estimated the significance of the difference between the sexes to such an extent that at a certain synod it was debated with all seriousness whether a woman had an immortal soul as well as man".

de Riencourt (1983:259) notes that Protestant reformer Martin Luther maintained that women should restrict themselves to childbearing, cooking and sewing and if childbearing were to cause their death there would be "no harm in that". Women could die as long as they were having children, since that is what they were designed for. She continues, saying that Luther also taught that God had given the wife to the husband, that she should fear and obey him, listen to him and avoid arguments with him.

Some of these statements may seem unbelievable in today's context. According to feminist theologian Rosemary Radford Ruether (in Børresen, 1991:258), most theologians are unaware of this history and "assume that women have 'always' been included in the Image of God in Christian theological tradition". Unfortunately these views were held with sincerity, and spoken of with conviction; their implications being all pervasive and painting a picture which leaves no doubt as to the source of many of the often unspoken – yet assumed – attitudes towards women.

While one may wish to disregard the above – saying that it is all theory and no longer relevant to women – the principle of *imago Dei* (or lack of it) is still relevant when it comes to some of the reasons given for disallowing the ordination of women. Quoting the argument of Episcopal Bishop Myers, Swidler (in Metz and Schillebeeckx, 1981:77) writes that the first of four arguments presented against ordaining women was the "fact that a priest is always a 'God symbol' and in both testaments masculine

imagery has been used ... ". According to Ruether (in Børresen, 1991:259), although women may now be said to 'image' God, they are still denied the capacity to 'image' Christ – this is reserved for the male. South African Anglican priest Chris Ahrends (1989:102) notes that while, according to conservative argument as presented to the 26th Provincial Synod of the Church of the Province of Southern Africa in the late 1980s, women may minister in the church, they may not give communion: "this high and priestly office is given by God only to some who are born in the 'male image' of God."

Instead of being able to be active in the life and leadership of the church, women have been relegated to roles within the home, which, while important for the functioning of society, have not been recognised and valued. Ruether (in Børresen 1991:272) notes that while Brunner wishes to concede that women should be accorded more equality, he also wants women to retain their "traditionally feminine roles in relation to men", and he hopes that " 'real women', who understand their true feminine nature, will voluntarily submit to these roles, aiding men thereby to be their true masculine selves ..."

3.2.3. Consequences of the History of the Doctrine of *imago Dei* for Women

Although adherents to the Christian faith may wish to believe that their religious tradition owes itself to the self-revelation of The Divine onto the blank pages of human history, beginning some 4000 years ago (with the election of Abraham as patriarch of the Jewish nation) and being revised \pm 2000 years ago with the advent of Jesus of Nazareth, this is not the case. Just as history has always been written by the conquerors, so too does Christian theology - and Christian history - owe its formulation to the work of those who held power. From a position of power, shared experience and support of other men, the early Church Fathers have developed the theology of the church. They have written the Creeds of Belief and established what writings should, and should not, be included in the Canon of Christian Scripture, and have succeeded in determining the nature of what is considered orthodox.

The doctrines and creeds of the church as regards the 'gender' and nature of The Divine, in whose image both men and women are said to be created, are particularly

important when it comes to self-identity. Men have no problem: The Divine is presented and perceived in masculine terms, upholding the ideals of masculinity. Women are denied this direct association with The Divine in so far as there is no direct link between themselves as women and their perception of anything feminine in The Divine (with the possible exception of the role of Mary). For a believer – raised on a diet of masculine representation of The Divine – these implications cannot be ignored.

Deutscher (1994:98), in presenting Irigaray's argument, writes that "a substantial reshaping of feminist reflection and practice is not possible without the reshaping of philosophical conceptions of divinity", suggesting that this is one of Irigaray's "most grandiose claims" (1994:108). While she may be correct in highlighting the enormity of the task, its necessity is as essential as its all-encompassing vastness.

It would appear that the church may have unconsciously recognised the principles of structuration theory and, in an effort to stall possible change, have actively sought to exclude women from positions where they could most effectively effect change. In denominations where this is changing and women are allowed ordination, it may only be a question of time before other significant changes follow - changes which may yet affect society as a whole. However, it needs to be remembered that there are active forces within the church as a social institution which would seek to oppose this change. The Roman Catholic Church still refuses to allow the issue of the ordination of women onto its official agenda, while the evangelical, fundamental movement of the more 'biblically based' churches is still very controlling with regard to the role of women – both at home and in the church.

3.2.4. Current Implications

In the light of the proposed reflexive interaction of personal identity and gender perceptions of The Divine, and the context of *imago Dei*, the impact of the above cannot be ignored. Women seeking identification with a Divine Being in terms of their self-esteem and self-identity have to contend with historical teachings which, although outdated and somewhat diluted, nevertheless still impact on their lives through residual doctrines which deny them their full humanity as created creatures of

The Divine; as agents with the privilege and full responsibility of free choice, the opportunity for creative expression, the possibility of full participation in social structures and institutions, and unrestricted access to power structures within the church.

[See Images 2 and 3 of Appendix 6 for two possible depictions/expressions of the doctrine of *imago Dei*]

3.3. PERCEPTIONS OF THE DIVINE AS PATRIARCH

3.3.1. The Religion of God the Father, the Legitimacy of Patriarchal Society and Consequences for Self-identity

Not only is The Divine imaged in masculine terms, but often in specifically patriarchal terms. First as the Father of Israel (although there is occasional reference to The Divine as Mother, these are seldom acknowledged), then Father of Jesus of Nazareth and now Father of all who believe the message of Jesus of Nazareth. Almost every person in western society is exposed, at some stage in their lives, to the most common prayer of the Christian faith, namely the 'Our Father'; and the term 'Father' has become an almost universal form of address to The Divine by members of the Christian faith. According to feminist theologian Carol Christ (in Christ & Plaskow, 1979:274,275) even people who "no longer 'believe in God' or participate in the institutional structure of religion still may not be free of the power of the symbolism of God the Father", since the effect of symbolism "does not depend on rational assent, for a symbol also functions on levels of the psyche other than the rational"; the mind being uncomfortable with a vacuum and reverting to familiar structures, especially under stress. It could be argued that references to The Divine, uttered as a curse or swear word, are indicative of an unconscious belief or acknowledgement of the existence of The Divine, as could be common expressions referring to 'him-up-there', 'the big man upstairs', 'big daddy' or 'the one who looks down on us'.

But the idea of The Divine as patriarch of humanity, as indicated above, does not only affect the individual believer. It has also had a wide-ranging effect on the societies within which the Christian faith is practiced, and the gender relationships (with regard

to power) within society. Canon Torquil Paterson (lecturer at St Paul's Anglican Theological College, Grahamstown, Eastern Cape. South Africa) (1989:23), refers to religion as "a conservative force in everyday society, in that it is closely tied up with the legitimising of social structures" in spite of the fact that modern Christology reveals a Christ who was revolutionary in his day. Ariela Keysar and Barry Kosmin (1995:49), in their research on the impact of religious identification on educational attainment among American women, claim that religion "is widely recognized as important in creating cultural communities, which in turn directly influence their adherent's attitudes and behaviour toward gender roles in society". Feminist theologians Christ & Plaskow (1979:23) note that what Daly now sees as "oppressive in the Christian tradition is not individual sexist statements, but the message implicit in its core *symbols* - God the Father, 'the great patriarch in heaven', and the male Christ. ... The maleness of God and Christ, ... providing images of the 'rightness' of male rule"; reinforcing and legitimating the power of males in society. As patriarch of humanity – represented by human patriarchs on earth – The Divine is seen to sanction the ideal of the masculine, the norm of 'maleness' and the all pervading power of men, that is, Patriarchal Society.

Most often this bias toward the preference of the masculine has been taken for granted and has consequently gone unacknowledged. It has been an underlying, hidden structure which has been perpetuated, through both intended and unintended consequences of the actions of human agents, and under the auspices, and with the blessing of, the majority of the Christian churches. Although some church denominations do ordain women, the fundamental suppression of women cannot be denied. With reference to Ruether, Halkes (1981:104) states that this

pattern of man as powerful and woman as subject, which is so clearly symbolised in the image of God the Father, is so deeply rooted in our thinking and imagination that it is experienced as divine revelation itself and therefore as unchangeable. This explains why women are deprived of the opportunity to give meaning to themselves personally, physically or sexually and why they are prevented from having any official or sacramental responsibility in the Church or the liturgy.

Given the patriarchal nature of current social reality one can identify with Psychoanalytic feminism when it

argues that women, from childhood, are not allowed to develop as women. Indeed it is argued that women never existed because they have had to use male points of reference. In short this approach is concerned with the masculinity in women's heads that results from them being in a patriarchal society (Mitchell, 1974; Marks and Courtivron, 1980; Coward, 1984) in (Harvey & MacDonald, 1993:25).

Society, self-identity and self-perception are being re-constituted by perceptions of The Divine, as presented by the church, which holds out the possibility of actualisation of the self but at the same time creates structures of repression and restraint, especially for women. This, according to Saussy (1991:148,149) could be attributed to the 'over-functioning' of women in the home, either as mothers or spouses who have given up their own aspirations in order to set their husbands free to pursue the career of their choice. In answering the question of how the good news of Jesus of Nazareth – addressed to women with regard to their equal status – became transmuted into servitude, Charton (1992:4) suggests that it is because, at all levels of society, women themselves accepted this role. She continues to say that one of the biggest 'problems' with women is not their obsession with self, but their obsession with 'the other'; in "finding satisfaction in serving and answering other's needs while being devoid of an adequate sense of self and of her own intrinsic worth" (1992:4).

Stone suggests that: "All too often this desire to be nurturing has led women to deny themselves any right to a fulfilling or satisfying life, especially if they believe that trying to achieve their own goals might in any way decrease their nurturing of those around them" (in Zweig, 1990: 207). Leah Gcabashe (1995:9,10) (senior lecturer in the Public Law Department at the University of Natal, Durban, South Africa and with a special interest in gender issues) claims that women are often their own worst enemies because they are afraid to challenge the status quo for fear of the price they must pay, or perhaps the influence of the "martyr complex" which suggests that "everyone else ... everyone usually being equated with males" is more important, and that others' needs must be met, even at the expense of one's own, a view grounded in the values and norms of Christian teachings of humility, sacrifice and selflessness.

Castells (1997:23) quotes Christian author on marriage relationships, Beverly La Haye as writing: "Don't be afraid to give, and give and give"; La Haye supporting the Christian fundamentalist, conservative notion that a woman's submission will help her achieve a sense of self-esteem and that it is through sacrifice that a woman asserts her identity as independent from men.

Connell (in Polity Reader in Gender Studies 1994:33 – No editor given) maintains that it is "understandable" that "one way of handling a strong power imbalance is to build a praxis of compliance"; and cites Morgan's book *'The Total Woman'* as an example. In this book the author urges the wife to work at being attractive to her husband (to titillate) in order to get the husband to stay at home. In the words of Connell (1994:33): "Marabel Morgan eroticises powerlessness". In the light of the above one could agree with Saussy (1991:87,88) that many "women are blind to the patriarchal rules and values that dictate their lives", and that women "defined by patriarchy would probably disagree with the assessment that they have achieved a comfortable amount of false self-esteem" defined by Saussy (1991:87) as the resultant self-esteem of an individual (often in early childhood) who represses their own personal genuine feelings and desires and tries to accomplish (or conform to) others' views of themselves thereby achieving goals which have not been personally expressed or claimed.

On the other hand, the current arrangement seems to suit men. It is significant to note that in most societies, according to Castells (1997:234), "single men have poorer health, lower longevity, and higher suicide and depression rates than married men". For women who divorce or separate the contrary is true, in spite of the frequent, but short post-divorce depressions (1997:234). Patriarchy benefits men, and conversely disadvantages women. In doing so, patriarchy as a social system – with the support of the church as an institution - has the potential to contribute to women's concepts of self in a negative way, and conversely to the self-identity of men in a positive way.

3.3.2. South Africa – A Religious [Christian] Patriarchal Society

Although not many individuals have theological knowledge of The Divine, there would not be many people in South Africa who have not been influenced in some way

by religion and the theology of the Christian faith. It is recognised that every effort is being made to achieve equality of religion in the 'New South Africa'. However, the Christian faith remains dominant in many ways and is but one of three patriarchal religions which may be significant in South Africa. Islam and Judaism are equally monotheistic and patriarchal in nature. In the church/state debate/relationship churches have contributed to theologies and ethical debates which have been both potentially empowering and liberating, but also subjugating and destructive of human dignity. Recent events in South Africa continue to highlight the role of religion, while religious philosophy has been a profound influence in the Truth and Reconciliation concept and process, as evidenced by the primary use of terms concurrent with religion and the Christian faith, for example, confession, forgiveness and restitution, and the fact that the commission was headed by a leading member of the Christian clergy.

Just as the church has been influential in the nation of South Africa with regard to the state, it has also been as influential with regard to the way women are treated, but unfortunately not in their favour. South African Anglican Priest Wilma Jakobsen (1989:3) points out that women's issues have been sidelined in South Africa as secondary (if not irrelevant), in relation to the struggle against apartheid. South African Constitutional Court judge Albie Sachs (1990:1), in his article on the Constitutional rights of women in post-apartheid South Africa, maintains that "one of the few profoundly non-racial institutions in South Africa is patriarchy"; and concludes that the "struggle to create a non-sexist South Africa will be even more difficult than the fight to create a non-racial one."(1990:11). With reference to Sadie and Van Aardt, Tracy Swemmer *et al* (1998:163) - in their article on the social construction of gender in a Reformed Congregation in South Africa make the following claim:

Christian churches in South Africa contribute to the maintenance of gender stereotypes. This is generally done by means of theological views on the nature of women; and specifically through male-orientated leadership which characterises denominational and congregational structures. Christian churches in South Africa are not unique in maintaining gender stereotypes. Basow (1992:156), for example, argues that virtually all major religions attach great value to gender roles which accord with patriarchal society.

In her article on Reproductive Rights, South African feminist theologian Denise Ackermann (1995:121) quotes Mamphela Ramphele (then Vice Chancellor of the University of Cape Town) as saying that "South African society is one of the most sexist in the world which is in keeping with its conservative image on other issues of human rights and dignity ..." – the result of both Calvinist conservatism and fear of disrespect for traditional African cultural values. Gcabashe (1995:7) questions whether South African women have been liberated at all, especially in the light of women's religious experience within the church, and the role of the constitution in allowing religious freedom.

The degree to which the issue of the subordination and oppression of women is not understood was highlighted at a meeting of the Gender Equality Commission and religious leaders in the East London area, and attended by myself, in June 2002. An elderly male participant claimed that The Bible - as the 'constitution of the church' - superseded the Constitution of South Africa. With silent reference to the believed Divinely ordained patriarchal ordering of society, the participant was implying that 'women needed to remain subordinate' and that, according to Scripture, they could not enjoy the liberation proposed by the new Constitution. Another participant referred to the necessity of maintaining the status quo because "old people would not understand". It was also argued that problems were arising because "women want to be the head of the home".

Ackermann and Armour (1989:53), in their article on the influence of Right Wing Religion in SA, suggest that the problem revolves around a basic inability to understand "the systematic nature of the evil of sexism and the necessity for fundamental theological and structural change". Although it is recognised that mainline churches in SA do not fall into the grouping known as 'Right Wing Religions' it is Ackermann's contention that they cannot be excluded from the responsibility of the influence of the Right Wing Religions because it is the "mainline church traditions and praxis that historically have provided right wing religions with their patriarchal and dualistic self-understanding" (Ackermann 1989:59). According to Ackermann (in Lessing, 1994:284) religion in South Africa, "in its structured form is in the hands of men". Interpretation of scripture and tradition has been decided by

men, religious rites and practices are subject to male domination, while theologies, images and concepts are also dominated by the male gender. Ackermann (in Lessing, 1994:285) suggests that patriarchy and androcentrism are so ingrained in South African society, and linked to religion, that even for women these structures are perceived as divinely sanctioned and therefore passively accepted.

3.3.3. The Divine as Parent: Patriarchy and Implications in the Family

Alongside the Church as an institution within society, is the family unit. The nature of this unit, and its composition, displays historical evidence of aspects of structuration theory. Migrant people limited the number of children in a family. Cultures which did not allow women to earn reward for their tasks often allowed polygamous marriage, including the undertaking to marry a deceased male relative's spouse. Until recently the preferred 'ideal norm' in the west was the marriage of one man to one women, and the rearing of children within the security of that bond. However, the development of new understandings of the role of women and men, the need for, and recognition of, personal fulfilment for all agents, irrespective of gender orientation, past understanding of gender roles and the expectations of others, is changing the face of the definition of family.

But the church (with a few exceptions) – as the institution which believes itself to be the source of morality – also exerts its influence into family life; maintaining its views on the role of women and men, abortion, same-sex marriage, the evil of divorce, the principals of child rearing, *et cetera*, and defies change. This is the same social institution which has been seen to be patriarchal in nature, denying women's *imago Dei*, and worshipping a Divine Being presented in masculine, patriarchal, parental terms.

Ackermann (1995:121) notes that the rise of Protestant fundamentalism – with its emphasis on privatised morality and the family as the custodian of that morality - further exacerbates the situation for women. According to her, the enthusiastic reception of "North American fundamentalist evangelicalism in Southern Africa is providing further grounds for religious resistance to the whole gamut of women's

issues ..." (1995:121). Castells (1997:23) maintains that in religious fundamentalism the family is paramount and that this

'fortress of Christian life' has to be reconstructed by asserting patriarchy, that is the sanctity of marriage (excluding divorce and adultery) and, above all, the authority of men over women (as established in biblical literalism: Genesis 1; Ephesians 5,22-23), and the strict obedience of children ...

Miller (in Saussy, 1991:87) claims that all "forms of oppression encourage people to enlist in their own enslavement ...". Thus, according to Saussy (1991:88) "women will say with sincerity in their voices that they want their husbands to be heads of their families. They cherish their subordinate position in home and society – although they may deny that it is subordinate". By way of example, one could consider the experience and views of one woman holding an LLB Degree who, while regarding herself as a strong Christian, maintains that although she believes in a 'rights culture' there is a necessary hierarchical structure in the home. She holds that this structure does not refer to inferiority or superiority, but to roles. At home she is submissive to her husband. He is the decision maker and at church the "ultimate spiritual authority should always be a man" – based on the teaching of scripture (Gcabashe, 1995:11). But without the opportunity for ongoing free expression of choice and creative input, one may justifiably ask whether these women are afforded the right to a personal self-identity, and the full privileges of their *imago Dei*.

With regard to children, James Fowler (1981:119-121), in his book *Stages of Faith*, says that religious faith and pre-images of The Divine have their very beginnings in the pre-linguistic basic trust relationship that is formed between an infant and its primary care giver. He concedes that this is not open to empirical research. On the other hand, as children gain linguistic skills and are able to communicate, one can enter their world and gain insight into their perceptions. Fowler (1981:135-150) maintains that it is during this second stage of faith development that parents have a measurable effect on their children's perception of The Divine, suggesting that it is in this stage that the more anthropomorphic elements of a child's image of The Divine are developed. An excerpt from an interview with a ten year old illustrates this when she equates The Divine's knowing what is best with that of parents who also generally

know what is best and right – although she also feels that they (both parents and The Divine) don't always 'get it right' (1981:141).

South African Carl Niehaus, born in the 'Afrikaner mould' and who became a member of the ANC and a well-known activist during the years of apartheid, in his autobiography, illustrates the truth of Fowler's observation. Through his relationship with his father, who would, in his words "take a broken toy and mend it without asking why it was broken" - he experienced The Divine as more gentle, and different, from that of the 'Thou shalt not' severe Divine Being of law and order. For Niehaus this severe Divine Being punished one for misbehaviour, was able to hear when one cursed, and forbade swimming on Sundays. This latter perception of The Divine was as a result of his mother's input and reinforced on Sundays in the Dutch Reformed Church he and his family attended. He comments that he does not believe that he loved this harsh Divine Being, nevertheless he continued to fear The Divine as represented by his mother. She was the one who represented the many rules which he strove with dedication to follow, and was the one who punished him when he misbehaved (Niehaus, 1994:17,18). Later he states that "... God is like a parent who reprimands but who comforts also" ; an amalgamation of aspects of both perceptions experienced in his early days (1994:41).

3.3.4. Summary

South African theologian Simon Maimela (1990:199) claims that "Male sexist oppression and domination of women is perhaps the oldest and most universal form of human domination known to history". Charles Taylor (1992:25) notes that feminists maintain that women have been indoctrinated with a "depreciatory image of themselves"; one which has been internalised to the point of leading to a low self-esteem. Saussy (1991:147,148) argues that

Patriarchy dies hard because the vast majority of men, and a perhaps critical mass of women, are still blind to the domination/subordination soul of patriarchy. Fantasies replace facts in the imaginations of so many people. For example, many people still repeat the cliché that it's not the men who rule the world but the powerful women behind each ruling man.

Although unacknowledged and hidden in many ways, the influence of The Divine in social life – especially with regard to patriarchy - cannot be ignored. Self-identity, society and the church are being reflexively reconstituted using the same bricks of patriarchy and while a few women are becoming aware of what is happening, their voice is, to a degree, a cry in the wilderness. Christian church tradition, scripture and current power structures would silence this voice, in the name of The Divine. With reference to Daly, Halkes notes that the

image of God as the patriarchal Father has established itself so firmly in men's imagination that it has not only confirmed the status quo of the patriarchal society, but has also become the cause of the legitimation and even the sacralisation of the domination of men over women in accordance with God's plan and dispensation (in Metz and Schillebeeckx, 1981:103).

As has been seen, Halkes confirms that this "feminist protest against God the Father is being made, not only by Christian theologians, but also by those specialising in comparative religion and the psychology of religion" (in Metz and Schillebeeckx, 1981:105). According to Patricia Doyle (in Ruether, 1974:38), Erikson (working in the field of psychology) also believed that "the exclusive masculinization of Protestant religion and culture, since the Reformation, has been one-sided and dangerous for humanity".

3.4. THE TEACHING AND ROLE OF MARY

3.4.1. Development of the Role of Mary the Mother of Jesus

While it is suggested that the above forms a reasonably fair overview of the general presentation of the Divine by the church, there is another piece of the puzzle which has remained significant specifically for adherents of the Roman Catholic tradition, but which is almost non-existent in Protestant teaching, namely the role of Mary the mother of Jesus. Ruether relates three aspects of protestant thinking which contributed to reducing Marian devotion; namely an emphasis on Biblical authority (doctrines not supported by a biblically based story were considered suspect), the abolition of monasticism (and with it celibacy and the importance of virginity as the highest

expression of devotion) and a renewed emphasis on family and the acceptableness of normal married life (Ruether 1977:70,71).

According to Ruether (1977:11), theologian Paul Tillich has suggested that "Protestantism was too male- orientated" and that it "needed some of the feminine element provided through Mary in Roman Catholicism". Doyle (in Ruether, 1974:31) refers to Tillich as having believed that it is the loss of the presence and role of Mary that has caused many Protestants to look for religious satisfaction in other forms of religion which still retain something of the feminine and "mystical sensitivity". In an effort to reaffirm the feminine in *The Divine*, Tillich substitutes the "the demanding father image" with that of "The Ground and Power of Being" (in Ruether, 1974:31), suggesting images of both Mother Earth and the Fertility Goddesses of the past.

Although Mary has been primarily presented to the Protestant world through nativity plays, Christmas carols and art – only as the mother of Jesus - her official history in the Roman Catholic Church is far more theologically profound and possibly relevant. The history of the doctrine of Mary is claimed by some to have its origin in the goddess figures of ancient Near Eastern religion (Ruether, 1977,13), undergoing numerous developments and nuances in the history of the Christian church. Ruether (1977:58,59) notes that in the "late fourth century ... teaching about Mary developed very rapidly" and by the fifth century two levels of Marian devotion appear. The first was the official theology of the monks, in which she was the docile virgin and obedient to the divine will. The second saw her as the earth mother, venerated to a powerful role with regard to the continuity of life.

Also in the fifth century the struggle around the doctrine of Mary as the 'Mother of God' took place. The argument went around a fine point of Christological doctrine, namely whether the human and divine natures in Jesus had mingled to the point where one could speak of his human mother also as the mother of God, since the human son was also God (Ruether, 1977:59). But it also had implications for the status and role of Mary herself. Ruether continues:

The definition of Mary as mother of God was the opening wedge for her veneration as a substitute mother goddess. However much theology might

narrow this view in theory, popular piety would widen it in imagination (1977:60/61).

Although these doctrines around Mary have had popular support for many centuries, they have only relatively recently been formalised. In 1854 Mary was said to have been born without 'original sin' (c.f. the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception) and was later held not to have died, but to have been 'assumed' into heaven (Dogma of the Assumption of the Virgin of 1950) (Pope in Atkinson, C.W., Buchanan, C.H. & Miles, M.R. 1985:173). With the idea of the assumption of Mary came the idea of Mary as

an object of prayer and devotion ... established above space and time in a transcendent realm ... the queen of angels and saints ... enthroned on the right hand of Christ ... the first of the saints to participate in the resurrection of the body ... a duplication of a doctrine about Christ. In the New Testament it is Christ who is the "first fruits" of the general resurrection. However, as Christ comes to be more and more removed from human nature the doctrines about him cease to be symbols of the redemption of humanity ... Teachings about Mary develop as parallels to doctrines about Christ ... Christ thus comes to be seen primarily and the representative of God, and so no longer really represents humanity. Mary takes his place as the symbol of the hope of the human race for final salvation (Ruether, 1977:62).

According to feminist scholar Barbara Pope (in Atkinson *et al*, 1985:173) the defining of these two controversial doctrines – the Immaculate Conception in 1854 and the Assumption of the Virgin in 1950 – demarcate an era within which there was both "popular and official resurgence in the veneration of Mary"; the years 1850-1950 being referred to by some as the Marian Age. Pope (1985:173,174) maintains that for some Roman Catholics the advent of the Marian Age is seen as a part of the Divine plan; that Mary - as the Mother of God - should intervene in history to give direction regarding salvation. Apparitions, visions and showings of The Virgin have been accompanied by pilgrimages, vigils, miracle healings, prophecies and invitations to pray. She has been presented as the one who is concerned about humanity, and compassionate regarding suffering – offering prayers on behalf of the afflicted in the hope that Jesus the Divine Son would not refuse the request of his loving Mother

(1985:176). According to Linda Woodhead (in Cosslett, Easton, & Summerfield, (eds.), 1996:128) believers approach Mary on the grounds that she, knowing what it is like to be human, can sympathise with their needs and will therefore intercede on their behalf with her son.

At times, attempts have been made to accord to Mary a place in relation to the doctrine of the Trinity. Feuerbach suggested that it is not the Holy Spirit who is the third person of the Trinity, but Mary: the 'mother' who – alongside the 'father' – completes the holy family (Adams, 1996:44). Johnson (1993:52) presents the argument of Latin American Catholic liberation theologian Leonardo Boff, suggesting Mary as being 'divinised' [attributing divine status to a human being] by the 3rd person of the Trinity, namely the Holy Spirit; working out what he sees as the feminine, and especially maternal, traits/dimension in the Holy Spirit (namely love and self-giving) "in affinity with the person of the Virgin Mary. In analogy with the incarnation of the Word in Jesus, the Spirit divinises the feminine in the person of Mary, who in turn is to be regarded as hypostatically united to the third person of the blessed Trinity, for the benefit of all womankind".

Johnson (1993:129) quotes Pope Leo XIII (Pontiff from 1878 to 1903) as having written: "Every grace granted to human beings has three degrees in order; from God it is communicated to Christ, from Christ it passes to the Virgin and from the Virgin it descends to us ...". Johnson claims this to be "a precise substitution of Mary for the Spirit in the Trinitarian gift of grace to the world".

According to Pope (in Atkinson *et al*, 1985:174), Jungians could suggest that the events of the Marian Age present a feminine aspect of The Divine, necessary because religion and culture had become too masculine in orientation. She proposes that the

revival of the Marian cult can and has been interpreted as a 'softening' of religious symbolism or a 'resurgence of the feminine.' ... But it should be clear that this female symbolism has long been shaped and defined by men. By the time of the modern apparitions, over sixteen hundred years of Catholic theology had defined Mary as both Virgin and Mother. This depiction presented real women with a complex ideal of womanhood that they could not fulfil. For some women, it had the effect of denying female power, or the

positive power of sexuality in human life. At the same time, the Virgin Mother provided a male, celibate clergy with a 'safe' object of contemplation and adoration (1985:193/194).

3.4.2. Critical Evaluation of the Role – and Influence - of Mary

Yorick Spiegel, German theologian and sociologist, (in Metz and Schillebeeckx, 1981:3) notes that it has been a principle of Christian theology not to incorporate the mother figure into The Trinity of the Christian Divine Being; even "though the Holy Spirit has a number of female traits he [sic] ... is not a mother-figure". Continuing, he claims that although attempts have been made to give both Mary the mother of God and the Bible divine relevance, they have "never resulted in their becoming necessary elements of the Trinity" (in 1981:3). Adams (1996:44), in critique of Feuerbach's attempt to include Mary as the third element in the Trinity, notes that for Feuerbach the "Mother seems a redundant presence, because for Feuerbach the Son already represents the feminine principle of the Godhead" when he says: "The Son is the mild, gentle, forgiving, conciliating being – the womanly sentiment of God ..." (Feuerbach, in Adams, 1996:44). With regard to Boff's attempt to associate Mary with the Spirit, Johnson (1993:52) draws attention to Boff's self-critical awareness that "his is a male view of femininity", but also that his argument is inconsistent. On the one hand Mary is "a prophetic woman of liberation"; on the other she "participates in salvation 'silently and unassumingly' according to the norm of the feminine" (1993:52).

A second area of concern revolves around the idea of Mary as both 'virgin' and 'mother' – an impossible ideal for normal women. Boff's attempt to be more realistic with regard to Mary as being both virgin and mother – and the "eschatological realization of the feminine in all of its dimensions" (Johnson, 1993:52) - still does not help the situation. As Johnson (1993:52) points out, the categories of virgin and mother do not begin to describe woman in all the possibilities of her self-realisation. Gertrud Wittenberg (in Ackermann *et al*, 1991:16) adds to this dilemma of women in relation to Mary in that she notes that the 'Mother of God' role which was increasingly elevated, is also further and further removed from women's experience.

While Mary's high position in the church may have provided a source of female pride, Mary has remained, according to Pope (in Atkinson *et al*, 1985:194,195), a male-defined image – a "pure and passive vessel", rather than a first disciple who acted in faith. In similar vein, Sandra Schneiders (lecturer, spiritual director and author, Professor of New Testament and spirituality at the Jesuit School of Theology and the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley) (in Conn, 1986:327) notes that the

only feminine model which has been evoked with real fervour and consistency in the male church has been Mary, the Mother of Jesus, and that invocation has been badly misused in many periods of church history to reinforce and sacralize the subordination and passivity of women (in Conn, 1986:39).

3.4.3. Mary and the Christian Believer

Adams (1996:42) claims that for many feminist scholars (for example Daly, Johnson, and Ruether) the image of Mary the Mother of Jesus is no more than yet another aspect of feminine subjugation; Mary is seen as the impossible, distorted and limiting ideal for women. Anne Klein (in Atkinson *et al*, 1985:112) maintains that the glorification of Mary has not generally had a positive effect on the social reality of women in the West.

However there are others for whom she is an icon of hope and empowerment. Megan Walker (in Ackermann *et al*, 1991:146) quotes Kingsley as claiming – in his study of goddess worship - that "for her millions of devotees Mary functions in exactly the same way that other goddesses function for their devotees ...". Adams (1996:48) refers to Jameson (art critic and author) as wanting to divinise Mary, since for her, Mary is the central figure in an argument for the inclusion of women in Godhead, society and progress. With reference to many works of art found all over Europe, Jameson maintains that Mary is often portrayed as powerful, as the equal or near-equal of Christ, as a dispenser of mercy, and protector of all (including men, women, children, nobles, kings and priests). Adams notes that Jameson points out that these depictions of Mary are in sharp contrast to the more English portrayal of Mary as "meek maiden, mother mild" (1996:49). According to Jameson, (1996:48-53) although the potential of Mary is not yet realised, she can nevertheless be an

empowering symbol for women – a symbol of what they could become should they be able to free themselves from the restraints of current social thinking.

Doyle (in Ruether, 1974:32) suggests that "Historically, mythically and psychologically, Erikson and Tillich may be right that the motherhood of God is the first statement that can be made about divinity. In an ecologically sensitive age, Mariology as well as Mother Earth religion may be appealing and worthy of resuscitation". Focusing on the role of the relationship between the mother and an infant and the establishment of early trust, one can understand why both Erik and Joan Erikson highlight the loss of Mary the Mother of Jesus (or Mary the Madonna) in Protestant theology, saying that wherever the influence of Luther has been experienced, the Mother of God was dethroned (Doyle in Ruether, 1974:30). This means that while the role of 'father' and 'son' have been revitalised, the feminine role and presence have been both "ignored and impoverished" (Doyle in Ruether, 1974:31).

Given the role of image and art in the formation of perceptions and ideas it cannot be insignificant that in almost all Catholic churches and homes statues and pictures of Mary exist alongside images of her son Jesus. Roman Catholic liturgy also has reference to the feminine because of her, and the Rosary is prayed 'through' her. For members of the Schoenstatt Movement (a movement within the Catholic church with an emphasis on Mary) her influence is even greater in that they are encouraged to erect a home shrine in a place given to Mary – as a symbol of forming one's own family into a shrine.

Perhaps Walker (in Ackermann *et al*, 1991:147/148) sums it up best when she maintains that

... the declaration that Mary is Mother of God is therefore ambivalent. On the one hand it evokes popular memories of the great mother-goddess who is powerful and autonomous and speaks of the human need to relate to the divine in feminine form. But on the other hand it defines Mary in terms of her son (something that had already begun to happen to the pre-Christian goddess) and, because Mary comes to be seen as representing all women, it therefore comes to define women in terms of their relationships with men. As Mary is

to the Christ (or to God who is presumed to be male) so women are to men. Mary is normative for women, Christ (or God) is normative for men. Thus Augustine could say: 'The honour of the masculine sex is in the flesh of Christ, the honour of the feminine sex is in the Mother of Christ' (Graef 1963:98). Mary (and with her the feminine), however honoured, remains human and dependent while God (and with him the male?) is seen as divine and dominant. It is a relationship of inequality.

Although both the mere presence of Mary as a feminine influence – as well as her veneration to almost divine status - could provide a source of hope for women who need and seek a divine role to emulate, one cannot find any evidence to suggest that her influence could be – or could become – as important as that of the triune Divine Being currently worshipped in the Christian faith.

3.4.4. Summary

According to Giddens the formation of self-identity rests on a number of principles, many of which are directly part of Christian human identity, when examined in the light of the doctrine of *imago Dei*.

Included among these principles are the ideas of practical consciousness and hidden conditions which affect identity in - most often – unacknowledged ways. This thesis has so far argued that primary among these unacknowledged factors is the influence of the gender (orientation) of the agent. This is particularly important for people associated with the Christian faith in that a basic doctrine upon which many others rests is that of *imago Dei*; human beings created in the image of The Divine.

In the light of gender issues, women have found themselves oppressed and considered 'less than' their male counterparts. The Divine is perceived in masculine, patriarchal terms; maleness therefore seen as the standard for humanity. This has led to patriarchal faith, patriarchal (South African) society and patriarchal family structures. All of this has played a role in the lives of women, preventing the full expression of their heritage as people created in the image of The Divine.

However, while the influence of The Divine presented and perceived in predominantly masculine terms cannot be denied, it is possible that Mary can make a difference. As can be seen from the above, there have been attempts to incorporate Mary of Nazareth into the concept of The Divine. While some of them may have attempted to be theologically sound, the reality would seem to be that none of them have gained the general approval of the church as a whole. For most Protestant believers Mary remains no more than the mother of Jesus of Nazareth, a young girl who in obedience gave birth to the person who was later to be called the Saviour of the world. Even Roman Catholics, for whom Mary is more important, maintain that she is venerated and not worshipped.

CHAPTER FOUR
THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH IN THE MAKING OF IDENTITY IN THE
LIFE OF A CHRISTIAN BELIEVER

*'Not everyone who says to me,
'Lord, Lord' will enter the kingdom of heaven,
but only those who do the will of my heavenly Father'*
Matthew 7:21

**4.1. THE CHURCH AS COMMUNITY: A PLACE OF BELONGING,
CONTINUITY AND TRUST**

Giddens paints a picture of community in which little, if any, security exists. The unstable nature of truth, disembedding, the separation of time, place and space, and the nature of pure relationships, all contribute to a society which offers scarcely any security, continuity or moral conviction within which the agent undertakes the reflexive journey of the making of self-identity.

Religion and the church offer a sub-context which also affects the making of identity, but within which Christian believers find a social *milieu* which endeavours to retain many of the traditions which are no longer part of (post) modern society. Human relationships are based on a common affiliation with The Divine and are deemed to be dependable and accessible, a sense of 'family' being encouraged. Within this sub-context, issues of morality are generally decided by the leadership and the members are expected to conform. Although there may not always be agreement, there is, for most members, a standard from which to conduct their lives. Regular worship services and fellowship meetings re-enforce the sense of belonging, both emotionally and in person.

However, as has been mentioned, the agent is not always aware of the context within which identity develops, including the nature and circumstance of the relationships within which human beings operate. These relationships could be as unconscious, unacknowledged and unspoken as the rules which determine, or lay the foundation for, normal coherent interaction and interdependence (role function) between human beings. While there is no consensus with regard to the degree to which communities and

relationships influence identity - the process involved – or even the nature or definition of community, it must be acknowledged that individuals are affected by their daily interactions, or lack of them, with other human beings. Approval or disapproval early in life may lay the foundation for confidence or insecurity. A break in early trust may make it very difficult for an agent to later have faith in other human beings and The Divine, while a sense of purpose or futility with regard to the contribution made by the agent to society may be a further factor affecting the feelings of well-being or melancholy of the individual.

Relationship with The Divine – believed to be the One who creates and cares for each individual agent, and in whose likeness the individual is fashioned – has the potential to be particularly influential in the life of the Christian believer since the believer seeks to emulate and gratify this supreme and powerful being; finding support and encouragement among like-minded individuals within the confines of a religious organisation, in this case, the Christian church.

It is suggested that the church is, for the modern Christian believer, a place of community, with all the implications associated with community, and that it too has an unconscious influence on identity formation. This includes the church as a place of belonging, a source of continuity, and an environment within which the experience of trust can be nurtured, although these may come at a cost.

4.1.1. The Church: Community and Relationship

Theorists and theologians from all walks of life agree that human beings do not exist outside of relationship. Archbishop Desmond Tutu concurs when he comments that a "solitary human being is a contradiction in terms" (in Ackerman, 1998:18) while Taylor (1992:33) suggests that we "need relationships to fulfil, but not to define ourselves". With reference to Herder, Taylor (1992:31,32) says that self-recognition and identity revolve around the discovery of the individual's authentic and unique self or "own original way of being", implying that this "way of being cannot be socially derived, but must be inwardly generated" – primarily through the acquisition of language in all its diversity as experienced in exchanges with others; or, in Mead's terms 'significant others', even after they are no longer part of our lives. According to

Saussy (1991:20), a further component of self-esteem "is the capacity to develop and sustain mutually satisfying relationships".

But the nature (both hidden and acknowledged) of relationship is complicated by the constitution of today's modern global village. In the early stages of human social development individuals tended to live within the confines of a specific, closed group, family or clan, and 'we' would have referred to the same group of people with the same value system, code of conduct and belief system. Relationships would have developed - and interactions taken place - within the confines of one and the same time, space and place, that is, communication and interaction would have always been 'face to face' and immediate. Giddens (1991:16) states it clearly when he says that in pre-modern settings "time and space were connected *through* the situatedness of place". Modern communication has changed this and belonging is no longer limited to ones immediate location. According to Giddens (1990:17) modernity increasingly tears space away from place and fosters relations between 'absent' others, locationally distant from any given situation of face-to-face interaction. This results in a loss of the immediateness of social interaction, and with that an increase in elements of risk and insecurity; individuals being simultaneously involved in a plurality of contexts. It would seem logical to assume that in some instances there would be congruity between the different areas of belonging, who or what one perceives oneself to be, and what society sees as the ideal; in other circumstances dissonance could be anticipated.

The church, although existing within modern society, is an institution with its own identity and to which individuals choose to align themselves. Within the context of denomination and congregation agents encounter others with the same outlook as themselves and – in association with them – enjoy the experience of acceptance and approval. This sense of belonging is strengthened within the context of face-to-face relationship; worship services, prayer groups, recreational gatherings, social outreach programmes and Bible study meetings all occur within the context of place. Members of individual congregations also adhere to the 'code' of their church, the church often giving them the lead with regard to matters of morality and informing their value system. Fellow believers share the experience of worship, offer support and encouragement when times are tough and generally endeavour to accept the individual into the community and facilitate their relationship with The Divine.

While transcendent, The Divine is also believed to be immanent and wanting a relationship with the individual. This ascribes consciousness and agency to The Divine: The Divine participating in the *durée* of time. Process theology - a theological approach to The Divine which implies that everything, including The Divine – is in a state of constant development and growth, facilitates this approach. Although suggesting relativity, process theology also holds that "all knowledge is dynamic and open-ended and that God himself [sic] develops through his [sic] interaction with the changing world" (Deist, 1984:135); a basic principle of structuration theory applied to the relationship between human and divine agents.

Ackermann (1998:21) says that in "the covenant tradition, God expressly confirms a relationship of love, faithfulness and of presence with humanity. We, in turn, struggle to live up to God's covenanting love". While it could be validly argued that the teaching of the church induces the need for salvation and acceptance – suggesting the sinfulness and unacceptability of the individual before presenting the answer, that is, a loving and forgiving Divine Being – this does not detract from the attraction of a presentation of The Divine as wanting to be in relationship with creation and created beings. Early narratives refer to The Divine in conversation with human beings, later stories in the Hebrew scriptures refer to the covenant made between The Divine and the Israelite Nation and in the New Testament The Divine as presented as a loving Divine Being who wishes to 'save' a sinful world. In his book *The Return of the Prodigal Son* (based on the scriptural parable found in Luke 15:11-32 and his experience of Rembrandt's painting (Appendix 6: Image 1) depicting this scriptural parable) Roman Catholic writer Henri Nouwen (1994:92-97) relates an image of The Divine as a compassionate father with unconditional merciful love and everlasting forgiveness; as a father who wants his children to be free, and who suffers with them the pains of their wrong choices. This idea is strongly illustrated in the teaching with regard to Jesus about whom it is taught went to the point of death in order to restore the relationship between The Divine and humanity.

For the Christian agent, relationships within the context of the church can offer security and a sense of belonging, both of which facilitate the development of self-identity. Alongside these human relationships exists a further liaison, namely with The Divine, as experienced on a personal level through private devotion and

collectively through public worship. Although unseen, the perceived immanence of The Divine and the face-to-face contact with fellow believers offer a return to space-place immediacy of relationship; and with that a promise of security and belonging.

4.1.2. The Church: Community and Continuity

Religious tradition, ritual and world-view enjoyed primacy in pre-modern culture. Natural phenomenon and disasters were attributed to the actions of the gods and seen as approval, punishment or revelations of displeasure. The gods needed to be satisfied – or appeased – in order for crops to flourish, children to be born, life to continue and death to have meaning. Also integral to these cultures were the rites and rituals through which the community acknowledged the passage of individual development, a sense of continuity within the community and a feeling of purpose and goal orientation. The acceptance of a child into the community was acknowledged by the community, rites of passage accompanied and facilitated the transition of boys and girls into adulthood while death and burial rituals maintained and furthered the basic tenets of the world-view of a particular group or tribe. All of this provided a sense of belonging and security within which the individual was able to cope with the transitions of life and the possible insecurity which could result from 'not knowing'.

Modernity has challenged these claims and has highlighted the scientific nature of many areas formally held as sacrosanct. Natural phenomenon are no longer understood as emanating from the gods, but are the consequence of tides, winds, human destruction of the eco-system, atoms, magnetic forces, *et cetera*. Although there are still many areas to be examined, developments (in understanding) to date can be proved and explained, and most convincing of all, often predicted. Birth and death are understood as natural processes in the evolution of life. Religion and tradition are no longer guardians of sacred authority and ultimate truth.

But in spite of the anticipation that the social and physical universe would be increasingly subject to certain knowledge and control, Giddens (1991:207) maintains that modernity has instead created a system in which "areas of relative security interlace with radical doubt and with disquieting scenarios of risk". Most natural phenomenon cannot (yet) be controlled. Floods, tornadoes, lightning strikes,

hurricanes and tsunamis occur and cannot be prevented. Although cloning is able to produce a living creature and advances in infertility treatment can facilitate conception in unlikely cases, the development of two cells into a foetus and then a baby remains a fragile process and cannot be guaranteed. The meaning of life is no longer a 'given', but has to be discovered, while death can be delayed but not prevented.

While no longer normative in its control, Giddens (1991:195) reminds us that religion as a source of traditional authority continues to exist; the notion of tradition presuming an endurance, integrity, and continuity which resists the assault of change (Giddens 1994:62), the appeal of religion in both its traditional and novel forms likely to be long lasting (Giddens, 1993:487). Theorists from differing perspectives agree. Pickering and Martins (1994:119) refer to Durkheim's insistence that "there is and always will be a place in social life for religious-like 'mythological truths'". Castells (1997:12) would agree, maintaining that the fear of death and the pain of life leads humans to need a Divine Being, and to have faith, whatever that faith may be. According to Giddens (1991:181), adherence to a clear-cut faith, which offers a comprehensive lifestyle, may go some way to reducing anxiety and it would appear that it is the element of 'clear cut' which is most attractive.

Castells (1997:13) notes that there is a shift in emphasis – in the context of the network society - to religious fundamentalism, which is more than faith and belief in The Divine, and notes that religious fundamentalism "appears to be surprisingly strong and influential as a source of identity in this end of millennium" (Castells, 1997:13). With reference to Erikson, Markstrom-Adams *et al* (1994:456) state that "... as social groups, religions serve as buffers against alienation by promoting belongingness through the use of rites and rituals, faith and affirmative dogma ...". With reference to Kohut and Becker, Paul Marcus and Alan Rosenberg (1995:87-89) in their article on *The Value of Religion in Sustaining Self in Extreme Situations*, maintain that religion can provide a basic sense of direction in life and allow an individual to "root themselves in a self-transcending mythical drama which can support self-esteem". According to them, religion need not be dismissed as an unhelpful illusion or neurosis, but can rather be seen as an aid throughout life - capable of having either a positive or a negative influence in a person's life

(1995:101,102). Tradition also offers a link between generations and – within a Christian context – a bridge between the stages of life and ultimately, hope in death.

This security through belonging is strengthened by the notion that only those within a particular group 'have the answer', especially among the churches with a fundamental approach to Scripture. 'The Bible says ... ' becomes a statement or command almost as strong as that found in pre-modern religion. The group is bound by its common acceptance of the role and significance of Scripture and the norms and values it demands. Directives are to be obeyed and not debated and it is the duty of the members to prevent 'contamination' and secularisation of the church and society. To discover, and be committed to living 'the will of The Divine' also provides a sense of purpose and direction in life; a continuity which links one's history, purpose and goal.

However, within the security of this tradition, individual self-identity can also be stifled. Marxism's critique that "all religion is an instrument the ruling class uses to justify its own power and to pacify the oppressed ... " (Ruether, 1983:17) - alienating them from their critical response to the unjust social systems in which they find themselves - offers us, in the truth of the statement, a profound example of the church's power in influencing its members. This is especially true when church members have no private access to exegesis, reading material or lay leadership; all facilitating the maintenance of the status quo. The development of self-identity can also be hindered if the individual is expected to comply with a prescribed tradition or ritual with which they feel they cannot identify, or, as highlighted above, to identify with a Divine Being who does not offer what is needed in terms of gender identity.

4.1.3. The Church: Community and Trust

A sense of belonging and continuity are not the only important contexts within which identity development takes place. Although they contribute to the necessary circumstances they are not – in themselves – sufficient to provide the individual with the indispensable self-confidence for the expression of their individuality. Neither do they provide a *milieu* in which to conform to expected behaviour or a prescribed set of rules. Trust and security remain necessary for identity development. According to Giddens (1991:244) trust is defined as the "the vesting of confidence in persons or in

abstract systems, made on the basis of a 'leap into faith' which brackets ignorance or lack of information". This results in a protective cocoon; "the defensive protection which filters out potential dangers impinging from the external world ..." (1991:244) and which is "essentially a sense of 'unreality' rather than a firm conviction of security: it is a bracketing, on the level of practice, of possible events which could threaten the bodily or psychological integrity of the agent" (1991:40).

Trust is established in a number of ways and in many contexts. For most individuals the first and primary space within which trust is conceived is that of family and the relationships within the family. In this context, trust is the result of security gained as a child when the time-space absence of the primary care-giver is overcome. The parent leaves, but returns (Giddens, 1991:38,39). This ongoing dynamic provides what Giddens calls an '*emotional inoculation* against existential anxieties (1991:39). Louw (1991:58,59), referring to Erikson's division of the stages of human development, and based on the resolution of crises, writes that the first stage of human development – or the first crisis to be resolved - is one of trust vs. mistrust, and coincides with the first year of life, during which time the foundation is laid for trust in later life, and the synthesis of 'hope' is achieved. Giddens (1991:38) refers to Bloch as saying that basic trust is also at the core of what Bloch refers to as 'hope', and is the origin of what Tillich calls "the courage to be".

However, trust does more than provide the basic security for facing the rigours of adult life. It is also, according to Giddens (1991:41), creative, in that it allows the individual the chance to "leap into the unknown" and to act or think innovatively in relation to pre-established modes of activity. This affects self-identity in that the experience of creativity, as a routine phenomenon, is important as a buttress for individuals to experience personal self-worth and psychological health (Giddens, 1991:41). Given the notion of the self as the centre of identity formation, human beings create their own history, the self now forming the trajectory of development from the past to the anticipated future (1991:75). This trajectory is orientated within the self and is internally referential, this internally referential condition forming the basis for the reflexive nature of identity formation. The self is discovered in relation to the world, but not subject to it. Trust facilitates this interdependent – yet independent – development of identity for this individual.

The individual can also be denied the opportunity for the establishment of this basic trust. Giddens (1991:66) maintains that when the child does not experience a world that has coherence, continuity and dependability, trust is lost – "not only in other persons but in the coherence of the object-world". In its fragility, basic trust can also be affected by, amongst others factors, a sense of shame. According to Giddens (1991:64,65) shame affects self-identity in that it raises within one the fear about the adequacy of one's story: the "narrative by means of which the individual sustains a coherent biography". These feelings of shame have their roots in experiences which have led to feelings of inadequacy, humiliation or personal insufficiency, and needs to be understood in its "relation to the integrity of self" (1991:65). According to Giddens (1991:65,66) shame eats at the roots of trust because it is linked to a fear of abandonment in infancy.

Relationships in later life can also affect feelings of trust and security. Giddens (1991:6,89) notes that while traditional obligation often linked one to kin, modern relationships are more "free-floating", and are characterised by a willing choice with regard to commitment to the individual and the relationship (1991:89,186). These relationships – pure relationships - are sought only for what the relationship can give each of the partners involved (1991:90), and are based on reciprocity, and focused on intimacy (1991:94) and mutual trust. This trust needs to be earned and is dependent on both parties being both trusting and trustworthy (1991:96). In a pure relationship there is no moral imperative motivating the maintenance of the relationship and if the needs of one member are deemed not to have been met, the relationship can end, and with its ending, the security once enjoyed within that relationship is also lost. To the degree to which self-identity "is negotiated through linked processes of self-exploration and the development of intimacy with others" (1991:97), and given the nature of pure relationships, it is understandable that a degree of insecurity could exist.

In the same way as the church can seem to provide a community of acceptance and continuity as outlined above, it can also provide a context for basic trust – trust in a Divine Being said to have the best interest of the individual at heart, and trust in one's fellow believers. Based on its understanding of Scripture, the church sees itself as offering a safe place; a haven for those who feel they have been betrayed by the

world. Experiences of shame are countered with the message of *imago Dei* and the self-worth of everyone in the eyes of The Divine. Feelings of guilt are dealt with through teachings concerning the death of Jesus on the Cross. Forgiveness is offered to all who ask, based on the doctrine that when "Christ by his suffering and death appeased God's wrath he did so on man's [sic] behalf and that, therefore, Christ's suffering is a substitute for every individual human being's suffering for his [sic] own sins" (Deist, 1984:164). Once this sacrifice is acknowledged and embraced by the individual they are believed to be set free from any valid judgement and/or punishment which may have been exacted on them by The Divine. If one then attempts to live 'in relationship' with The Divine, one can trust the love of The Divine to be a constant source of security. Scriptures such as Romans 8:28 motivate this thinking: "And we know in all things God works for the good of those who love him ... ", and Luke 12:24: "Think of the ravens ... God feeds them. You are worth far more than the birds ...", and the list could go on. [It is acknowledged that although Romans 8:28 is often quoted as above, namely as a way of communicating a message of trust in The Divine, when it is looked at in its context, issues of pre-destination are raised; a doctrine which could in fact suggest a sense of insecurity as opposed to security].

Within the church as community, members are urged not only to be in relationship with The Divine but also to love 'their neighbour'. Christian believers could therefore realistically expect to be loved as 'someone else's neighbour'. Relationship, acceptance and security are not dependent on the agents acceptableness or what they are able to offer, Christian believers endeavouring (theoretically anyway) to encourage the believer, embrace the outsider, affirm the downtrodden and accept the marginalised. The nature of pure relationships (as described by Giddens with regard to mutual need satisfaction) is foreign to Christian believers in the light of Scriptures such as "If you love only those who love you, what reward can you expect ... if you greet only your brothers [sic] what is there extraordinary in that? Even the heathen do as much" (Matthew 5:46,47), and "Always treat others as you would like them to treat you" (Matthew 7:12), and once again, the list could go on.

In the context of the trust relationships which are offered to Christian believers – both in relation to The Divine and fellow believers – it should be possible, as Saussy

suggests, for the individual to find security and, in that security, the potential for the development of a positive self-identity. However, this potential source of trust comes with a price, namely conformity; a conformity which parallels that found in pre-modern cultures.

4.1.4. Summary

As has been seen (so far), the process of forming and sustaining a positive and coherent self-identity is reflexively dependent on elements of relationship, continuity and trust. While the nature of modern society does not always provide the necessary context within which these elements can be experienced, it is suggested that the church still does – at least in theory.

Although trust in later life is facilitated by early trust in relation to the primary care giver, this context for the development of trust can be absent. However, religion can surpass this disadvantage and advocate a context of trust in a Divine Being; firstly as the agent is created in the image of The Divine and can enjoy relationship with The Divine, and secondly within the context of the relationships within the church. These interpersonal relationships are based on a shared commitment to The Divine, and are meant to be accepting, encouraging and loving. Self-sacrifice for the good of another is encouraged, and recognition, charity, approval and assistance are expected to be offered without thought of reward. If these relationships of commitment and obligation are successful, the context for further trust can develop. The church and The Divine also offer a restoration of self-esteem and release from feelings of shame and guilt through the doctrines of forgiveness and acceptance by The Divine.

However, these 'benefits' do not come without implications, and while these implications can be positive, they can also be restrictive of personal growth and can facilitate the maintenance of conservative ideas or support the status quo, including patriarchal society and the 'rightness' of 'maleness'.

4.2. THE CHURCH AS REPRESENTATIVE OF THE DIVINE ON EARTH, AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FREE CHOICE AND CREATIVE EXPRESSION

The issue of free choice remains a central element in the debate with regard to the influence of society and the making of individual identity. Durkheim and others posit that society itself has an 'established' identity; Comte maintained that society *per se* acquires an identity within its own historical development, which is in turn passed on to individuals, while Durkheim's treatment of 'social facts as things' implied that "social phenomena exist as an objective realm, are external to individuals, operate by their constraining or 'coercive' influence on individuals" (Jary & Jary, 1995:180) and limit the element of free choice.

However, approaching society from a perspective which avoids positivism, Giddens is of the opinion that free choice and creative expression are not only possible, but necessary for identity development (Giddens, 1991:141,75). According to Giddens (1991:141) security and trust facilitate both the formation of self-identity and allow for opportunities of personal creative expression. As a routine phenomenon, this experience of creativity becomes in turn a "basic prop to a sense of personal worth and therefore to psychological health" (Giddens 1991:41). Implied in creative expression is the concept of the free choice of the individual. According to Giddens (1991:75), "We are, not what we are, but what we make ourselves", and while it could be argued that not everyone has the privilege of free choice, Giddens (in Held & Thompson, 1989:259) suggests that even in a situation where there appears to be only one option, one can 'open options' by changing or redefining the 'want or motivation'; that is, through modifying ones goal, desire or purpose for carrying out an action one can create alternatives.

If this is possible, and the element of free choice does affect self-identity and self-esteem as Giddens, and others suggest, then this could imply that those who have found ways of creative expression - and have been recognised in that uniqueness - could have a stronger sense of self, and 'self-acceptance'. They would, in turn, be more fully integrated into existing structures, allowing fuller reflexive participation - and influence - in the social structures within which the individual exists. However, with regard to the role of free choice in the life of a member of a church, one needs to

examine the role of the teaching of the church with regard to the degree to which a believer is accorded the opportunity of free choice. The following considers this option of free will in the context of a) the Christian home and the dynamics within the home, b) the idea of sin and the consequences of sin, c) the notion of 'the will of The Divine' and d) The Divine as omnipotent and omnipresent. It is recognised that this is an ongoing discussion and that no resolution has yet been achieved.

4.2.1. The Church and the Family

Although Giddens does not mention the role of family relationships with regard to gender identity and free choice this issue needs to be addressed as a hidden condition affecting the identity of both men and women. The family does not exist in a vacuum, but is an institution intrinsic within society, a microcosm of society - patriarchal society. The influence of patriarchy as, in Castells' (1997:134) words "a founding structure of all contemporary societies" and "characterized by the institutionally enforced authority of males over females and their children in the family unit", cannot be overlooked. Patriarchy could be said to be the underlying, generally unacknowledged and unconscious cradle of society; the possible role of the church as an institution in the formation and sustaining of patriarchy already having been explored. Giddens (1991:207) would remind us of the special appeal of religious fundamentalism, while Castells (1997:23) refers to the family as the fortress of Christian life, and re-enforcing the tenets of patriarchy.

According to the theology of these Christian movements (churches) it is considered mandatory for the husband to assume headship in the family and for the wife to defer to him in all matters, with the possible exception of when he requires something that may be outside of the moral requirements of scripture. This is based on exegesis of Scripture, often linking the principles of different passages from different contexts into the specific current context (the submission of wives to their husbands) in order to create a semblance of the supremacy of The Divine, and the need for the husband to be submissive to The Divine. For example: The command, addressed to wives in Ephesians 5:22-24 requires that

Wives, be subject to your husbands as though to the Lord; for the man is the head of the woman, just as Christ is the head of the church. Christ is, indeed,

the saviour of that body; but just as the church is subject to Christ, so must women be subject to their husbands in everything

However Ephesians 5:22-24 is linked to Acts 4:19-20 and the Sanhedrin's command to Peter and John (disciples of Jesus) to stop their preaching about Jesus. "But Peter and John replied: 'Is it right in the eyes of God for us to obey you rather than him? Judge for yourselves. We cannot possibly give up speaking about what we have seen and heard'". Just as Peter and John were expected to obey The Divine rather than the Sanhedrin, so too may the wife (in theory) refuse to obey her husband if what he expects is contrary to scriptural dictates; this directive being appropriated to the context of husband and wife; a context within which it was not written.

The underlying dynamics of the psychological development of individuals also calls into question the degree to which free choice can be exercised within the family. Luise Eichenbaum and Susie Orbach, Co-directors of The Women's Therapy Centre Institute in New York and co-founders of The Women's Therapy Centre in London, (in Conn, 1986:128) note that psychological development starts at birth and occurs within the relationship of the child with his or her primary caregiver; in most instances the mother who raises her daughter to be like her, and her son to be 'the other'. Substantiated by writers including Mead, Fromm, and Parsons, Valerie Saiving (in Christ and Plaskow, 1979:30,31) observes that:

The close relationship between mother and infant plays the first and perhaps the most important role in the formation of masculine and feminine character, for it means that the person with whom the child originally identifies himself [sic] with is a woman. Both male and female children must learn to overcome this initial identification by differentiating themselves from the mother. But the kind and degree of differentiation required by the boy are strikingly different from what is required from the girl. The little girl learns that ... she will grow up to be a woman, like her mother ... the boy's process of differentiation from his mother is much more complex and difficult ... he must therefore become quite a different sort of creature from his mother ... he must relinquish completely his original identification with her ...he must *prove* himself to be a man. (Italics as per quote).

Castells (1997: 231,232), quoting feminist psychoanalyst Nancy Chodorow, refers to this dynamic. Chodorow says that because women have been mothered by women, they develop with an ongoing awareness of relational capacities and needs - of "self-in-relationship" - which commits them to mothering, while men, because they were mothered by women, do not. Carol Gilligan (1993:8), a feminist psychologist, concurs when she explains how, for men and boys, identity revolves around separation and individuation, while for girls and women the concept of relationship retains issues of attachment. The issue of gender identity formation of individuals in relation to the gender of their primary care giver also affects the nature of their relationships in later life between individuals on a personal basis; and can also impact on professional success. In line with the theory that being raised by a primary care giver of the opposite sex stimulates a response of individuation and independence as opposed to interdependence, Michael Genovese (1993:214) found in his study on women as national leaders that, in the same way as many forceful male political figures have had strong identification with their mothers, so too have most women leaders had very strong bonds with their fathers.

In the light of the changing nature of the composition of what was the 'nuclear' family one may be able to agree with Giddens that change is occurring, and will still occur. However, in the context of the influence of the family, this realistically be attributed to the free choice of the agent (the son or the daughter)?

While it is true that roles do not constitute identity *per se*, they can have an influence on the way people perceive themselves, especially if they lend themselves to a situation in which the roles defined for the individual preclude the meeting of emotional needs, and carry no financial reward. It would seem many women are caste in this mould. Castells (1997:229) quotes Chodorow as saying that, because of the primary relationship of a daughter to her mother (as both a mother and a member of the same sex) "Women, as mothers, produce daughters with mothering capacities and the desire to mother". While Chodorow claims that generally women want to mother and experience a sense of fulfilment through mothering (Castells, 1997:229), Eichenbaum and Orbach (in Conn, 1986:130) maintain that beyond the positive feelings engendered by pregnancy, birth and mothering lie a mother's "other experiences of self"; namely that of having to put aside her own wants and desires

resulting in her no longer being aware that she feels needy; developing 'complicated feelings about her repressed needs'. Mothers also project these feelings onto their daughters, but not their sons; the mother conditions the daughter to expect that her needs will not be met, that she will not have all possibilities opened to her, and that she has to take control of her own emotional care. With reference to patriarchal attitudes, Eichenbaum and Orbach suggest that a boy will be raised to expect to be looked after and attended to, while a girl will be encouraged (and equipped) to provide the looking after and attending; "demonstrating these unconscious injunctions by relating to her daughter this way herself" (in Conn, 1986:130-133). Continuing in the same vein, they maintain that the mother has a 'repressed little-girl inside' as a consequence of always (even as a child) having to hold back or deny aspects of herself, and that this also acts as a determining factor in the suppression of free expression of the daughter (in Conn, 1986:133,134).

Given these (often) unacknowledged and hidden conditions with regard to the formation of a gendered self-identity it is valid to question the degree to which individuals enjoy the privilege of free choice, especially when this influence is exerted in the very early stages of identity formation, within the primary space of the home environment. In spite of changes in some areas of the church, the resurgence of the fundamental/evangelical Christian church, with its emphasis on the home and family, which would support the above dynamic, must be remembered.

4.2.2. The Christian Agent, Free Choice and the Consequence of Sin

A further area in which the church asserts an influence on self-identity has to do with the concept of sin (or evil) and the understanding that a person is 'a sinner' in need of 'salvation' – since a good and holy Divine Being cannot 'look upon' that which is impure. This dilemma is highlighted in the idea of the sacred/profane divide as a result of secularisation. In this context the individual is faced with a choice between what religion presents as good and acceptable and what the world offers. The latter is often condemned as unacceptable and unholy; in need of restoration through the transformative power of religion.

For example, thoughts and feelings need to be controlled to avoid the risk of being denied entrance into the kingdom of heaven. Even to look at a woman with lust is equal to adultery (Matthew 5:27,28), anger makes one subject to judgement (Matt 5:21,22), retaliation to abuse is prohibited (Matt 5:38-42), and so the list could go on. Only certain emotions may be expressed. Known as 'The fruit of the Spirit' the Christian believer is expected to exhibit qualities of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, fidelity, gentleness and self-control (Galatians 5:22,23). As implied, these qualities are a consequence of the Spirit of The Divine being granted power in the life of the believer.

According to the above, the individual who builds an identity within a specialised religious context lives in a condition of dependence on The Divine for an acceptable sense of self and identity. One's very acceptability depends on adherence to the principles of the general sin of all humanity and the need for forgiveness for each individual. It is my opinion that these undertones of judgement and condemnation to an eternity of suffering and which permeate religious language, can make the role of religious institutions (and therefore perceptions of The Divine) more significant than that of many other dominant (secular) institutions.

In this scenario, society (as the organised product of human acts), self-identity and self-perception are being re-constituted by perceptions of the individual and The Divine which may be said to hold out the possibility of actualisation of the self, but only in dependence on The Divine, while at the same time creating structures of repression and restraint. Saussy (1991:12) observes, with regard to self-esteem, the incongruence in the Christian faith between the claim of a God of love, and believers' inability to love themselves; as well as the belief that human beings are made in the image of a holy God, yet see themselves as unworthy or unlovable people, and unworthy of happiness. She suggests that this may be because of conflicting images of The Divine which are at work in their psyches, cancelling out the God of love (1991:13). According to her research she suspects that for some, "faith in God" or "faith in Jesus Christ" may be an "escape from faith in self" (1991:13). She notes that only a few people speak of "discovering the incarnate Deity in themselves, or finding themselves empowered to respond to their own problems" (1991:14) demonstrating little autonomy, ability and belief in the self, preferring to defer their wants, needs, problems *et cetera* to The

Divine. These circumstances cannot be considered to be conducive to a healthy ideology of goodness, truth and value for the individual – as an independent individual - since there is an ongoing dependence on The Divine and no emergent self confidence to tackle the issues of one's own life.

4.2.3. 'The Will of God' and Implications for Free Choice

Not only is the agent subject to the constraints of traditional family values and church teachings which could be undermining of self-esteem, but the individual is – as a Christian believer – also called to obey the will of The Divine. This impacts on the way Christian believers view the choices available to them, and their responsibility for the choices exercised. Christian Scripture speaks very clearly of self-sacrifice and of submission to the will of The Divine. An example of the former would be Mark 8:34-35 in which Jesus instructs both 'the people' and his disciples as follows: "Anyone who wants to be a follower of mine must renounce self; he must take up his cross and follow me. Whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and for the gospel's will save it". An example of the need to submit to the will of The Divine can be found in Matthew 7:21 where Jesus warns that "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only those who do the will of my heavenly Father"; with reference to the belief among Christians that The Divine has a path marked out for them, that they need follow this path, and please The Divine in all they do.

This teaching starts at a young age with biblical stories in which children are presented with biblical heroes who have acted well and in accordance with the will of The Divine. It is in the area of imagination, fantasy and story that these perceptions can best be seen, identification with the biblical characters in stories told by the parents often influencing later life. Fowler (1981:131) relates the account of a man for whom the story of the call and response of young Samuel (as found in 1 Samuel 3) made a strong impression. In this story Samuel has been dedicated to the service of the God of Israel and lives within the confines of the Temple and under the tutorship of the prophet Eli. In the story he is awakened in the night by a voice calling his name, which he presumes to be that of his tutor, Eli. After the third instance they realise that it is The Divine who is in fact calling, to which Samuel responds "Speak,

for your servant is listening". According to Scripture, Samuel goes on to become a well-known and respected prophet, greatly used by The Divine. Fowler reports that the person was so impressed by the story that he later found he was often repeating this response to himself during waking moments in the night, and that this person went on to become, not surprisingly, a minister and theologian. Fowler (1981:132) maintains that for each child

whose significant others have shared religious stories, images and symbols in ways that prove life-opening and sustaining of love, faith and courage, there must be at least one other for whom the introduction of religion, while equally powerful, gave rise to fear, rigidity, and the brutalisation of souls – both one's own and those of others.

According to Fowler (1981:132) children who are converted through stories of sin, the devil and hell when at a young age, and who respond by assuming the required "adult faith identity", often go on to have a "rigid, brittle and authoritarian personality"; an identity developed in response to a Divine Being who demands total surrender of the self, most often sustained through belonging the 'the church'.

The Christian believer has also been taught that The Divine is always present. With reference to the concept of the transcendence, yet immanence, of The Divine, and based on Giddens' (1991:27) assertion that time and space merged with the domains of the gods and spirits in pre-modern cultures; it can be said that for the modern Christian this time-space human-divine relationship still exists. As One who is omnipresent the constant attendance of The Divine is believed to be a reality although this presence is not always acknowledged. The Divine and the agent interact through prayer, meditation, reading of scripture, reflection on nature, and the movement of The Spirit, all being ways in which the Christian believer becomes aware of the presence of The Divine and believes communication occurs between him/herself and The Divine. However, The Divine is not only present. Agents are urged to 'accept Jesus in their heart' situating The Divine in a location from which the person cannot hope to hide or escape.

This omnipresence can be a potential and constant source of condemnation and/or affirmation. In order to win affirmation or avoid punishment, Christian believers often

submit themselves to constant self-surveillance and are reluctant to move outside the accepted norm of the tradition within which they have been raised. An example of this self-surveillance can be found in the functioning of Bentham's Panopticon. "At the heart of the panopticon system lies the invisibility of the disciplinary power and the 'compulsory visibility' of its subjects" (Hunter, 1992:15). Anne Hunter, in her article *Numbering the Hairs of Our Heads (Male Social Control and the All-Seeing Male God)* continues and says that both Foucault and Bentham argue that when under the possibility of constant disciplinary gaze, the individual "assumes responsibility for the constraints of power ... and becomes the principle of his own subjection". She suggests that:

... when subjected to a continuous but unverifiable gaze, the individual internalises that gaze, begins to monitor her own behaviour, and thus becomes an instrument of her own oppression ... the panoptically controlled society is made up of individuals who are not only normalized, but self-normalized (1992:15).

4.2.4. Summary

The Christian believer is taught that they have to conform to certain norms in order to be acceptable, and that they are expected to make decisions for their lives only after having consulted The Divine with regard to the 'will of The Divine' for their life. Failure to do this would lead to ostracism and judgement. In the light of this, one may legitimately question the degree to which they experience the options of free choice. When the options that are made available are deemed to have to be in accordance with the will of The Divine – who is always present and constantly watching – the element of free choice becomes almost non-existent.

Although one could argue that the believer has the choice on whether or not to believe, once this initial choice is made (or accepted as a result of fear, childhood conditioning, etc) consequent choices – if the believer wishes to remain accepted as a member of their church or religious group - are restricted. It could also be argued that the agent still has a choice of whether or not to remain a believer, and whether or not to even attempt to discover and follow the will of The Divine. However, given the cost of withdrawing from a community, which has often been an aspect of the believer's entire life, this is not an easy option. Alongside this is the condemnation

which accompanies such a decision, specifically the supposed condemnation of the ex-believer to an eternal existence beyond the presence of The Divine, or an eternity in 'hell'. In a further endeavour – albeit unconscious – of the church to offer security to Christian believers in a world which (still/once again) appears on the point of self-destruction there is the teaching with regard to 'the second coming'; the end of time when Christian believers can expect to be drawn into eternity with The Divine while 'non-believers' would be banished to perpetual torment. On the one hand the church offers community and the potential for security and trust while on the other this is withdrawn when the agent does not conform.

4.3. THE POWER OF THE CHURCH AS A SOCIAL INSTITUTION

The church, as a religious institution, has not lost its power and influence, albeit power and influence that is exercised in a most subtle way. According to Giddens

The study of power cannot be regarded as a second-order consideration in the social sciences. Power cannot be tacked on, as it were, after the more basic concepts of social science have been formulated. There is no more elemental concept than that of power. However, this does not mean that the concept of power is more essential than any other ... Power is one of several primary concepts of social science, all clustered around the relations of action and structure (1984:283).

Catherine Madsen (1994:481) suggests that since parents have a tendency to want to maintain their tradition, curb the influence of culture and discourage speculation with regard to the experience of their offspring, religious authorities are able to consolidate their authority and prevent any real change in religious practice and belief. This is possible within Marcia's framework of identity formation. According to Marcia (in Neimeyer & Raeshide, 1991:562), identity development occurs along two dimensions, namely 'commitment' and 'crisis'. The former refers to the degree to which the individual has realised stable values and beliefs in important areas, while the latter (crisis) refers to the degree to which the individual has actively explored the possibilities of identity commitments. According to Marcia's paradigm, four identity statuses can be identified, each reflecting the presence or absence of exploration and commitment. These are:

- *Diffuse* people are individuals who have not yet 'negotiated the tasks of identity development' because they lack both a stable system of commitments (for example values etc) and the tools necessary to acquire them.
- *Foreclosed* people have prematurely resolved the issue of personal identity by adopting available, often parental, value systems and not facing any personal active self-exploration or crisis.
- *Moratorium* people are those who actively pursue alternative beliefs, but have no grounded, stable set of values from which to work.
- *Achieved* people are those who have 'settled on a stable system of commitments following an active period of exploration and identity crisis'. (1991: 562).

Given the influence of the church as outlined above it would not be unreasonable to expect individuals with a religious orientation to have a 'foreclosed identity'; their identity being one in which they have assumed the value system of a parent or religious institution, without really wrestling with issues in a personal way. In religious (Christian) communities, free thought is not encouraged and deviation from the norm is met with disapproval. Unless something occurs which challenges the personal history of the agent, they are likely to reflexively maintain the status quo.

Conformity to the crowd is also a stage noted by Fowler in his theory of spiritual development. He maintains that most Christian believers have made some kind of commitment to The Divine, believing that they have done so as a personal decision. However, this normally occurs during the teen years of a person's life and is often only maintained for as long as that person is part of the group which shares their conviction. It is nevertheless a commitment to God – to what James Cone refers to as the 'Decisive Other'. This commitment, "and the correlated self-image can exert a powerful ordering on a youth's identity and values outlook" (Fowler, 1981:154). It is also Fowler's opinion that many Christian believers get caught in this phase and do not go on to personalising their belief system, experiencing different forms of religious knowledge; an "ascendant strength [that] has to do with its capacity for critical reflection on identity (self) and outlook (ideology)" (1981:182). In time, 'self' and 'ideology' become congruent and relevant to life situations, developing (in Marcia's terms) an 'achieved identity status', an integrated system of faith and being

which would, in the context of this thesis, be expected to contribute to the facilitation of a healthy self-identity.

Unless an Achieved identity status is realised for the individual, religions – as powerful institutions and legitimating authorities - affirm and strengthen their own rule and domination. Within the context of power relations, Manuel Castells (1997: 7,8) proposes three forms and origins of identity building, namely:

- Legitimising identity is introduced by powerful institutions, using existing structures, and serves to strengthen and justify the domination of these institutions. However it is only when these are internalised and meaning constructed around them that they become 'identities'.
- Resistance identity which forms a collective resistance against oppression.
- Project identity, which is an identity built when social actors mobilise to form a new 'order', for example feminists challenging patriarchal society.

It is interesting to note that Resistance identities can lead to projects which – if 'successful' - can become in their turn dominant, and therefore Legitimising identities (Castells, 1997:8). Although the Legitimising identity needs to be personalised, it is not difficult to understand how this happens and how Christian believers conform to the norms, standards and values of the institutionalised church; especially given the presentation of The Divine as an all powerful and judgmental Divine Being.

Both women and men are susceptible to experiencing the authority of the church as limiting and restrictive. While men may reflexively enjoy the power to motivate and sustain the status quo of masculine supremacy, they are also at risk of being defined by the church, the individualism of each person – woman or man – often being denied. Although the system favours the male and would not be as debilitating for men, they are not immune to the restricting power of the institutionalised church. Powerlessness, as a possible consequence of these same issues, or simply the ostracisation of the individual by those in authority, can also not be ignored.

However, women are more strongly affected and disadvantaged. The development of their identity and role has to be made in a *milieu* which is not conducive to recognising their uniqueness, giftedness and equality in the eyes of The Divine, in

whose image both women and men are believed to be created. In many churches the role of women is decided for them by men who retain control of religious institutions in the name of the pan-optic, omni-present, omnipotent Divine Being whom they presume to image, and on whose behalf they presume to govern; male supremacy being the product of the myth of maleness as the norm and the male as representative of The Divine on earth. In his discussion on the ordination of women in the CPSA, Paterson states that

Too often the appeal to culture is nothing more than a defence of a form of oppression. Mercy Oduyoye puts it more succinctly when she says: "When I hear people at home say 'It is our culture', I expect what follows to strengthen the hands of those in power and make the privileged ones continue in a state of comfort ... " (Paterson, 1989:29).

In her discussion on women, men and power, Maureen Gaffney, Senior clinical psychologist with the Eastern Health Board, a Research Associate in Trinity College Dublin and a member of the Law Reform Commission (1991:3,4) argues from a psychological perspective that in close relationships the exercise of power is not always obvious, but is often hidden and disguised, and that power can mean different things in different contexts. Although Gaffney (1991:4) prefers the definition of power as suggested by Miller as being "*the capacity to produce a change, that is, to move anything from point A to point B*", she notes that power can also be socially constructed: power being the capacity given to one to determine one's own, and another's fate (Gaffney, 1991:4). In the context of emancipatory politics, Giddens notes that oppression is understood as the ability of a group to limit the life chances of another, as a consequence of differential power (Giddens, 1991:212) while autonomy/emancipation is the opportunity afforded the individual (by the group) for free and independent action; freedom and responsibility being held in balance (1991:213). Power, and the capacity of power to influence choices, cannot be ignored, whether this power originates from tradition, gender, race or class classification or culture

Feminist theologian and New Testament professor Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (1992:xix) suggests that "Western women are not able to discard completely and forget our personal, cultural or religious Christian history. We will either transform it

into a new liberating future or continue to be subject to its tyranny whether we recognise its power or not". By following the rules, we give them power. In response to Lelwica, Martha Ackelsberg (1998:132) agrees that to "simply dismiss religion as patriarchal superstition" is to "ignore the ways religious traditions and values structure many of our belief systems and to hand over to the conservative practitioners the power to define what 'religion' demands of citizens". Foucault seems to put it in plausible perspective when he states, as quoted by Danna Fewell & David Gunn (1989:11,12), that "power is tolerable only on condition that it mask a substantial part of itself. Its success is proportional to its ability to hide its own mechanisms". Fewell and Gunn (1989:12) rightly maintain that: "Biblical patriarchy has mastered this rule".

Both men and women are reflexively affected by the authority of the church and society in the process of the making of identity. With regard to women, Saussy (1991:16,17) sums it up when she says that she came to the personal realisation that the "personal is political" when she realised the impact that the patriarchal religion and world-view in which she had been raised was inextricably interwoven with her personal struggle with self-esteem. Unfortunately, literally millions of women continue in their day-to-day life unaware of the reflexive power of the almost exclusively masculine presentations and perceptions of The Divine – as taught through the church – for both their personal identity, and for society.

4.4. CONCLUSION

The making of self-identity is a complex process, one which is impossible to sketch in a few pages. Nevertheless, the above has been an attempt to outline how the church, as a social institution, may have an influence on the making of self-identity. This has been done in the context of proposals presented by Giddens with regard to the making of identity in a modern context; one in which many of the traditional pillars of society have been eroded. It has been suggested that the church, as a source of perceptions of The Divine and a place of community and security can be both negative and positive in its influence. However, the over-riding evaluation - especially but not exclusively from a feminist perspective - would seem to be that the church does not have a positive influence in the lives of women. In supporting the status quo of patriarchy it would attempt to uphold the dominance of men in the church, the home, and social

structures. Although there have been changes to the status of women, it would seem that these have been despite the role of the church, and not because of the influence of the church.

With regard to women, Hunter (1992:14-16) points out that just as the prisoners of the panopticon prison become their own monitors, so too, society is made up of women who have internalised the expectations of docility and subjectivity. Women often seem unaware of their subjugation, believing what they have been told. In her book *Women who Run With the Wolves*, feminist Jungian analyst Clarissa Estés (1992:240-245) speaks of "cringing before the collective" as being the pressure on women to conform to the collective, to "be good", to "normalise the abnormal", and to adopt a "learned helplessness" – all of which place at risk the development of personal self-identity. Sherry Anderson & Patricia Hopkins (1991:17), when posing a question with regard to women being unable or reluctant to trust themselves, quote one reply received:

I've been identified with patriarchal values for so long now that whenever something deep within me begins to ask questions, I feel guilty and disloyal. Then I scramble around trying to make my feelings and beliefs fit together somehow. It's very hard to put into words, but something uniquely feminine in me is asking to be expressed and I don't know how to let it come out (1991:17).

In similar vein, Flood, Hoosain, & Primo, note that: "despite a clear gender bias in the portrayal of women, many Christian women feel that challenging religious foundations would anger God and other devout Christians" (1997:33). In order to 'destabilise' the panoptic system, Hunter (1992:26) suggests that what is needed is a "profound questioning of whether and how we talk about, understand, and use God's 'point of view'". Is The Divine the One who has been presented in the teachings of the institution of the church, permeated by patriarchalism and bound by culture, or is The Divine the One who understands the world in its many and varied facets and who moves with humanity on its journey? One may legitimately ask whether the church is secure enough, willing and/or able to facilitate this picture of The Divine, or whether it will choose to remain in its ivory tower. Giddens would say that the individual has the ability to institute change, and this may yet prove to be the case. Unfortunately the

history of the church indicates 'splits' or resurgence of conservative modes of thinking as opposed to fundamental change throughout its ranks.

CHAPTER FIVE

ANALYSIS OF DATA: LIGHTHOUSE COMMUNITY CHURCH

'O come and be my mate!' said the Eagle to the Hen;

I love to soar, but then

I want my mate to rest

Forever in the nest!

Said the Hen, 'I cannot fly,

I have no wish to try,

But I joy to see my mate, careering through the sky!

They wed, and cried, 'Ah, this is Love, my own!'

And the Hen sat, the Eagle soared, alone.

Charlotte Perkins Gilman, 'Wedded Bliss'

(in Miles 1993:147)

5.1. INTRODUCTION

In the light of the factors affecting identity formation, as discussed in the previous two chapters, the analysis of the data which has been collected will be presented within the context of each of the two denominations from which participants were drawn. In order to attempt to protect the identity of the research participants the names of the churches have been changed. I have also limited the biography of each participant; East London being a relatively small town in the Eastern Cape (South Africa) and some of my research participants being prominent members of the community.

I have referred to the language as used by the research participant as accurately as grammatically possible. This means that at times words appear in square brackets [] which alter the tense or person of the statement, but not the basic content. At other times these square brackets summarise a part of the sentence which was too wieldy to quote directly, but once again the meaning has not been distorted. While there may appear to be an excess of direct quotes – of either phrases or single words – this is intentional, given the context of the research approach employed, and serves to illustrate the mind-set, feelings and thoughts of the research participant. The masculine words 'He, Father, Lord, *et cetera*' are retained in order to indicate (and confirm) the frequency of which these words are used. As with any pursuit within

which people commonly engage, religion (and the different denominations) has developed its own 'lay language', a further reason for direct quotes. Once again these terms are defined in Appendix 7.

Although the impact of the church is being evaluated, so too is the influence of The Divine and the church being examined with regard to each individual participant. In the light of this the analysis is two pronged: organised per participant when necessary and per church when possible. Personal profiles and faith journey, perceptions of The Divine, understanding of *imago Dei*, self-perceptions and evaluations are presented per participant. Analysis for the churches from whom participants were drawn is presented under the following sub-sections:

➤ Perceptions of The Divine and of Mary

Based on Giddens' assertion that the making of self-identity is affected by factors which are often hidden and unconscious, and that agents are generally not aware of the effect that their views of The Divine could have, evidence of the influence of perceptions of The Divine are explored based on the doctrine of *Imago Dei*. Perceptions of The Divine in the life of the Christian believer – with special reference to gender perceptions – and their possible impact on identity formation are given priority. In order to establish individual perceptions of The Divine, I looked at the answers to the open questions dealing with the participants' personal experience and understanding of The Divine, both their recollections when they were young and their current adult views. Anthropomorphic vs ethereal perceptions of The Divine were considered significant with gender perceptions deemed to be more noteworthy for those who hold the former view. Perceptions of Mary, for those on whom she has an impact, were established in a similar way.

➤ As has been suggested in the literature review, perceptions of The Divine were (or could be) significant with regard to the self-identity and self-perception of the individual, based on the Christian doctrine of *Imago Dei*. For this reason it may not be only the way the research participants' perceived The Divine which was relevant, but also how they understood humanity as created in the image of The Divine. I looked for the research participants understanding of this concept, whether they saw any of the 'Image of The Divine' within

themselves and those around them, and whether or not these attributes were associated with gender stereotypes as understood by the participant.

- Based on the apparent congruence between church and society with regard to patriarchy and patriarchal structures, the influence of patriarchy was established through noting the degree of conformity with regard to patriarchy as it affects the participants. Patriarchal rule as applied within the church denies the *imago Dei* of women in terms of their right to choice, independence, responsibility and creativity, although they once again may not be aware of it. This information was obtained through examining:
 - Participants' understanding of the role of men and women in society
 - Their views on the relationship between husbands and wives
 - Their views on the inclusion of women as priests and Pastors (as leaders of a church)

Since identity is formed within the context of relationships the impact of relationships within the church, and the nature of these relationships, is also significant. In order to establish this I looked for participants' responses to questions dealing with their understanding of the Church, including their roles and relationships within the church. I also explored participants' understanding of the implications in their lives when they believed that The Divine was always present.

- Free choice - as a necessary component in creative expression and the making of self-identity - is also looked at. Participants' perceptions of the degree to which free choice is an option in their lives were established through exploring their understanding of what was required of them by The Divine (what, if anything they perceived to be 'God's will'), and their reaction if (and when) they disagreed with something in the church. I looked for reference to the Christian faith as being the only 'way of salvation'; that is 'being born again' and 'accepting Christ'; and their role of choice in the initiation of this relationship.

- In order to establish the power of the church in the lives of participants their response with regard to what they would have done if they had disagreed with their church was considered. Instances of incongruence between what they said they believed and what they understood their church's doctrine to be were considered significant, as was the view of participants with regard to the idea that only people belonging to 'their' denomination, or people who experience The Divine as taught by 'their' denomination, were people who had 'seen the light'.

- The area of self-perception was explored in the context of the participants' descriptions of themselves, their perceived view of others with regard to themselves (and whether or not they agreed with this view), what they liked and disliked about themselves, and who their role model had been/would be. Discursive awareness was established through an assessment of their willingness and ability to speak about themselves, while feelings of biographical continuity, purpose and self-worth were determined through an examination of their life story, as told during the interviews.

- The role of perceptions of The Divine (including Mary when appropriate), and the teaching of the Church with regard to the self-identity of research participants is evaluated in the light of the factors defining self-identity according to Giddens, namely:
 - Discursive and reflexive awareness of personhood and of self (beyond role and function)
 - Feelings of self-worth and self-esteem
 - Biographical continuity, sense of purpose and continuity in life
 - Sense of belonging and trust (in others, the Church and The Divine)
 - Perceived (or actual) freedom to choose and a Sense of freedom for creativity and creative expression; in as much as security provides the opportunity for free choice which in turn facilitates creativity and a sense of self-identity.

- The influence of patriarchal perceptions of The Divine, patriarchy in the Church and society, and perceptions of Mary – as hidden and unacknowledged

factors influencing identity – are evaluated in the light of perceptions of self, participants' personal gender-stereotypical perceptions in general, and their perceptions of The Divine with regard to perceived masculine and/or feminine traits. These masculine and/or feminine traits are considered to be of more relevance when the participant has an anthropomorphic perception of The Divine, as opposed to a 'spiritual/ethereal' or 'non-anthropomorphic' view.

More detailed analysis using the same criteria, but a different format, is presented as a separate addendum.

5.2. THE LIGHTHOUSE COMMUNITY CHURCH

5.2.1. Introduction to the Lighthouse Community Church

The Lighthouse Community Church met for worship services on a Sunday morning. The purpose of these services was corporate worship and teaching, and on occasion, prayer and ministry. At the time of the interviews the services were between two-and-a-half and three hours long, with no consideration of time constraints.

5.2.2. Observations during the Services

During the services attended at the Lighthouse Community Church The Divine was at all times referred to in masculine and/or patriarchal terms. Choruses were sung about 'the king', 'the Lord', 'The Father', and 'the master' while prayers addressed to The Divine used these same terms. Scriptures were also read with no reference to the feminine at all. No attempt was made to be gender inclusive in language, with reference neither to The Divine nor to the women who were present. Women were included in the terms 'man', 'brother', 'mankind' and 'Son's of God'. In all the Church literature available to me the same tendency was observed. The Divine was presented as One who was unchangeable, powerful, almighty, and righteous; the death and 'blood sacrifice' (Substitution Theory) of Jesus Christ being the means of atonement.

The congregants were encouraged to participate through free worship. Members were allowed to share what they believed to be a 'message from The Divine', after having

cleared it with someone delegated to the task of discernment. During a time of ministry, following the sermon, leaders and members prayed freely for one another and it appeared that many were visibly moved by these prayers.

The structure of the church facilitated this in that there was no boundary or barrier between the worshippers and those leading the service. The furniture, fittings, and equipment reflected a practical and modern approach to the nature and theology of the church with traditional structure and ritual abandoned in favour of informal and extemporary worship. There were no statues of Jesus, Mary, or the Saints and no evidence of the elements of Holy Communion. The walls were bare, with the exception of two banners. At the time of taking the photographs (2, 3& 4 of Appendix 6) these had been removed to be substituted by banners being made which were to reflect the mission of the Lighthouse Community Church.

There was, however, a clear distinction drawn between what was 'of God' and 'of the world', congregants being encouraged to 'draw aside from the world' and focus on The Divine, specifically the Holy Spirit. Confession of wrongdoing was facilitated through song and prayer and congregants were expected to bring their private confession to The Divine during this time.

All members of the Lighthouse Community Church also had to belong to a 'cell group' which met during the week. Teaching, pastoral care and accountability were facilitated through these groups.

5.3. INTRODUCTION TO THE PARTICIPANTS: PERSONAL PROFILES AND FAITH JOURNEY

The following – all of whom were (at the time of the interviews) congregants of the Lighthouse Community Church– are the selected research participants, according to the criteria noted in the methodology chapter. The context within which each participant currently lives, as well as a very brief history of their life/faith journey is presented. Most of their personal perceptions of The Divine are incorporated, but a more detailed report on the views of each participant can be found in the separate addendum accompanying this thesis.

5.3.1. Sue: Personal Profile and Faith Journey

Sue was thirty-nine years old, married, and had three young children. She had been a stay-at-home parent since the birth of her first child. She grew up in Zimbabwe, one of four children, in a very happy and secure home environment, but not what she would have called a 'Christian home'. As a teenager her previously close relationship with her mother fragmented, and although she believed The Divine had enabled her to forgive and had healed her emotionally, the relationship had never been quite the same. She qualified as a nursing sister, but once qualified realised that her choice was not as fulfilling as anticipated. She then registered for a degree in music - which was her hearts desire - and taught music until the birth of her first child.

She regularly attended a number of different churches during her childhood, and her perception of The Divine has changed over the years. Had she been asked as a young child to draw The Divine, her picture would have been based on the ornamental grandeur of the church she attended. At Sunday School she learnt to see The Divine of the Old Testament as one to be feared, while the Jesus of the New Testament was a "soft looking man"; which was also a learnt perception. Later her drawing would have been less anthropomorphic: "a sun or something – something bright and light–dispelling darkness and warming"; an image that was still most strong. As Sue experienced the Lighthouse Community Church tradition she said that she also perceived The Divine in "almost a shepherd image ... a sense of God guiding and leading ... a sense of dependence on Him ... while not being ... clear cut ... [or as] black and white ... ". The Divine had become more of a mystery for her, while at the same time being One on whom she could depend. Although there were times when Sue felt that The Divine had let her down, and that there had been times "when God had felt far away" she nevertheless knew that "... [he was] still a loving God and heavenly father to [her]". She also experienced The Divine as "a personal God" although at the same time "awesome, great and beyond understanding". Sue understood the doctrine of *imago Dei* as referring to the idea that human beings can reflect the attributes of The Divine.

Sue felt she had always had a "spiritual sensitivity", and could sense the presence of The Divine – even in the "dry Anglican Church" she regularly attended when young.

She said her confirmation (at twelve) was in her head and not her heart. However, when the bishop prayed for her she did feel "the most incredible joy and [a] warmth just flooded [her] body". She saw this as "a hook in her heart" and was later "baptised in the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues ...". She said she "never doubted her salvation after that". She had been a member of the Lighthouse Community Church for over ten years, was very involved in church activities, and attended church regularly. She was of the opinion that her understanding of the doctrine and teaching of the Lighthouse Community Church was "very good".

Sue said that Mary had not played much of role in her life, and that in the Lighthouse Community Church Mary hardly got a mention. However, she had often thought what an amazing woman Mary must have been. When asked to describe Mary she related a number of traits, including gentleness, graciousness, kindness, sadness, self-giving, strength and wisdom. She also described Mary as mother, mother of Jesus and mother of God.

Sue said that she was a shy child, but "not in an inadequate sort of sense". Later, in spite of having had a stable upbringing, she felt that she did not have "a high self-esteem", and felt "socially awkward". Although she was top of her class she felt that she was always in the shadow of her brother, "who was brilliant". When relationships failed she did not always have the tenacity to try again, but she said she thought that this was linked to her low self-esteem.

She saw herself as quite quiet and reserved, not much of a party person, and enjoyed smaller groups of people. She wished she could be more orderly in what she did so that she could feel she was a bit more "in control". While she could be very disciplined in some areas, she could be very un-disciplined in others.

She said that as she had gotten older she had grown to like herself; the knowledge that she was loved by The Divine having given her a sense of self-worth and changed her focus. While she loved the academic side of things she had become more aware "that God had a purpose" for her life. She added that the teaching of the Church had made her grow into more of what she was meant to be, becoming more certain of herself and stretching her beyond herself. She said that the biggest changes in her feelings of

contentment, self-worth, significance, happiness and hope were related to her having joined the Lighthouse Community Church. She had also grown in her dependence of The Divine, empathy, ability to forgive, and friendliness. She considered herself less reserved, less afraid of The Divine, and better tempered. She also said that she "had seen characteristics of God grow in her life" and that she was often able to respond with a compassion which would not be according to her natural instinct. Being "just a mom", gave her an outlet for love and kindness, although she could be impatient at times. She could also be a bit selfish and was not always ready to meet needs outside the home. She wished she had a greater capacity to reach out.

She enjoyed her creativity with regard to music – which at that stage was on hold - and the fact that she had an ability to see things through, although she felt that with regard to her creativity much was held back and she wished she could reach her full potential. She also said that she thought The Divine had not allowed her to be the typical moody creative musician-type person, and she was a happier person because of that.

When asked who she would choose to identify with in terms of a biblical character or saint she answered: "I've always enjoyed the feisty women in the Bible – Ruth and Abigail and Ester have always appealed to me ... maybe someone like Ester – she was stunning and she was beautiful ... she really made a huge change – I mean, she saved her nation". Sue acknowledged that Ester moved outside of what was considered the norm of her day.

5.3.2. Carol: Personal Profile and Faith Journey

Carol was a middle-aged part-time homemaker, part-time clerk, the oldest of two children, married and had teenage children. Both her parents had had an input in her upbringing, although she mentioned that she was close to her father. She considered herself to have been a generally happy child and to have had a "pretty un-traumatic" life. Apart from the expectation that she would marry and have a family, she was allowed freedom of choice with regard to decisions for her future.

As a child there was an awareness of The Divine in her home, in Carol's words: "God was always there because other people said so". As a child she would have drawn what she had seen in pictures: a man with "... sort of long hair and white robe ...". Her first recalled personal experience of the existence of The Divine was when she prayed – at age twelve or thirteen – for her dog to be healed – "and it was". Her most significant experience of The Divine was when she was Baptised in the Spirit in her early twenties, this experience having opened the doors to a whole new realm of experience. Since then she had been aware of the ongoing involvement of The Divine in her life through having provided for her and having made a difference in the lives of people around her. At the time of the interviews she said that she didn't "have any perception of his face – just an incredible light – nothing – just a holiness"; a caring Being, but balanced by an "awesomeness".

She described The Divine as one with authority; great and big, saying: "God is awesome and holy" and not one to be "messed with", but honoured and respected. With regard to her personal relationship with The Divine, Carol maintained: "To me God has always been incredibly faithful so I see him as a father, I think", then continued to describe her struggle to relate to The Divine as "Daddy" (or Abba) - because of the ambivalence she experienced with regard to the holiness issue: The Divine was approachable yet could not be "casually" approached. Carol believed that being created in the image of The Divine implied that human beings had the potential to evidence the nature of The Divine in their lives.

She was one of the founder members of the Lighthouse Community Church, having been a member for more than twenty years. As an employee and a deacon, she was very involved in the day-to-day running of her church, and she felt that she played a pivotal role. She attended church at least three times a month and rated her understanding of her church's doctrine and teaching as excellent. Carol said that, as a protestant, Mary had played absolutely no role in her faith experience. She was the mother of Jesus and nothing else.

Carol did not see herself as particularly outgoing or good in crowds, and sometimes felt threatened by others. She said that she was the "sort of person that live[d] a lot in her emotions" so found it difficult when others were suffering. She had always "had

this thing of wanting to be useful and [was] happy ... to be helpful"; this being something which she thought was a result of the gratitude she felt toward The Divine for all that The Divine had given her. Her sense of belonging to The Divine made her feel secure and gave her a sense of purpose and a sense of belonging. Living within what she believed was The Divine's purpose for her life made her feel content and fulfilled, loved, significant and worthy. She was aware that she "hadn't arrived" but was on a journey – however the journey was a positive one, filled with hope. She enjoyed her sense of humour, and that she was there for her children. She liked the fact that she was able to relate to all ages, to care for, and encourage others.

As a Christian she believed she had a role in society "to be proactive for things that [were] right", although she felt she didn't manage to do as much as she would have liked. She was prepared to try new tasks and spent a lot of time in self-assessment. If she felt she had failed she was able to move on – but only after a few days of "acute embarrassment ... self-denigration ... and a bit of confidence loss as well". She felt that sometimes she lacked perseverance, being "a great starter, but not a great finisher". She said she could be a bit abrupt and insensitive and did not enjoy interference in her areas of responsibility. She would have liked to be less judgemental and critical and more accepting of people.

5.3.3. Pearl: Personal Profile and Faith Journey

Pearl was the older daughter born to a mother who worshipped in an Anglican Church and a father who was Roman Catholic. She had been raised in a Christian home and referred to herself as having been a "practicing Catholic" and "earnest about her religion". She considered herself to have been close to both her mother and her father, each having had an equal influence on her life, and recalled that she had been a happy child. She married late in life, was a widow, and had an adult son.

Her religious education was very severe – at age six or seven having to go to Mass and sit quietly, without even a smile; a nun watching their every move. As was common in Roman Catholic teaching, she experienced The Divine as being present in the Blessed Sacrament, and if she wanted to pray, she "went to visit Jesus in the church" (although this did not excluded private prayer). She recalled an experience

when, during her first year at school, the pupils were taken to the chapel attached to the convent, saying: "one day we went to the chapel – we waited – I was waiting for something to happen but obviously we'd just gone there for a visit ... nothing happened". Communion was another time when she felt that there should be more, and said: "When I came back from Communion I would want to cry ... but no-one else cried so I couldn't". These feelings of disappointment and of expectation not met were to become a feature of her life, until she found what she referred to as "the more" of The Divine as offered by the charismatic movement.

As a former member of the Roman Catholic Church, Pearl had two identifiable perceptions of The Divine. While belonging to the Roman Catholic Church she feared The Divine who was, in her understanding, "mighty, awesome [and] sovereign"; and focused on the reverence and respect due to The Divine – "The Father out there ... with a big beard and sitting on a throne ...". In this sense it would seem Pearl had a very anthropomorphic picture of The Divine – but not accessible. However, while The Divine was out there somewhere, Mary was far more approachable, and she "... prayed to Mary rather than to The Father" since Mary was presented as the one who would understand human loss and human need. Pearl was also taught that if she wanted something of The Divine she should ask Mary to ask the Father on her behalf; "just as a child who wants something of their father asks mommy to ask him".

Since her transfer to the charismatic movement Mary had been "replaced" by the Holy Spirit and she considered her exposure to the Holy Spirit (through Baptism of the Spirit) as having been the most exciting revelation in her Christian belief. Pearl's experience of her relationship with The Divine had also undergone many changes. The Host had been indicative of her relationship and "oneness" with The Divine, but since having been a member of the Lighthouse Community Church she felt that the experience of worship had brought "the presence of Christ". Pearl also referred to The Divine in more personal terms, saying that she thought of The Divine as "Abba", one who "like a father, slows his footsteps down for his toddlers ...". In similar vein she said she perceived the relationship as one in which The Divine indulges humanity and said that "he uses us but at the same time ... he doesn't put the full burden on us ... we are very nicely trying to help daddy – but he takes the full responsibility on himself ... he sort of let's us think we're helping him". *Imago Dei* meant that The Divine had

imbued humanity with the Spirit of The Divine, that the agent has a free will, but a responsibility to lead others into relationship with The Divine.

Although she "missed" Mary she did think that "looking back with new eyes" the role of Mary "smack[ed] of ... idolatry and ... superstition". On the other hand Pearl said that it was "a shame" that in the Lighthouse Community Church Mary [was] almost ignored. Significantly, when I asked Pearl to brainstorm the word 'Mother', "Mother Mary" was her first association, in spite of the fact that she had been outside of the Roman Catholic Church for twenty years, and at no point in the third interview had we discussed Mary at all. Pearl said she would have described Mary as "kind, motherly, beautiful, soft, gentle, ... all the lovely feminine – a beautiful kind lady". She did however regret that in the Roman Catholic Church "Mary [was] really pushed ... the Holy Spirit was being pushed out and Mary had been put in his place". However, Mary remained significant to Pearl with regard to her salvation experience. She said she recalls praying to Mary and stating in very strong terms her desire to "follow" and "love" Jesus, and that she wanted to be Mary, and Jesus' child.

At the time of the interviews Pearl had been member of the Lighthouse Community Church for more than twenty years. She considered herself to be an "involved" member and attended church at least three times per month. She was of the opinion that she had a good understanding of her church's doctrine and teaching.

As a child Pearl recalls being shy, stiff and formal, but "friendly with her friends". She said she had always been cheerful and that she "... didn't dislike [herself]". Pearl felt that she was someone who tried to toe the line and who usually got caught if she didn't. She associated this with being Roman Catholic saying: "the protestant ones were more relaxed – freer somehow".

She said she had become "lighter in spirit" and more outgoing. Although she described herself as quiet and did not see any leadership qualities in herself, she had often been the one to initiate the formation of a group or who had taken the initiative to do what she thought was best. She also said that her confidence was improving, implying that that was a recent development, but there was evidence of confidence earlier in her life.

She saw herself as very earnest about what she tackled and always aware of the responsibility that went with where she found herself in life. She described herself as empathetic and compassionate, intense, conservative yet open-minded, and emotional but also logical. She felt she was not very organised and wished she did not procrastinate as much as she did.

When asked if there was a Saint or biblical character with whom she would have liked to identify she replied: "Well Mother Theresa's rather marvellous", but Ruth and Ester also came to mind because of talks she had heard about women in the Bible.

5.3.4. Len: Personal Profile and Faith Journey

Len was born one of six children and believed that he had had a good relationship with his parents, and that they were good parents. His mother had had more influence in his life until the age of about 10, at which time his father also became involved. He said that he was fairly obedient as a child and although his parents were strict, there had been no real problems with regard to discipline. His early years were very happy, while his teenage years were slightly less so. He was allowed a great deal of free choice with regard to decisions relating to his future. Len was married and the father of adult children.

He considered his upbringing to have been marginally Christian in orientation. His first recalled experience of The Divine occurred at about age ten when, during a Sunday School class, he indicated his desire to meet Jesus. Although not a permanent commitment, it had had an impact and was later followed by a further dedication of his life during an evangelical rally. About two years later he experienced a Baptism in The Spirit, and had since experienced the power of The Divine in that he believed he had been physically healed, as had a number of other people after he had prayed for them. At the time of his Baptism in The Spirit he was in his first year in full-time ministry in a mainline denomination, a ministry he later left because of doctrinal differences; specifically the issue of women as ministers, and to a lesser degree, Baptism in the Spirit.

As a child Len had a very strong anthropomorphic view of The Divine and grew up with an image of The Divine as "a man sitting on a throne with a crown on his head and a sceptre in his hand". The Divine was one to be feared. However, at the time of his response to The Divine he realised that it was all about grace and not about trying to live a good life. The Divine Being was one who sought to bless and give fullness of life and who really did love and care. He added that he no longer saw The Divine in concrete terms, but related "to him on a spirit level". Mary had not played a role in Len's faith experience; he had "just seen her as the mother of Jesus – nothing more, nothing less than that ...".

He still saw The Divine as "majestic", "sovereign", "omnipotent", "on a throne" and as "ruler", these ideas remaining consistent with his earlier image of the throne, crown and sceptre. These concepts were, for Len, masculine in nature. Although his first association with the word 'God' was that of father, he did not at any time refer to himself as a child in relationship with The Divine. Being created in the image of The Divine meant having the "characteristics of God", but which were only manifest when in relationship with The Divine.

Len had been a member of the Lighthouse Community Church for nearly 20 years, and was a cell group leader. He attended church at least three or more times per month and said that he was very involved in the life of his church. He rated his understanding of the doctrine and teaching of his church as "excellent".

Len described himself as having been a quiet and reserved child, probably shy in some ways. In spite of not enjoying being "up front" he had overcome this and managed as head-boy of his school and later as a minister of religion. He was able to take the lead, particularly in the Lighthouse Community Church situation. He was involved in the hospitality industry, a role which necessitated his interaction with strangers. He said he was content with his own company and could become preoccupied in his own interests.

He considered himself to be loyal, and would not bend to external pressure. Len could also be decisive, something which he said his wife enjoyed about him. Although he liked things to be organised and could be a perfectionist, he was able to make

allowances for those around him who had different standards. He did not "suffer fools gladly" but had learnt not to show his irritation. He had also learnt to control and overcome a violent temper, which according to him was the influence of The Divine working in his life.

If he could change something in himself he would have wanted to be even more caring, patient and understanding, and to have been able to deal graciously with differences. If he could have chosen a Saint or a Biblical character with whom to identify it would have been the Apostle John "because he was a man filled with the love of God".

5.3.5. Oscar: Personal Profile and Faith Journey

Oscar was the only child of older parents and was raised alongside a grandchild from his father's first marriage. Both his parents were equally involved in his upbringing and he considered himself to have had quite a happy childhood in a generally Christian home, although church attendance was not a common occurrence. He was given little choice with regard to his future and the expectations of his parents forced him into an occupation in a financial institution, something which he never wanted to do and never enjoyed. He would have preferred something outdoors. He was married but had no children and had taken early retirement.

As a child, Oscar would have described God as "one who [was] a father, someone who [was] there for you" a "loving father ... with a deep concern for his creation", while at the same time being "enormous ... magnificent ... just big ...". The awareness of this "largeness" had developed over time and was "uppermost in [his] mind"; using words such as "omnipotent, omnipresent, loving, upright, true, [and] straight". He was amazed that "such a great God" had concern for him, and even for the smallest of desert flowers. A further perception of The Divine revolved around the human emotions of joy and humour, something which in his opinion was an interaction between the members of the Godhead (the Trinity). *Imago Dei* bestowed both eternal life, and a sense of earthly purpose, to humanity. Mary had had no role in Oscar's faith experience, his focus always having "been on Jesus". His most

significant spiritual experience was his Baptism in The Spirit, an event which was accompanied by the gift of "singing in the spirit".

He initially chose to worship in an Anglican church, because "everything was done decently and in order". He offered himself for full time ministry in the Anglican Church during his early twenties, but considered it fortunate that they suggested he wait a year, since during that year he attended a renewal conference in Johannesburg, after which he joined the Lighthouse Community Church where he had been a member for more than twenty years. He attended church at least three times a month, said he was very involved in church activities and considered himself to have a very good understanding of his church's doctrine and teaching.

He and his wife were recently involved in full-time mission projects in two countries overseas. Although they went with their church's covering, they were not sent by their church. Had they been sent by their church they would have received financial support. Having their churches "covering" meant that the church approved of what they were doing, but did not support them financially. Oscar's time in mission proved to be very costly, emotionally and financially, and he regretted not having attempted to get more spiritual support from his home church during that time.

Oscar said he did not often think about himself, so talking about his perception of himself was not easy. He said he hadn't, not even to himself, tried to voice how he felt about himself: "... I just in a sense take day-by-day". When asked if he 'liked' who he was he answered: "I really don't try to think about myself – but I am also [pause] in many ways I'm a [pause] do a lot of dreaming – if this or if that ...". When asked what words best described himself, he replied: "In some ways I still feel a little bit mixed up in that ... I still in a sense ... I suppose conflict - wondering ... whether I couldn't have done better in my life ... but [after a long pause] I think [pause] I'm happy with where I am at the moment in God". [The disjointed nature of these quotes are given as an indication of Oscar's difficulty in speaking about himself. The words that have been omitted were his attempts to think of what to say, for for example ugh, umm, aah, *et cetera*]

Without the input of The Divine he thought he might have gone off on his "own imaginations". The person in the Bible with whom he would have liked to identify was David (a king in Hebrew Scripture under whose leadership the Israelites were said to be very powerful, but who also committed adultery) because The Divine had said of David that "he's a man after my own heart", although he said that he identified with David in as much as David was a sinner. In addition, Oscar identified with Peter, a New Testament apostle who was reportedly renowned for his tendency to speak without thinking in that he sometimes spoke without thinking.

Oscar also said that he was not really a "group person" – but he was not sure if he was an introvert. He felt he could be very compassionate, but, above all, he said he had "a serving heart"; and enjoyed working with people, helping and serving them. He found "great satisfaction in helping people", although at times he found it difficult to relate to people's suffering. He said he was more comfortable in the company of older people and while he felt that he could be very patient, he was also inclined to "explode" when things got too much.

He felt that he was the type of person who could not easily ask for help, but preferred to struggle through things himself. He wished he could be more practical, that he could avoid procrastinating and that he was able to see through to the end projects which he had begun. If he failed he questioned himself, and asked of The Divine "why, why did I not succeed?". He also felt devastated and tried to put it behind him and "just keep on living life". At the time of the interview he said he just felt "dead".

5.3.6. Gus: Personal Profile and Faith Journey

Gus was a semi-retired artisan in his seventies. He had been divorced, was remarried, and was a father. Gus said that his mother had been the primary influence in his life; his father – who left home when Gus was a young adult - having been too busy. He said he had been a generally well-behaved and happy child/teenager. Although he did well at school, he had to leave before he could matriculate, because of his father's lack of interest. He was given a degree of choice with regard to decisions affecting his future, but these were limited to the area of following a trade. He was quite a good sportsman.

In what he considered to have been a home which was reasonably Christian in orientation, his awareness of The Divine was initially as a result of his mother who used to take him to Sunday School. His consciousness of The Divine was maintained through the ministry of a local minister who made church a fun place to be, and presented the Christian way of life as one of joy. Although he had later suffered a number of set backs and disappointments with leaders in the church, he maintained his commitment, and said that he hardly ever missed a Church service.

He had been a congregant in a number of denominations and church congregations, including Baptist, Methodist, Anglican and the Lighthouse Community Church. Some of these he had belonged to because of convenience (locality), others because of his wife, and others because of circumstance. Gus considered his introduction into the charismatic movement as the start of his enlightenment and in his opinion the Lighthouse Community Church was biblically based and taught Jesus.

Gus had always held that The Divine – as creator of all – was "just too big" and could only be described by "all the superfluous [sic superlatives] [one could] think of" and that The Divine "could never be compared to anything". He was however aware of the caring, love and forgiveness of The Divine; "... the wonder of it all ... his pity ... his concern that we are going off the rails ...". He related incidences when he had felt that The Divine had taken a personal interest in his life – and intervened in ways that were practical and possibly life-saving. He said that he trusted The Divine implicitly for his material needs and "couldn't care less if he died". His understanding of *imago Dei* was complicated by anthropomorphic implications, and the fact that, for him, divine attributes are only gifts from The Divine and not a reflection of The Divine. Mary had had no significance in his spiritual experience, although he did associate the traits of gentleness, kindness and self-giving with her.

He had been a member of the Lighthouse Community Church for over ten years but was only marginally involved in church activities. He considered himself to have an excellent understanding of the doctrine and teaching of the Lighthouse Community Church.

It was not easy for Gus to speak about himself. He was unsure of many attributes in that he dismissed or 'explained away' most of what he said. He described himself as an average child, but also thought he had potential as a leader and an academic. He said that he preferred not to be "number one" and this was initially attributed to a lack of confidence but then he suggested that his "lack of confidence might have been a little laziness".

When asked what he liked about himself he replied that he tried to be honest, but because he felt The Divine was watching him. He was aware of what he called "evil" around him, but felt he did not have the capacity to do anything about it; he had no influence because according to him, one needed wealth in order to have an influence.

His role model would have been "a decent chap", while the biblical character with whom he would have liked to identify was David because of his bravery and also because David was loved by God in spite of his weakness.

5.4. LIGHTHOUSE COMMUNITY CHURCH: PERCEPTIONS OF THE DIVINE (AND MARY)

Common to all research participants worshiping at the Lighthouse Community Church was a perception of The Divine as both ethereal –"a sun or something – something bright and light– dispelling darkness and warming", "just an incredible light – nothing – just a holiness", related to "on a spirit level" – and immense: "awesome, great and beyond understanding", "majestic", "sovereign", "omnipotent", "magnificent ... just big" and "could never be compared to anything".

In spite of this awesomeness The Divine was revealed and encountered, through the Holy Spirit, as a relational Divine Being with agency to act in creation and the lives of human beings. This relationship was generally characterised by the experience of The Divine as forgiving, loving and caring - one who sought to bless and give fullness of life, who really did love and care, and with a deep concern for creation. The Divine was also dependable, 'almost a shepherd image' engendering the feeling of being led and guided through life.

The most outstanding feature of the nature of the relationship between The Divine and research participants was that of a parent; The Divine as a loving and heavenly father who leads, who is faithful, approachable, and who, 'like a father, slows his footsteps down for his toddlers ...'. However, The Divine retains authority, remains holy, is approachable but not to be 'casually' approached, one to be respected, not 'messed with' but honoured,

All of the research participants referred to The Divine in purely masculine terms – a combination of "Father", 'Lord' and 'He'; members of the Lighthouse Community Church being specifically taught to perceive The Divine as a heavenly father. At no time was there a conscious awareness that The Divine could be perceived as anything but masculine. This was in spite of the fact that for many participants a number of the attributes (unconsciously) associated with The Divine were, in their personal understanding and experience, more feminine than masculine.

There appeared to be no teaching with regard to Mary, except as the human mother of Jesus. In line with this, there was no evidence of Mary being part of the current spiritual experience of participants from the Lighthouse Community Church. However there was an awareness of Mary; perceived as an amazing woman, gentle, gracious, kind, self-giving, strong and wise, kind, motherly, beautiful, soft, gentle, but sad.

In summary; the general trend of believers in the Lighthouse Community Church was to perceive The Divine as one who was too great to be described; although it was also possible to identify a relational awareness, albeit ambiguous in nature. For most of the participants The Divine was both a personal ally and father, but also sovereign and demanding of respect. Together with this relational awareness was the feeling of being cared for and of being secure within the relationship with The Divine.

5.5. LIGHT HOUSE COMMUNITY CHURCH :*IMAGO DEI*

For Sue, Carol, Oscar, Len and Gus the image of The Divine was evidenced in the attributes and nature of The Divine in the life of human beings, including being loving, caring, slow to anger, full of mercy, fair, joyful, righteous, compassionate and creative - and the potential for believers to express these qualities. However, these

attributes were not automatic. Their expression became stronger as one's relationship with The Divine deepened. For Gus they were gifts from The Divine.

For both Carol and Pearl their "*imago Dei*" needed to be expressed in relationships with others, while Oscar felt that his *imago Dei* was linked to his purpose in life. Only Pearl and Gus referred to the implication of The Divine having "made us like himself – as a spirit"; but not as "clones"; as The Divine having "put his life into us ... [making us] part of the eternal". The only anthropomorphic references came from Gus whose initial reaction to the question was confusion, saying: "... if that was the case, how are we generated into Chinese, Japanese, Indians, Zulu's, Xhosa's – how do we manage to get in these different ... I just accept it, I don't try to understand it".

Although the only directly anthropomorphic reference to the doctrine of *imago Dei* was from Gus, most other responses indicate an identification with The Divine in terms of potential attributes and personality traits which can be evidenced in the agent's lives. Only two respondents referred to the spiritual, eternal implications of *imago Dei*. This would imply that this doctrine has the potential to influence the making of identity in the life of the Christian believer, once again in a hidden, unconscious way.

5.6. LIGHTHOUSE COMMUNITY CHURCH: PATRIARCHY

Fundamental teaching of the Lighthouse Community Church with regard to the relationship between women and men revolved around patriarchy and patriarchal issues. The Divine was "Father", the husband was the head of the home, and the male represented the authority of The Divine on earth.

5.6.1. The Divine as Father

As mentioned, The Divine was at all times referred to in masculine terms. With regard to the "fatherhood" of The Divine, the teaching was that The Divine **is** Father; as opposed to The Divine being like a father. Carol confirmed the extent to which her church presented The Divine in patriarchal parental terms.

God is easy for me to approach because I have a good relationship with my dad – but sometimes when we've done a [alter] call to relate to Father they've actually had to heal – go through inner healing - with the person concerned in his own relationship with his dad and change his conception of a father before he could actually come to God the Father

Oscar also referred to The Divine in masculine terms, and as a father who was "there for you" and who cared. His sense of "belonging" to The Divine engendered in him a desire to once again be like "a little child ... with his father". Pearl perceived The Divine as Abba Father and Sue related to The Divine as "a loving God and heavenly father".

5.6.2. Women and Men in the Church

According to the policy of the Lighthouse Community Church only a man could be the Pastor of the church, a preacher, a cell-group leader and/or a member of the Eldership. It was considered a wife's role to be supportive of their husbands in their leadership role; her ministry – if any - being 'woman to woman'. Carol agreed with this approach and saw her role in the church as encouraging and "looking after" people – sort of "mothering them". She could have imagined women caring for other women, but would "have a problem with a woman being a head of the church". She would not have been able to "relate to that church"; having always been taught that leadership was "not really a woman's role ...".

However, the rest of the participants were ambivalent with regard to this teaching. Sue was of the opinion that women could, and did have, a valid role to play as Pastors and priests, but accepted the views of her church in this area because it was "not something [she] particularly [felt] called to". Gus expressed the conviction that he was quite happy for women to be priests or ministers, since "... the story that the Bible says men only is nonsense – [women] were priests in the early days so it doesn't bother me at all – if she's got a calling then she gets to be made a priest ...". Pearl was of the opinion that it would be a "very good idea" for women to be ordained; in fact she thought they "could probably do better in some instances". Even Len agreed. Since leaving the mainline church in which he was training to become an ordained

minister he said he had heard women preach and his views on women as Pastors or priests were in the process of change. He did, however, add the proviso that - in spite of what he had seen in terms of women's competency - he was of the opinion that "if a woman [was] in a Pastoral role then she [needed] to be in a place of submission to men nevertheless, and not try to be on her own – because she [was] too vulnerable". It was his experience that women could be too emotional and not objective enough, and that aberrations of the truth have crept in when women had been alone in leadership. Although he admitted that some men could also be "pretty weak leaders" he claimed he had found that "women [tended] to go that way ...".

5.6.3. Wives and Husbands

There was broad agreement and acquiescence with regard to the required patriarchal nature of the structure of the family.

Although Sue experienced her role in the home as pivotal, as being "responsible for just shifting the things that are important into a bit more focus", and holding the view that as far as she was concerned husbands and wives were "a team together in marriage", she maintained that "the husband was the head of the home in that he had the ultimate ... authority ...", and that primary responsibility lay on him. She also considered him the "spiritual head of the home".

Carol believed that her husband was the head of the home and she had to submit to him. As she saw it, one did not submit to one's husband because "he was right in your estimation but one submit[ed] to him because it was biblical". She also felt that women were to a large extent the pivotal point around which the family functioned, but saw this as "holding things together ... organising things so that the kids don't get in the way of dad and dad knows what the kids are doing ...".

Although Pearl held her own opinions with regard to the role of women and men, she did identify men as being in authority, being decisive and having power. However, there was no point at which she referred to men as being in control of any aspect of her own life, or of having to defer to them.

With regard to his role in the family, Len stated that he was "the head of [his] household and therefore [had] spiritual authority ...". For him, this meant that he had to take responsibility for his family, meet their needs and care for them. He was reluctant to admit to times when he may have needed them, but did concede that although it was not often necessary, he had received support from his wife.

Oscar said that his role in the family was "obviously ... being the head of the family" and that the biggest influence of the Lighthouse Community Church had been in this area. This role included being the family priest and caring for his wife "as Jesus [cared for] the church". He considered it a "bad thing" if women were to dominate and want their own way.

Gus confirmed the approach that as the male he should be the leader in the home. However, he interpreted this differently to the other participants in that he said: "I love going to our church because we are being taught that the husband is the leader in the house, that the wife is not an underling - she is his equal ... but she's seen differently". However, he was unable to lead family prayers (an integral aspect of being the spiritual head of the home). He also mentioned that there were times when he had "followed her [his wife] in her choice of a church" but added: "we're a team – I have to follow if I think she's doing the right thing ...". He also called himself blessed because she "nagged him" about certain areas of his life. On the other hand it was clear that she did not support his participation in this research, but he volunteered anyway.

5.6.4. Summary

The above confirms that patriarchal structures are well established in the Lighthouse Community Church and that these values are – in the main, at least in theory - being adhered to. In the light of Giddens assertion that identity formation can be affected by unacknowledged factors, it would appear that patriarchal ideals are being reflexively taught, adhered to and generally perpetuated, but with a hint of possible change to the principles currently accepted when it is realised that in reality, these principles are undergoing a slow transformation.

5.7. LIGHTHOUSE COMMUNITY CHURCH: A PLACE OF COMMUNITY, RELATIONSHIP, CONTINUITY AND TRUST

Community and relationship – with each other and The Divine - featured strongly in the lives of members of the Lighthouse Community Church, and for most participants this was a positive and affirming experience. Although for Carol the presence of The Divine was both comforting and "scary"; so too was being outside of relationship with The Divine "the most scary thing [she could] imagine". However, for Len the idea of community offered nothing.

For most, attending church was no longer a duty or a ritual but had become fun and life-changing. Members found in the Lighthouse Community Church a sense of purpose, a place of hope, healing and encouragement, and an assurance that they were never alone. Relationships between the members were covenantal in nature and characterised by care, support, counsel, acceptance and love, and according to Oscar, the Lighthouse Community Church was a body of believers which could be depended upon and that one could "go to in a crisis, even if it's two o'clock in the morning".

The result of the nature of these relationships was that research participants felt very comfortable, secure and unafraid. The Lighthouse Community Church was also a place where, for Oscar, insecurities became less severe, and for Carol a place where her "incredibly low self-image" was transformed, through the lives of others and through the Holy Spirit, and where she came to see herself as "somebody of worth". Len was of the opinion that his whole life had been "moulded by [his] relationships within the body", while Pearl's entry into the Charismatic movement revolved around the relationships she had with other "born again believers".

However, not only were relationships between members meaningful and important. Research participants (except Gus) also enjoyed a positive and enriching experience with The Divine. For Len Christianity was "a relationship not a religion"; the covenant relationship between members of the church being extended to one's relationship with The Divine. Carol believed that The Divine had created human beings in order to have fellowship with humanity. Sue felt that "Sunday and Monday Faith" were the same, that is, being a Christian believer entailed an ongoing, all

embracing relationship with The Divine; this sense of community and trust in The Divine being facilitated within the church.

However, Gus' experience did not resonate with the above but was, in fact, an almost unpleasant reality. He had been taught by the Lighthouse Community Church that each person was an essential aspect of the body, with reference to the Christian ecclesiastical concept of the Church as the Body of Christ on earth, but he was of the opinion that he was not adequately involved. He expressed feelings of incompetence, inferiority and of letting The Divine down because he was not able to preach or teach as many others did, saying, "You know, I sit in the congregation sometimes – and I've actually said this to somebody the other day – you know I feel once again ... you know I feel a failure ... I don't volunteer to go up and pray - I just feel inadequate – I do – I shouldn't do ...". He said that he found himself confused when he thought about his belonging to the church and to The Divine. With regard to his sense of belonging to The Divine he said: I'm apologising to the Lord all day long because [if] something goes wrong and I use a word I shouldn't ... the wonder of it all [being that The Divine] bothers about us at all".

On the other hand, Gus had spoken of times when he was involved in the life of a church and he had been comfortable with his association with the members of that church. In looking for possible reasons I looked for what was not reported. An interesting missing link was that he made no mention of being Baptised in the Spirit, the one event which was normally very important to all members of Charismatic churches. This could have hindered his integration into the Lighthouse Community Church, and be an indication – in principle - of the degree to which conformity is necessary if an individual is to feel part of a specific church community.

Overall it seemed that participants belonging to the Lighthouse Community Church enjoyed the security of relationships which could be depended on, both with The Divine and fellow believers. The experience and teaching of the church was not restricted to Sundays, but permeated all aspects of life, providing a sense of continuity and purpose in life.

5.8. FREEDOM OF CHOICE AND CREATIVE EXPRESSION

None of the research participants were – at the time of the interviews - aware of any restrictions on their lives that they were not able to accommodate. Although they did not agree with all the rules and doctrines of the Lighthouse Community Church, they still felt they were able to belong to the community of the Lighthouse Community Church. On the whole, being in relationship with The Divine and belonging to the Lighthouse Community Church were the consequence of free choice, even if this choice had been in response to a directive from The Divine. However this did not mean that there was acquiescence on issues which may have been hidden and unacknowledged.

Sue did not experience the presence of The Divine as something which was inhibiting, controlling or judgemental, but rather a comfort, and felt that both The Divine and her have had a part to play in the fact that she was a Christian. However, she had given up her academic and teaching career - which she enjoyed - in favour of being a full-time mother, in line with the teaching of the Lighthouse Community Church. At times she felt unfulfilled, and had to remind herself that she was moulding the lives of her children.

Carol believed that God had chosen her, but that she had had an option with regard to a response. She also felt that "the church [had] given [her] a purpose for living" and that she belonged to the church where she worshipped because The Divine had called her there. However, once this choice was made and she aligned herself with the Lighthouse Community Church she lost her "voice" in the home and the church, "submission having been drummed into us".

Although choice was at the centre of Pearl's understanding of *imago Dei* she felt that she had had no choice in being a Christian, having been born into a Roman Catholic home. This went together with her conviction that The Divine had chosen her. She had, nevertheless, exercised free choice when she chose to leave the Roman Catholic Church to join the Lighthouse Community Church but felt compelled to show people "this new way" with the same passion and conviction she showed when she had argued for others to convert to Catholicism.

At no time did Oscar indicate that he was aware of any degree of free choice. He was of the opinion that The Divine had chosen him and that it was "just by grace" that he had been saved. He also believed that Scripture, as opposed to an internal referential source, held all the answers to life's questions and moral issues. He said he would be opposed to homosexual priests - "but not – personal – but on Scriptural grounds" and that his views of women as priests and Pastors "came from scriptures", and he explained it as follows: "I feel scripture said women [should] not in that sense be over men - God [had] put an order in society by which man [was] in a sense to be the priest". He belonged to the Lighthouse Community Church because he believed it to be "the expression of the Body of Christ" and would not leave the church unless he felt The Divine was telling him to do so, and it would have needed to be "on Scriptural grounds". Changes happening in the church were – according to Oscar – "an attempt to hear God in the situation", and not human decision. With regard to his career, which was not the career of his choice and in which he "was never ... particularly happy ..." – he only took early retirement to follow what he believed was a call from the Divine, as revealed through Scripture.

Len maintained that The Divine had chosen to be in relationship with him, since he had nothing in himself that would have chosen relationship with The Divine. He said the church had always had a major influence in his life and that he now felt integrated and accepted at the Lighthouse Community Church. He nevertheless argued that human beings did have the capacity for choice, suffering often being the consequence of human decision. He said he held his own opinions and that he had never been one to "go with the flow". When he had disagreed with the mainline church in which he was a full time minister, in that they were accepting women for ordination, he expressed his views, was not prepared to compromise and eventually left the church. Since then he had reviewed his opinion and felt that women could be ordained, and although this was not consistent with the views of the Lighthouse Community Church he showed no indication of any need to challenge the church leaders with regard to this issue.

Gus also believed that The Divine had given humanity the gift of free choice but it did not seem that he enjoyed this privilege. He referred to Scripture as a source of knowing what was right and wrong, and said that he enjoyed the Lighthouse

Community Church because they went according to the Bible. But he appeared to live in fear of The Divine in that he believed that he was under the constant surveillance of a judgemental and controlling Divine Being. This could be seen in his reply to a question regarding self-identity. He said that one of the things he liked about himself was that he tried to be honest but added "... if I've got any ... thoughts about doing the wrong thing – then I think – no – it's not right ... maybe because I feel God's watching me at all times ... and maybe that is what has been my saving grace ... I won't get away with it because he's watching ... how does one like oneself – I suppose you've got to otherwise you are in trouble".

Although it may not have been apparent to the participants from the Lighthouse Community Church, it seems that the church exercised a rather high degree of control in their lives. Any desire to serve The Divine in church structures was limited by church decrees, relationships between husbands and wives were regulated, associations outside the church were frowned upon and personal decisions, values and morals were informed by Scripture; but through the exegesis of Scripture as the Lighthouse Community Church understood it.

5.9. THE POWER OF THE CHURCH

As will be seen, each research participant had their own way of dealing with issues that they disagreed with in terms of church doctrine, influence *et cetera*. This often depended upon the significance of the issue in their own lives.

Sue's spiritual and religious orientation to life was not restricted to corporate worship, but was part of "who she was" - overflowing into personal, domestic and social areas of her life. Her entire worldview was orientated toward her faith experience and she appeared to be content with the integrated nature of her faith. With regard to the power of the church she was realistic. She realised that "at the end of the day [she was] not going to agree with every single thing" the Lighthouse Community Church did and said, but if it did not affect her directly she said she would continue to hold her own views, while retaining membership of the church.

Carol, on the other hand, felt it necessary to deal with differences (within the church) through discussion with the leadership of the Lighthouse Community Church. However, if an impasse was reached she would ultimately submit to the leadership, submission having been "drummed into" them in the beginning. It seemed there was no room for women and men to bring about change in the church, this being, according to Carol, the prerogative of The Divine. Any change was seen as The Divine moving the church forward, and not the result of human decision. As has been seen, the teaching of the church also influenced Carol's role in the home, Carol having to submit to her husband in all things.

Pearl's story is perhaps the most powerful example of the power that the church can have over one of its members. She could not escape what she experienced as the undeniable need to draw others into the realm of her faith, first within the Roman Catholic Church and later within the Lighthouse Community Church. While a member of the Roman Catholic Church her life revolved around confession, re-confession, feast days, Mass, rules and regulations, for fear of committing a mortal sin. She was so convinced that only members of the Roman Catholic Church were 'saved' that when – in her late middle age – she saw a couple who had left the Roman Catholic Church to join a charismatic church, she was not able to speak to them. She said: "I was devastated – I didn't know how to deal with it – because I could literally in my mind see flames around their ankles ... I didn't know what to say to them ... what do you say to someone who was going to hell ...".

The church had always been important in Len's life. However, the degree of allegiance demonstrated had varied. He was far less critical of his current denomination and it would seem could not see some of the potential inconsistencies related to its theology. He believed that if he had not experienced the teaching of the church he would have been totally lost. As he saw it, there was no salvation outside of the church. For Len there were two categories of human beings, "those who love God and those who don't know him"

Much of Oscar's life seemed to have been tied up with the church, first as a desire to enter full time service, and then his work in full time mission. The church had also had a great deal to do with regard to his role at home. Although he said his decision-making was based on Scripture, it seemed this was often linked to his understanding

of the authority of Scripture as taught by his church, which would consider itself 'Bible based'. On the other hand he did say that if he felt that the Lighthouse Community Church was "erring, that [it was] digressing from scriptural principles", that he would have spoken to the leadership, and if it did not change he would leave.

There appeared to be a number of areas of incongruence between what Gus said or believed, and what his church maintained, while at the same time he seemed to experience pressure from his church to be someone he felt he was not. As a member of the Lighthouse Community Church he believed that he was expected to tell others about his faith but felt inadequate because he was of the opinion that he did not have the competence to do so, and was afraid that he may have said the wrong thing. There was also evidence of the power that the church exerted over Gus in that he believed that a person was either saved or not; on the right way or the wrong way. The former involves being part of a church, while the latter implied being outside of the church.

On the other hand there were areas in which he maintained his own views. In the context of the sadness he felt over one of his old friends who was, in his opinion, not a Christian, but with whom he still enjoyed a friendship he said, "... you know our instructions [are] not to associate with people who are not believers, but this was an old – I mean he was at school with me ...". He also noted that he was currently working for someone whom he said was "unfortunately not a believer", something else of which the Lighthouse Community Church disapproved. A further area in which he held his own views was with regard to the role of women in the church. He also appeared to give lip service to many areas with regard to the idea of the husband being the head of the home.

From the above one could deduce that not all participants from the Lighthouse Community Church were aware of the power and influence of the church in their lives, and if they were conscious of these restrictions, they were often content to live within the expectations of their church. When a decision was made to ignore the instructions of the church it would seem there was a degree of uncertainty, confusion and anxiety associated with their choice.

5.10. RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS: PERSONAL EVALUATIONS

While it has been important to note the influence of The Divine within the context of the church, it is equally as important to assess the impact of The Divine and the church on the participants as individuals. Although each agent is a member of one the churches being researched, each has a distinctive perception of The Divine and self-identity, and this uniqueness needs to be acknowledged.

5.10.1. Evaluation: Sue

Sue's perceptions of The Divine had changed from that of a remote Divine Being who was to be feared and was not easily accessed, to one who could not easily be described but who radiated both warmth and light, and was concerned for her. Qualities associated with The Divine included gentleness, patience, mercy, grace, compassion, fairness and creativity – all of which were, for her, associated with the feminine. Also associated with The Divine was the masculine stereotypical notion of The Divine as being one who protected. Further associations of strength and love, as traits of The Divine, were perceived by Sue as being both masculine and feminine in nature. Although not a member of the Roman Catholic Church, Mary had had an influence in Sue's faith experience. Sue associated the traits of gentleness, graciousness, sadness and self-giving with Mary, qualities which she perceived as feminine, while wisdom – also associated with Mary – was allied with both masculine and feminine stereotypes. Divine qualities which Sue had seen in her life included creativity, compassion, tolerance and the capacity to love; traits which had become more apparent over the years, and were associated with the feminine (although love was also associated with the masculine).

Sue was easily able about to talk about herself and presented a strong awareness of self; a discursive awareness of the story of her life, her purpose and her role. She attributed an improved self-esteem to the awareness that she was loved by The Divine, and the teachings of the Lighthouse Community Church. Sue had become more self-confident and had a greater sense of self-worth and significance. Stronger feelings of happiness, hope, friendliness, patience and contentment had developed since she had been associated with the Lighthouse Community Church. Sue

experienced the church as being "the people belonging to the church", and it had had a positive influence on her life, but was no more than a part – an aspect - of her faith experience.

Sue's relationship with The Divine and with The Church did not preclude the possibility of responsibility or free choice. Although a member of a church community which demanded a relatively high standard of compliance, Sue evidenced independence and free thought, even with regard to the most fundamental views taught by her church. Sue valued the quality of being able to make a difference and moved outside of pre-defined roles and expectations.

With reference to the factors affecting self-identity, as suggested by Giddens, one could conclude that Sue had a strong sense of identity, and that the church had had a degree of positive influence in her life. With regard to her perceptions of The Divine (more specifically her personal gender-stereotypical perceptions) there appeared to be a very strong feminine element associated with The Divine. This could have suggested that The Divine – as One evidencing many feminine qualities – had had a positive influence in the formation of Sue's self-identity as a woman. Her more ethereal understanding of The Divine may have strengthened the impact of these feminine perceptions since she did not have to 'see through' a masculine anthropomorphic image. Given the fact that she spoke of Mary in largely gender-stereotypical terms associated with the feminine, one could conclude that Mary, as a person associated with The Divine, had also had a positive impact on her life.

It was unlikely that Sue would actively perpetuate patriarchal models and perceptions. However if she retained her passive stance in this regard she would unintentionally facilitate the maintenance of the status-quo.

5.10.2. Evaluation: Carol

Although Carol related a perception of The Divine which had become less anthropomorphic, her idea of being in relationship with The Divine had strong masculine overtones, especially that of a father. Masculine gender-stereotypical qualities associated with The Divine included authority, security and protection.

Although she associates no specifically feminine stereotypical traits with The Divine, faithfulness and caring were, in her understanding, both masculine and feminine attributes. Her understanding of *imago Dei* revolved around the potential for human beings to evidence the nature of The Divine; her own *imago Dei* being expressed in relationships.

It was only in living within what Carol believed to be will of God that she was able to find security. She was not able to see herself as an autonomous being, her sense of purpose being wholly associated with what she was able to offer to others at home, in the church and in society, these acts of service being the will of The Divine for her life. At home this meant submission to her husband in all things. The idea of the church as community was very important to Carol, her experience being that it provided a place of security within which she found acceptance and felt loved. She believed that the nature of this aspect of community had facilitated a process whereby she had developed a sense of being somebody of worth. However, the price she had paid for this was compliance with the doctrines of her church with regard to submission, and the lack of opportunity for free thinking and choice, although she seemed unaware of this sacrifice. This compliance influenced the personal, family, religious and social aspects of her life.

Her choice of a biblical character with whom she would have liked to have been associated was Ester, but for reasons opposite to that of Sue. Carol understood Ester to have complied with the expectations placed on her.

In the light of Giddens' criteria for the development of self-identity, one could conclude that Carol did not enjoy a strong sense of self-identity, in spite of her belief that she had a purpose in life, namely the giving of herself to others. It was possible that her church had contributed to this sense of purpose and in that it promoted a sense of worth, it (the church) may have had a positive influence in her life. However, Carol's personal gender-stereotypical perceptions of The Divine were predominantly masculine in nature, which would support the inference of a weaker sense of self-identity. These perceptions could be considered more relevant in the light of the 'father – child' nature of her relationship with The Divine, in spite of her assertion that The Divine was more ethereal than anthropomorphic.

It would seem that no clear correlation between Carol's self-identity, the Church and perceptions of The Divine can be concluded. Carol would most likely perpetuate – as an intended consequence of her beliefs and compliance with the doctrines of her church - the patriarchal nature of the church and understanding of The Divine.

5.10.3. Evaluation: Pearl

As a former Roman Catholic, Pearl had two distinctly different perceptions of The Divine, although both revolved around the concept of fatherhood and her understandings of Mary and Jesus. Masculine qualities associated with The Divine included awesomeness, sovereignty, might, reverence, respect and fatherhood, while feminine attributes included considerateness and creativity (life giver, "the source of all"). Mary was perceived to be approachable, kind motherly, beautiful, soft and gentle and a comforter; all – according to Pearl - feminine qualities. Traits associated with The Divine, which were – for Pearl – both masculine and feminine, included faithfulness, wisdom, "cleverness", and approachability. Pearl's understanding of *imago Dei* was that human beings were created like The Divine in that they had a Spirit, and the ability to choose. A degree of anthropomorphism is also evident.

Pearl was easily able to speak about herself and her life story, the latter pointing to a sense of purpose strongly rooted in her faith. The idea of the church as community had always been important for Pearl and as a child she experienced the power of the church as all-embracing but somewhat oppressive. Her affiliation with the Lighthouse Community Church appeared as embracing, but as far as she was concerned, was tempered by grace. She held her own views with regard to Mariology, the celibacy of the priesthood and the ordination of women.

In the light of the factors affecting self-identity, according to Giddens, one could suggest that Pearl had a relatively strong sense of identity. Her affiliation with the church had had a marked impact on her life and appeared to have contributed to her identity development in a positive way. It seemed she had been able to rise above the potential oppression of many of the doctrines of both churches. With regard to Pearl's 'personal gender-stereotypical' perceptions of The Divine (including Mary), it was noticeable that these were strongly feminine. Her anthropological perceptions of Mary

and Jesus could have strengthened the influence of these perceptions. It could be said that The Divine (including Mary) had had a positive influence in Pearl's life and personal identity as a woman. Pearl was likely to contribute to the perpetuation of patriarchal perceptions of The Divine, and although not intentional, the patriarchal structures of the church.

While still at school she was outspoken about her faith and often wrote to the Southern Cross (Magazine of the Roman Catholic Church in South Africa) on issues that concerned her. In her mid-twenties she motorcycled around the continent for three months (with her younger sister).

5.10.4. Evaluation: Len

In gender-stereotypical terms as understood by Len, The Divine was strongly perceived in the masculine role of ruler and as having masculine traits of responsibility and [unlimited] authority and power. The idea of The Divine as father featured, but was not his principal perception. These perceptions have been consistent throughout his life. The Divine was also compassionate, a trait that he associated with both the masculine and the feminine. Love and care were feminine attributes which he associated with The Divine. Mary was only "the mother of Jesus". Len believed that *imago Dei* implied that human beings had been given – by The Divine - the characteristics and attributes of The Divine.

Although not a man of many words, Len was easily able to talk about himself and had a strong sense of self-awareness and purpose in life. He was well integrated into the church community with most of his goals in life having been orientated toward service within the church and caring for, and teaching, the members of the church. He had submitted to the authority of the church and had become more accommodating with regard to doctrinal issues. For Len, humans had a free choice in all matters.

With reference to the factors affecting self-identity (as suggested by Giddens) one could deduce that Len had a strong sense of self-identity and that the church had been significant in the making of this identity. According to his personal understanding of gender stereotypes, The Divine was perceived in principally masculine terms, many

of which he identified within himself and his role in the home and the church. It would seem that Len had benefited from his mostly masculine gender perceptions of The Divine. This could have been enhanced by his early anthropomorphic view of The Divine, supported by his later perception which showed a degree of continuity as regards characteristics associated with The Divine. As a theologically trained lay leader in the church Len was in a position to facilitate change in the church's thinking with regard to women, but there was no indication that he planned to do so. If he were to continue to perpetuate the concept of patriarchal domination, he would have been doing so intentionally.

5.10.5. Evaluation: Oscar

The concept of fatherhood was the only solely masculine trait that Oscar associated with The Divine. Traits which were – for Oscar – both feminine and masculine gender-stereotypical in nature included love, uprightness and trustworthiness. Faithfulness, concern, caring and compassion were feminine gender-stereotypical qualities that Oscar associated with The Divine. The implications of *imago Dei* are difficult to assess, but could be relevant.

Oscar was not easily able to speak of himself and did not appear to have had a sense of direction, continuity or purpose in his life. His personal choices had been limited by the desires of his parents, what he believed to be the injunctions of Scripture and the leading of the Holy Spirit. His views with regard to the church as a community were ambivalent. The idea of service in the church had always been a factor in his life but his attempts had not always been successful. He claimed that he would not have allowed the doctrine of his church to override his convictions with regard to the content of Scripture.

Given the criteria involved in the making of identity – according to Giddens - the story of Oscar's life did not point to an individual who enjoyed a strong sense of identity. The role of the church in this was difficult to identify, but it would appear that it had not been a positive one. Oscar's personal stereotypical perceptions of The Divine were predominantly feminine. It is important to note that none of these perceptions emanated from any thoughts of Mary, suggesting that the lack of strong

masculine perceptions could have hindered his self-identity development as a man. In spite of this Oscar seemed set to actively strengthen the patriarchal nature of the church, society and home life. The role of his mainly ethereal perceptions of The Divine was difficult to determine.

5.10.6. Evaluation: Gus

Gus's understandings of The Divine revolved around the "otherness" and omnipotence of The Divine, The Divine being panoptic, restraining, often disapproving, but fortunately also merciful. He also mentioned care, love and forgiveness as traits of The Divine and gentleness, kindness and self-giving with Mary. Gus insisted that he had no gender-stereotypical views with regard to traits and characteristics evidenced in human beings, although it was possible to establish from the general content of the interviews, and with a degree of certainty, that love and forgiveness were strongly associated with the feminine while caring was associated with both the masculine and the feminine. Unfortunately this was insufficient evidence to establish Gus's gender-stereotypical perceptions of The Divine. He could not identify anything of the image of the divine within himself and found it difficult to come to terms with the concept of *imago Dei*. It would appear that a very 'corporal' anthropomorphic image of The Divine precluded any understanding in this regard.

Gus was not easily able to speak about himself, nor was he sure of himself with regard to his purpose in life. He felt that he was a failure at many things that he had set out to do and that he was inadequate with regard to doing what he knew he needed to do. His belonging to, and involvement in, the church would seem to have been a hindrance more than a help. His role as a husband and head of the house was fraught with inconsistencies. It would appear that Gus evidences very little capacity for free choice, in relation to his wife, the church, and The Divine. While he may venture to do something of his own choosing, it was normally accompanied by guilt and a degree of fear. Significantly, David - his choice of biblical character – was one who was "loved by God in spite of his weakness".

Guided by Giddens' criteria for self-identity one could conclude that Gus did not enjoy a strong sense of self-esteem or identity. The influence of gender-stereotypical

traits of The Divine could not be determined while the church, in that it had not had an actively affirming role in Gus's life, had not been a positive influence. By default, Gus was likely to perpetuate a patriarchal model of The Divine, as well as a church, and society, which are patriarchal in nature.

5.11. SUMMARY OF THE TEACHINGS AND IMPACT OF THE LIGHTHOUSE COMMUNITY CHURCH

Respondents from the Lighthouse Community Church were, to some degree or another, all influenced by the doctrine, teaching, and fellowship of the Lighthouse Community Church. Their faith permeated all aspects of their lives and there was a dynamic interaction between The Divine and themselves.

The Divine was perceived in anthropomorphic terms, but with human attributes, these qualities being associated with what they, personally, perceived to be either masculine and/or feminine gender-stereotypical characteristics. The Divine was also one who was beyond knowledge, while at the same time caring for them. *Imago Dei* implied that human beings have a "spirit" which survives after death and that they can have aspects of the disposition (or attributes) of The Divine. Only one of the respondents had an anthropomorphic understanding of *imago Dei*. With the exception of Gus, there seemed a correlation between the way the research participants perceived themselves in relation to The Divine, and their perceived self-identity. On a personal level this appeared to empower individuals. They seemed happier with themselves as they saw the attributes of The Divine develop in their lives and wished for this to increase.

The Lighthouse Community Church also attempted to present itself as a place of belonging and relationship and while participants seemed to embrace the idea it would appear that the sense of belonging came at a price, namely conformity to the church's views. In spite of the restrictions in many areas of their lives, members seemed comfortable with this situation.

The Lighthouse Community Church was emphatic with regard to the role of men, both in the church and the home. There could be little doubt that the concept of

patriarchy was clearly established in, and promoted through, the teachings of the Lighthouse Community Church. It was also clear that all six participants attempted, to some degree or another, to implement this teaching in their lives. Men needed to be in control, both in the church and the home and, as far as they were concerned, this was the way The Divine intended it to be.

CHAPTER SIX

ANALYSIS OF DATA: ROMAN CATHOLIC COMMUNITIES

*"He loves her to the extent that she is his,
he fears her in so far as she remains the other;
but it is as the fearsome other that he seeks to make her more profoundly his
- and this is what will bring him to elevate her to the dignity of being a person and lead
him to recognize her as a fellow creature.
(de Beauvoir 1972 :201)*

6.1. INTRODUCTION

The analysis of the data collected from the research participants in the two Roman Catholic Communities is analyzed according to the same criteria as mentioned at the beginning of Chapter five; and presented using the same structure. The specific church to which the data refers is not highlighted as the composition of the two churches -geographical region, financial means, size in terms of numbers, and age of congregants - together correlates with the Lighthouse Community Church.

6.2. ST MARY'S AND ST ANNE'S ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCHES

6.2.1. Introduction to the Roman Catholic Churches

St Mary's and St Anne's Roman Catholic Churches held worship services on Sunday mornings. These were attended by many of the members of the two churches, and during these services Mass was also celebrated. Weekly activities, including Bible Study groups, were available for members to attend, although this was not compulsory. The priest was the central figure around whom the pastoral care and spiritual growth of the congregation members revolved.

6.2.2. Observations During the Services Attended

The services I attended followed a set liturgy and included a homology, Scripture reading, a homily, hymns and the celebration of Mass. Scripture passages were read

from the Hebrew Scripture, the New Testament and the Apocrypha. The services were within five minutes of an hour long – a practice which appeared to be the norm.

The architecture of the Roman Catholic Churches reflected a theology in which the Priest and Blessed Sacrament (representing the presence and worship of The Divine) were separated from the lay worshippers. An altar rail behind which only the priest moved, an altar upon which lay a Bible and which was used for the elements of Mass, and an impressive pulpit all highlighted the division between the things holy, and things secular. Also behind the altar rail and within the sacrosanct area was the Tabernacle which held the Blessed Sacrament, the presence of which was indicated by the burning Sanctuary Lamp.

The Divine was at all times referred to in masculine terms. No attempt was made to be gender inclusive in language, with reference either to The Divine or to the women who were present. However there was mention of 'Our Lady', Mary the Mother of Jesus and Mary as Theotokos. Statues, icons and pictures conveyed the importance of Mary and the acknowledgement of her role in the worship of The Divine. Mary also featured in the frescos of the Stations of the Cross which adorned the walls of the church.

During the service the participation of the lay worshippers was limited to their response as indicated in the Liturgy and presented in the Service book. For some it seemed that they were going through the routine of a liturgy, with little, if any, real meaning. During one service a congregant was reading the Southern Cross – admittedly the service that Sunday was orientated toward children. It needs to be stressed that while one or two appeared bored, this was not the case for everyone. As was common practice, only the Host was offered to the congregation during Mass, although there was no theological restriction against lay worshippers partaking of the consecrated wine.

In spite of the aura of the influence of Mary, patriarchy was well established in the power structures of the Roman Catholic Churches. The Priests were male – because The Divine (especially Jesus) was male - and men were said to be leaders in the home.

6.3. INTRODUCTION TO THE PARTICIPANTS: PERSONAL PROFILES AND FAITH JOURNEY

The following research participants were, at the time of the interviews, congregants of the one of the two Roman Catholic Church's previously referred to and were selected according to the criteria noted in the methodology chapter. As with participants from the Lighthouse Community Church, the context within which each participant currently lives, as well as a very brief history of their life/faith journey is presented. [Most of their personal perceptions of The Divine are incorporated, but a more detailed report on the views of each participant can be found in the Addendum to this thesis]

6.3.1. Bessie: Personal Profile and Faith Journey

Bessie was one of two daughters born to a mother who was Roman Catholic and a father who was protestant. She attended a convent boarding school from the age of five and said that in a sense she wasn't raised by her mom and dad, but by the nuns at the convent. At this time Bessie experienced The Divine as a "father figure", someone who was gentle, but who had a lot of power and an "ageless wisdom". Crucifixes, pictures of the Sacred Heart, statues of Mary and other religious pictures - which could have been of "God the Father or God the Son" - were a part of her environment, and were influential with regard to her perceptions of The Divine.

However, as a teenager she "rebelled enormously about ... being brought up like that", although later renewed her interest after realising that she had been given "all this opportunity ... to really get to know God", and hadn't used it. She was given a degree of free choice with regard to what she wanted to do with her life once her schooling was complete.

For her, the reality of Jesus implied a more direct access to The Divine, as opposed to "going through Mary to God". The Divine was strongly related to her perception of Jesus: "more her equal", a companion and friend more than a father figure. She said The Divine had become "... right next to [her] all the time, ... [and she] could talk to him anytime". Although Bessie did not get everything she asked of The Divine she

believed "he [was] definitely there ... and [could] always be depended on". In the context of her relative wealth and the reality of poverty she battled to understand The Divine as someone who was "fair"; although she said The Divine had been "fair to her".

Bessie understood the concept of humanity created in the image of The Divine as referring to "all our good attributes" and our potential to be like The Divine, although she felt she was not as caring as she could be. She considered herself very fortunate to have had the material comforts and possessions that she did and often thought about her responsibility to those who did not have what she enjoyed, but did not always manage to do anything about it.

She mentioned that her visit to Lourdes had been an essential part of her overseas trip, that she had a crucifix in her bedroom, as well as her "treasured possession", a statue of Mary, who was for Bessie, "more just gentleness – not a great power". While at school, Mary had been "like a second mother to her, [whom] she used to talk to her a lot ... pray to her a lot". Although no longer as important, Mary remained "like a mother" and if Bessie imagined herself in Mary's presence, she felt like a protected child.

She was divorced when her sons were in their early teens. They had since left home and she had not re-married. She had been a member of St Anne's for more than twenty years and attended church about three times a month, but was only marginally involved. She considered her understanding of church doctrine to be excellent.

Bessie said that she had been a happy child, although she had often felt quite lonely. She always wanted to be the leader, and at the time of the interviews still thought that she came across "quite bossy", although she said that in male company she was "much quieter". She felt that she was generally a "pretty happy person, a cheerful person"; and that she didn't often find herself "moaning or worrying". When her husband left home she "put heart and soul" into raising her sons, and thought that she "managed that quite well".

She considered herself to be friendly – although it took her a "long time to make a good friend". She said she was loyal in terms of friendships and relationships, and

could be very sensitive to the needs of others. Bessie considered herself to be honest - sometimes too honest - in that she tended to say what she thought. While this was a trait she enjoyed in others, she was not so sure that others enjoyed it in her. She was intolerant of those whom she perceived to be "putting on an act", insincere or condescending. She believed that she had a deep faith, but was "not always a great doer".

6.3.2. Gill: Personal Profile and Faith Journey

Gill was in her fifties, married to a "non violent" alcoholic and had three adult children. She considered herself a good mother, had "worked hard" to find wholeness in her life and had a deep concern for children who may have been being abused. She was raised by both her parents, her mother being "the wind beneath her wings"; her father a violent alcoholic. She said she grew up in a generally Christian home, but was not a happy child. According to Gill, her perception of The Divine, from the age of three, was that The Divine was One whom she could trust. This was in spite of having been told that The Divine was "a man in the clouds ... who wrote everything down in a book ... [and gave] a black mark" when a person did something wrong. She recalled a picture in the passage of her grandmother's home which she described as "this horrible man looking down from the clouds with a big frown on his face". When being told that "he's watching you – that's God" she said she used to think, "Well that's not my God and I don't like him". In spite of being punished for saying so, she retained her opinion. For her, The Divine was more like the genie in the story of Aladdin: almost magic, and "could come out of a bottle at any time" when she was in need.

She, and her two sisters, lived in a Roman Catholic neighbourhood but regularly attended charismatic protestant churches. She envied her Roman Catholic friends when they were confirmed and enjoyed the atmosphere of their church (tradition, incense, candles, *et cetera*) and eventually joined the Roman Catholic Church fourteen years ago. At the time of the interviews Gill attended church at least three times a month and rated her understanding of church doctrine as "very good".

The Divine had become "too big ... just gotten bigger and bigger and bigger ... the universe, just stars and just everything that was beautiful". In spite of the vastness of

her current perception she included the aspect of a Divine Being who knew her personally. She said that while watching the "little sparrows ... and thinking how important they were ... [she felt that] if he could love them he must love [her] ..." [With reference to Matthew 10:29]. However, the idea of The Divine as keeping a record of wrongs was not completely lost, Gill saying that "each time a wrong choice is made a 'dirty splotch' stains our soul, and that is what we one day need to explain to The Divine".

She thought of The Divine as a father because "we say: Our Father ..." but because of her experience of her own father she found a contradiction in this area. On the one hand The Divine was not a "father figure", but somehow was "the father in [her] life ...more than [her] own father". On the other hand she didn't "ever think of God as mother ..."; and wouldn't want to. She continued: "maybe that's why it's good to have Mary".

Even before Gill belonged to the Roman Catholic Church she knew about Mary and always "liked" her. She felt that Mary was a mother figure, especially for little girls. It was Gill's hope that if there were more emphasis on Mary, there may be "more respect for women [and] for people who don't have the experience of mother she would [have been] a good thing – especially for men who haven't got a good experience with their moms". She would also have hoped that there would be less abuse of women.

Gill was of the opinion that it was in the humanity of Mary that women could find one in whom they could confide and with whom they could identify. Gill referred to the profound experience of childbirth and to the human pain of Mary at the loss of her child, as depicted in the Pietà. She also identified with what she perceived to be the helplessness of Mary. Mary was also a comfort in that there were times when Gill felt that something was too "shameful" to take to The Divine and that Mary was then someone she'd rather have spoken to and ask "... could you do this ...[or] ... help me to do this". At times like this she saw Mary as "her mother and mother of God and ... on [her] side ... ". Although hesitant in her observations regarding Mary's relationship with The Divine, Gill said that Mary was not divine, but a "... very esteemed being", "God's right hand – or left hand".

Gill believed that human beings were created in the image of The Divine in that the human soul was like God and that humans were "inherently good ...a little perfect God". But humanity had a free will and wrong choices resulted in the loss of the status of being perfect, separation from The Divine, and the hurts of life. However, human beings have been given the power to perfect their souls and once again become "God like".

Gill perceived herself as open and honest, and although she hated it, was aware that she had had to lie at times in order to protect herself and her children from her husband. Her basic motto in life was to "love your neighbour as you love yourself" and to this end she was compassionate, sensitive to the needs of others, soft-hearted and willing to give if it was going to help people. She did not want to be a "people pleaser" and was often lonely. She also saw herself as impulsive and adaptable, and wanted to be a perfectionist.

She was aware that she may only be able to make a small difference in a small way, but was encouraged by St Theresa of The Little Flower, whose life story comprised of "little bits of little things for God". During the apartheid era in South Africa, Gill had started a multi-racial preschool in a local church hall. This was against the law (Group Areas Act and Bantu Education Policy) and because she refused to close the school she says she was arrested by the Bureau of State Security. When she became "headline news" as a result of this she said she could not conceive of the idea that she could cause such a stir. She felt ashamed at the significance given to her and would rather have had attention directed to the school, because she had no intention of drawing attention to herself. She was however proud of the fact that she "loved God".

6.3.3. Yvonne: Personal Profile and Faith Journey

Yvonne was one of six children. Her father had died when she was 19 and her mother had been a strong (almost manipulative) force in her life. She had left home in her early twenties, trained as a teacher and was married with three children.

She said she was raised in a deeply spiritual, typical Roman Catholic home. When Yvonne was five, her mother joined the Schoenstatt movement– a Roman Catholic

organisation which was very Marion in orientation. Family life revolved around morning and evening prayers, feast days and the church's liturgical calendar, Schoenstatt becoming their "second home". It was in this context that Yvonne's understanding of The Divine was developed, The Divine being who was a "father – loving, kind, merciful ... caring", and "a God who could be trusted". She visualised The Divine as "an old man" with "a flowing robe and long white beard", while "Jesus was the man seen in Bible pictures and the Holy Spirit would [of course have been] a dove".

At age six her first communion was a "special commitment" to The Divine. She was earnest in her faith, her religious commitment influencing all areas of her life. In her teen years Yvonne was exposed to the mainly Protestant movements of Scripture Union and Student Christian Association. This precipitated what she called a huge crisis, an "incredible dilemma" in her life. Although her first Communion had been a moment of special commitment, these movements advocated a "born again" dedication, which led her to question her salvation: Was it possible to be saved without having "knelt down ...and said – 'Lord, come into my heart?'". She was later exposed to the Charismatic movement through the Roman Catholic Church and after having done a "Life in the Spirit Seminar" was "baptised in The Spirit", and received the gift of "singing in tongues". During this time The Divine had become, for her, "a being, a spirit and ... not confined to a body". Yvonne understood the concept of *imago Dei* as The Divine having "breathed his spirit into us", humanity having "God within ... his qualities and his presence". If The Divine were allowed an influence in the life of the agent these qualities could be manifest.

In her thirties Yvonne developed cancer. At times she had felt "totally deserted by God", but experienced her suffering as a point of identification with Christ. During this time her faith in God and the support of friends at church sustained her. Although she related a journey marked by alternating trust and doubt she once again really believed that "there [was] a God and that Jesus [was] my saviour and Mary [was] my mother ...".

Yvonne explained that Mary had been very significant and was "almost there with Christ ... on a par in a sense ... leading [her] to Christ". Mary had been her mother and her role model, Mary having helped her to "grow up into being this model girl

...". Mary personified the virtues of modesty, selflessness, purity, gentleness, sanctification, and "total unity with Christ".

When asked if there was anything in nature that she would have associated with The Divine, Yvonne replied without hesitation that she would say "the Lily, the St Joseph's Lily ...the symbol of Mary", although when asked if she perceived Mary as being part of The Divine, she replied that Mary was "very much a woman – like I am a woman". She associated the word "father" with her "dad and God the Father" while the word "mother" invoked thoughts of "Mother Mary and [her own] mother".

After marriage her involvement in the Schoenstatt movement waned, and with that her intense focus on Mary. Yvonne had been a member of her current church for less than 10 years, considered herself marginally involved and to have a good understanding of her church's doctrine and teaching. She attended church three or more times per month.

As a child Yvonne was shy, very serious, earnest and intense, and was always striving to be better and to show the fruits of the Spirit. She was "incredibly selfless" and although not an unhappy child, she hardly smiled or laughed, was highly sensitive to the fact that she wasn't joyful enough and felt that she "didn't relate socially that well".

It was only once she had made the choice to leave home that she felt free to be herself "confident, in control, worthy and content". Encouraged by her husband and "free of her mothers clutches" her self-esteem improved, she became more "confident, outgoing, and chatty, ... very peaceful, very content, very happy, [and] very thrilled with life".

As an adult she described herself as gentle, loyal, a good listener, diligent, and a hard worker. She preferred following to leading but "[knew her] own mind" and was not easily swayed. She was generally happy with herself, happy with the way she looked and carried no guilt for past actions (especially leaving her mother in Cape Town).

6.3.4. Paul: Personal Profile and Faith Journey

Paul was born in Ireland, the eldest of seven children. His parents were Roman Catholic and he was educated by the Christian Brothers. Although they were a poor family they "accepted their lot" and he did not recall any "moans or groans about the situation". He did however, determine to have a good education, and worked hard in order to receive the bursaries which facilitated his studies. Paul's perception of The Divine went back to these childhood years and saying prayers with his parents, for whom "God was a very real person to whom you spoke". He had a largely anthropomorphic view of The Divine, someone who "looked like my father, and somehow my mother with him ... ", often dependent upon who had been good to him.

By the time of his confirmation at age ten, The Divine was not only One who existed, but One who also had influence in his life, with whom he could have a relationship, and One who needed to be served. Love for The Divine was expressed by doing things for The Divine. He recalled one of the emphases of his catechism being that it was "easy to say I love God ..." but what was implied was that one needed to express this love for The Divine by "doing things for God – in other words the servant angle", this having been his motivation for going into the ministry, "to help Him [The Divine] through kind of trying to help others". He entered studies for the Roman Catholic priesthood at age sixteen.

Paul understood human beings as being created in the image and likeness of The Divine to mean that they had the capacity to love and to learn to love fully. He said that "God was love and therefore the image of God – the human image of God – [was] a person capable of, and created to, love". Also implied was that "one had intellectual ability"; and that human beings were able to analyse a situation and come to certain conclusions. A further implication of intellectual ability was that as human beings "at the top of God's creation ... we [were] spiritual and we [were] free", that is, humans were agents who had the freedom to choose.

As an adult, he became more and more consciously aware of The Divine; The Divine being "love personified". His understanding and perception of The Divine continued to revolve around the reality of his relationship with The Divine and the practical

implications and expression of that relationship, for example, The Divine's forgiveness of human beings, the meeting of financial needs and The Divine's dealing with him on a "one-to-one basis", in spite of being so "vast ... enormous and almighty". He attributed the practical nature of his understanding to his logical, practical and mathematical mind.

After having served as a priest for a number of years he met his wife, and married after having received dispensation from the priesthood. He had six adult children and was retired from secular employment. He had been a member of his current church for over twenty years, attended church regularly and was very involved. He rated his understanding of church doctrine as "very good". His two most significant experiences of The Divine revolved around his call into, and out of, the priesthood.

For Paul, The Divine had become a "jolly old chap [with a] tremendous amount of loving forgiveness in his eyes". Although there were still rules to be obeyed, Paul came to perceive The Divine as much more understanding – almost indulgent of humanity's inability to live according to the rules – and who only wanted the best thing for humanity. Although sometimes mystified and a little afraid of the greatness, majesty and power of The Divine, he remained conscious of the one-on-one love and relationship between himself and The Divine.

Mary's role in Paul's life revolved around her humanness in that she would "always see things from the human angle". She was held in very high esteem and in his opinion had "tremendous influence"; recent apparitions of Mary having "more meaning to us as humans" than if Christ had appeared.

Paul considered himself to be very intense and analytical, objective and a "cut and dried ... thinking machine". He said everything started in his head and eventually got to his heart. The practicality of his approach to life could be seen in his understanding that thought and action went together, and that any significant relationship was one of love, which inevitably led to service. However, he felt that one of his major shortcomings was his "personal ability to love". He said he was far too cold-blooded and analytical, there being some kind of "breaking mechanism" to "total commitment"; total commitment understood as being service to others "totally and at

all times, without any consideration for oneself". He had however become more able to give.

He said he got on well with people and that he could be described as a "cheerful bloke who [didn't] lose his rag, usually careful at what he did". Although he sometimes jumped to negative conclusions he saw himself as having become "more tolerant" and willing to accept things as they were, it being his "conviction that one develops ... [and] because you come closer to God ... you actually see things from His angle". He said that from being "very forthright" about issues as a young person, he had, as he had "gotten older" developed a tendency to look for solutions to problems, rather than to merely state them. He was also less rule bound, more tolerant, and more accepting of "things as they were".

6.3.5. Rod: Personal Profile and Faith Journey

Rod was one of three children and, although raised in a protestant family, was educated by Christian Brothers in a Roman Catholic boarding school. In spite of this he said he had no early awareness of the reality of The Divine. Mass was said in Latin while the "hourly Hail Mary" and the two-o'clock "Litany of Our Lady" were prayers which at the time had no significance, although in retrospect he saw them as valuable.

The nature of Rod's father's work meant that he was seldom around. His mother was therefore the primary influence in his life, as well as the disciplinarian. During university Rod became agnostic, but joined the Roman Catholic Church when he met his wife since he felt that unity in the area of faith was important for their marriage. Rod said his faith had grown steadily stronger, as had his "realisation that God was there", this mainly through personal reading of books on spirituality. He described The Divine as follows: " [a] kindly father ... mother – I don't know if one puts a mother to it? – God was a he, but although he was not – he and she - ... God had a female aspect ... I still look on God as a father ... but yes, someone who was ... very kindly, gracious ...", caring and always there. He perceived The Divine as present in moments of quietness and reflection, rather than the "big thunder flash". His awareness of the feminine came from Christian author Henri Nouwen's interpretation of Rembrandt's painting [Image 1 Appendix 6] depicting the parable of the prodigal

son – a parable of Jesus found in Luke 15:11-32. Nowen noted that, looking at the hands of the father, one saw that the right hand was a feminine hand and the left hand was a strong (or masculine) hand.

Rod's most significant experience of the reality of The Divine was during a business lunch while listening to missionary and author Jackie Pullinger. He recalled that during her talk she seemed to disappear and he became aware of a yellow golden light. He continued, "I came back to the girls at the office and I said – I've seen God". A second significant experience revolved around the reality of the spiritual realm and the power of forgiveness.

Although Rod was never given the impression of The Divine as one who punishes, he said that The Divine did put "a few stumbling blocks in front of you ... to wake you up to his presence ...". He felt that "suffering was a necessary part of life ... sometimes uncomfortable ... but it served as a growing point ... to open [one to the] awareness of God ..." and was intended to make believers aware of their absolute dependence on The Divine. The Divine was One who wanted to be first in the life of the agent, could be depended on and who would never forget someone who was suffering. Rod also saw The Divine as one who suffered both with humanity, but also more than humanity; as a parent who looked at an erring child and, seeing their pain, patiently waited, longing for the child to see reason.

Because of the doctrine of the incarnation of The Divine in a human form – namely Jesus - Rod's understanding of *imago Dei* was both human and spiritual in nature. Thinking aloud he mused, "Well initially ... from a humanoid form – but if everyone is created in the image of God – how on earth do you picture God ... physically we were all so totally different that it's impossible to describe God, yet then when you go back and re-analyse that our body is really but a shell – so we were still spirit beings in a human shell so God created us in his own image which was a spirit [but] what that spirit looks like I don't know because we all imagine a spirit to look like your body". Although he said God's image was indefinable from a physical point of view, he also believed, with reference to Mahatma Ghandi, that unless one saw The Divine in the next person, one needn't go to the trouble of looking for The Divine. This understanding of *imago Dei* was integrated through the concept of The Divine as

incarnate within each human individual, implying that everyone had the capacity to evidence divine attributes, and all people need to be respected as vessels of the Divine image.

When asked about Mary, Rod's voice changed. Speaking in a soft and fond tone he noted that Mary - The Mother of Jesus - was becoming more important to him. He saw her as one who could reveal God to us, specifically through her apparitions, for example, Lourdes, Fátima and Medjugorje, the latter a lesser known but relatively recent claim of Mary's appearance to six school children a village in Bosnia / Herzegovina. He felt it was Mary's humanness that facilitated this communication. He was also of the opinion that a greater respect for Mary would lead to a reduction in the temptation to be lured into "looking at all these sexual things on TV and this sort of thing".

Although he had previously been very involved in the activities of the church, at the time of the interviews he had withdrawn due to time constraints. He had adult children, and was a specialist in the medical profession. He had been a member of his current church for more than twenty years, attended church at least three times a month and rated his understanding of church doctrine as "good".

Rod described himself as a loner, one who was quite conservative, philosophical and had a degree of wisdom and insight, trying to "look and understand". He got on well with most people and felt that he had something to contribute to the family, the church and society. As a medical professional he believed he needed to be an example of one who holds good values and moral principles, and someone who could be turned to for advice and counselling. He was self-confident and content, and felt that he had made a success of his life.

He had perfectionist tendencies and used to be quite demanding as a husband. He said he was dependable, responsible and loyal. He felt he had the capacity to love, to understand and to feel empathy; qualities which had always been present but which had become more apparent. He wished he could have had more insight and wisdom from an earlier age, and "came down hard" on himself if he felt that he had failed.

He said that as a child he could be quite quick tempered, although this had been "gradually hammered out". While he could be patient, loving and kind, he could also be "impatient ... belligerent, silent and moody ...".

6.3.6. Bill: Personal Profile and Faith Journey

Bill has died since the interviews from which the following information has been drawn, however I will not refer to Bill as "the late ...".

Bill was the older of two children. His father was away for the duration of the Second World War and only returned when Bill was seven, his parents divorcing shortly after his father's return. He was educated in private Roman Catholic Schools, the first of which encouraged him to excel. Bill embraced life and as a teenager/young adult had a full social calendar and was very involved in sport.

Although he was raised as a Roman Catholic in a home "fully aware of God's presence" his first "real and personal" experience of the presence of The Divine was during his first communion when he experienced the awareness of The Divine as One with a personal interest in himself. During his first two years after school he rebelled against religion but returned because he "felt he was missing out".

As a child Bill associated The Divine with Jesus, a man with long hair, a halo and probably a "happy face". The Divine was later seen as "sitting on a throne or floating on a cloud ... arms out, giving succour to everyone", a humanitarian God of mercy and love. During Bill's time of rebellion he felt that The Divine was cruel and he could never understand why The Divine permitted war and suffering.

He had since become very involved in his church, having been a member for more than twenty years, the Parish Council Chairperson and trained as a "communion giver". He attended Mass at least three times a month and rated his understanding of church doctrine as "good". He, together with his wife, had led and been regional lay directors of the marriage enrichment course 'Marriage Encounter'— a liberal programme based on Scripture and relationship with The Divine.

At the time of the interviews Bill perceived The Divine as a "kind of patriarch - surrounded by millions of people", no longer on a throne but as one of the crowd, although significant within the crowd. In his mind's eye The Divine was wearing a floating white vestment and - with surprise in his voice - he noted that The Divine was "clean shaven", as opposed to Jesus who was almost always depicted with a long beard. The Divine was One who could be trusted and "somebody who [was] especially close ... who [was] real ... [and whose] eyes [reflected] serenity, promise of goodwill, welcome, succour ... pity, help and guidance". Jesus was a selfless lawgiver, a preacher, God the Son, a friend and someone to whom one could "unburden" oneself. The Holy Spirit was symbolised by a dove and was a dispenser of faith-giving tenants, a help when one stumbled, and the third person of the Trinity.

Bill's immediate response to the concept of humanity created in the image of The Divine engendered in him a sense of awe and humility – together with an "enormous pride", based on the idea "that we were built in God's image". In his own life Bill felt that he had reflected this Divine image when he had done "good things" and recalled times when he had impacted positively on the lives of other people. He felt that "doing God's work in God's name" had been an extension of the Image of The Divine. It was Bill's opinion that humanity also reflected this image of The Divine in devotion and "total trust in God"; both in their personal spirituality and in their courage in confronting injustice and oppression.

Mary was a "huge part" of his faith experience, Bill espousing "tremendous devotion to Our Lady". Confirming this dedication, he noted that whenever he turned to prayer the first person he prayed to was "Our Lady, and then maybe to her son Jesus and then maybe to God ...". He perceived Mary to be an intercessory, a listener; loving, caring and compassionate, and one who suffered during the crucifixion of her son.

Bill perceived himself as a "charming, confident, humorous and fairly gregarious sort of guy", who got on well with others and had a good relationship with his peers. On the other hand he said he could be "extremely ratty [and] belligerent ", inclined to make mountains out of molehills and although he forgave easily he was not always able to apologise easily. He could be caring, sensitive and loving, but equally insensitive, although he always tried to be loving and understanding, something which

he felt he achieved with his family. He was confident, determined, and achieved anything he "put his mind to", but inclined to procrastinate. He gave attention to detail in all he did.

6.4. ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCHES: PERCEPTIONS OF THE DIVINE (AND MARY)

One of the most striking similarities between most research participants from the Roman Catholic Communities was their awareness of the triune nature of The Divine, although there was no consistency in their understanding of this aspect. The Divine was present in the Blessed Sacrament and became one with humans through the sacrament of Holy Communion. A further observation revolved around the gender awareness with regard to The Divine. The Divine was not automatically perceived as only masculine - although the issue was not resolved; participants being unsure of how the 'feminine aspect' 'fitted in'.

Perceptions of The Divine as Father (according to Gill "because we say: Our Father") included the understanding of The Divine being gentle but powerful, wise, fair and dependable, trustworthy and personal, loving, kind, merciful, forgiving and caring. Jesus implied a more direct access to The Divine, was a selfless lawgiver, a preacher, God the Son, a friend and someone to whom one could "unburden" oneself. The Holy Spirit was represented as a dove, was a dispenser of faith-giving tenet, a help when one stumbled, and the third person of the Trinity.

Furthermore, The Divine was one who could be trusted, who was especially close, real, serene, welcoming, supporting, helping and guiding. In spite of being vast, enormous and mighty, The Divine was also understood as present all the time, having a personal interest in each person on a 'one-to-one basis'; and a very real person to whom one spoke. Love for The Divine was expressed by doing things for The Divine. Among the Roman Catholic participants was an awareness of suffering, poverty and the violence of war, all presenting questions with regard to the nature of The Divine. Rod understood suffering (as a result of ill health) as The Divine reminding people of their need for dependence on The Divine and as the definitive force in their life. However, The Divine suffered both with humanity and also more than humanity; as a

parent who looked at an erring child and, seeing their pain, patiently waited, longing for the child to see reason.

There was also a degree of anthropomorphic perception, The Divine being "an old man" with "a flowing robe and long white beard", a "jolly old chap", a "kind of patriarch - surrounded by millions of people". However, the idea of The Divine in these anthropomorphic terms seemed to cause confusion with regard to gender. For Paul The Divine was someone who "looked like my father, and somehow my mother with him ... ", often dependent upon who had been good to him; while Rod described The Divine as a "kindly father ... mother – I don't know if one puts a mother to it ... God was a he, but although he was not – he and she - ... God had a female aspect ...". Gill maintained that The Divine was not a "father figure", but somehow was "the father in [her] life ... more than [her] own father", but this caused problems because of her father's alcoholism, *et cetera*. One the other had, if she "had to think of him as mother [she] wouldn't want to". Gill concluded that this might be why "it's good to have Mary".

In much the same way as The Divine was spoken of as a father, so Mary was seen as a mother, as both a heavenly mother and a mother who could supplant an earthly mother in cases where this was helpful. She was seen as more understanding of human need and suffering and (alongside Jesus) more accessible than The Divine. She was a role model of virtues of modesty, selflessness, purity, gentleness, sanctification, and 'total unity with Christ'. She was also a listener; loving, caring and compassionate, and one who suffered during the crucifixion of her son.

An interesting association was made between the abuse of women, and the potential role of Mary. It was suggested that if there were more emphasis on Mary, there may be more respect for women, and less abuse of women. It was also suggested that a greater respect for Mary would lead to a reduction in the temptation to be lured into "looking at all these sexual things on TV and this sort of thing". A fascinating observation was the change in tone of voice and demeanour when two of the male research participants spoke of her, both expressing warmth, affection, respect, admiration and devotion.

With regard to the divinity of Mary the consensus was that although Mary was highly esteemed, very significant and "almost there with Christ", a means through which one could encounter The Divine, one who could reveal The Divine to us who and had "tremendous influence", she was exclusively human. However, Bessie referred to praying to Mary while at school, while Bill remarked that when he prayed the first person he prayed to was "Our Lady, and then maybe to her son Jesus and then maybe to God ...". When asked if there was anything in nature that she would have associated with The Divine, Yvonne replied without hesitation that she would say the Lily, the St Joseph's Lily ...the symbol of Mary", although when asked if she perceived Mary as being part of The Divine, she replied that Mary was "very much a woman – like I am a woman". She associated the word "father" with her "dad and God the Father" while the word "mother" invoked thoughts of "Mother Mary and [her] mother".

6.5. ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCHES: *IMAGO DEI*

Most research participants from the Roman Catholic churches believed that being created in the image of The Divine referred to the ability to have, and exhibit, the attributes of The Divine. These were identified as the ability to care, to love, to be kind and sensitive and reach our potential. It also implied the inherent goodness of humanity, a personal "inner beauty" and the potential to be "like God"

An interesting association between *Imago Dei* and the need to bring about change in the world was identified among the research participants from the Roman Catholic Churches. This was to be achieved either through living the values and attributes given to humanity in their creation in the image of The Divine or through acknowledging, and respecting, the image of The Divine in others. With reference to Mahatma Ghandi, Rod said that unless one saw The Divine in the next person, one needn't go to the trouble of looking for The Divine while it was Bill's opinion that humanity reflected the image of The Divine both in their personal spirituality and in their courage in confronting injustice and oppression. Paul believed that *imago Dei* implied that not only was humanity capable of loving but was in fact created to love. Gill believed that it was her *imago Dei* which facilitated her doing what The Divine

wanted her to do, while Bill said that "doing God's work in God's name" was an extension of the Image of The Divine.

The concept of *imago Dei* had a spiritual dimension in that Yvonne understood the concept of *imago Dei* as The Divine having "breathed his spirit into us" while Bessie felt that her faith was linked to her *imago Dei*. Intellectual ability, the capacity to analyse a situation and come to certain conclusions as well as the freedom to choose were further aspects of being created in the image of The Divine. Bill's immediate response to the concept of humanity created in the image of The Divine engendered in him a sense of awe and humility – together with an "enormous pride". Because of the doctrine of the incarnation of The Divine in a human form, namely Jesus, Rod's understanding of *imago Dei* was both human and spiritual in nature, "spirit beings in a human shell" but the implications of this are not simple. Yvonne noted that The Divine did have qualities which human beings have not had, for example, omnipotence, having "no beginning and no end" as well as the power to heal.

6.6. ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCHES: PATRIARCHY

Although the Roman Catholic Church is patriarchal in its structure and outlook, and committed to maintaining the status quo, the implications of this attitude were not easily identifiable as fundamental to the lives of the research participants from St Mary's and St Anne's Catholic churches. Nonetheless official policy maintained that The Divine was masculine, Mary was feminine but not divine, and the male represented the authority of The Divine on earth.

6.6.1. The Divine as Father

As has been seen above - with regard to perceptions of The Divine and participants' understanding of *imago Dei* – the issue of the perceived "maleness" of The Divine was a simple matter in the two Roman Catholic Churches from which participants were drawn. Although most often referred to in masculine terms, there was a strong awareness that there may be feminine aspects related to The Divine. On the other hand Mary was referred to as feminine, and human, but there remained an association of Mary with The Divine in ways that suggested that she was perceived as more than

just human. Although official documents refer to The Divine in masculine, patriarchal terms, and Mary in human feminine terms it, would seem that the perceptions of the lay agents are not as clear-cut.

6.6.2. Women and Men in the Church

Approval of the patriarchal nature of the hierarchy and structure of the church was strongly expressed by most research participants. Only Gill was of the opinion that both men and women should be allowed into the priesthood, although she did believe they should remain celibate.

Bessie felt that while women could be pastors who would nurture and care, "God" (whom she perceived as a male) was the word she would associate with priests. Paul also didn't "see women having any place in the church as priests", although because of their empathy they could care for, and minister, to those who were ill, and to women in need.

Although Yvonne did not hold strong views in this regard she was "happy with the idea of men being priests", her reasons being that Christ was a man and chose men as disciples. She felt that women had a role as nuns and sisters and that that was "a beautiful role ...". Rod felt that the roles of the husband as head of the household and that of a male as a priest overlapped and that "a man should be doing the job, not a woman [because of] the order to things; man was the head of the household and woman was there – you know it comes under that". It was Bill's opinion that women would not ever become priests because the church was "bound to the perception of Christ as the single man, the first priest [and] historically the role of a priest in the Roman Catholic Church has been a single man". He supported this view saying he didn't have any problem that women were excluded from the priesthood since he thought that this was "a very special role ... walking in Christ's footsteps" and was a role reserved for men. If women were to be ordained he would have missed "the maleness of the priestly life [believing that it had] nothing to do with male chauvinism at all" but because he had traditionally seen a man in that role because of the maleness of Christ.

6.6.3. Wives and Husbands

While there was no direct policy stressing the headship of the husband in the home, there was a marginal tendency toward this arrangement.

Bessie had seen the role of husbands as "providers" and "guardians" and wives as "supporters", but since her divorce had realised that she had more to offer. Gill had been raised to believe that she needed a man in her life and was "always being lectured [that she] had to do everything for men". However, because of her personal experience she had raised her daughter to be feisty, independent, and have her own career. In spite of fulfilling the role of a loyal wife, Gill herself evidenced small attempts to resist repression of herself.

For Yvonne the family was the "nucleus of society" and she felt that the example of love between husbands and wives needed to be reflected in society. She believed that husbands and wives should be accepting of each other; recognising each other's changing needs and trying to meet those needs. At no time did she refer to any hierarchy between men and women, and she rejected any form of chauvinism.

Paul also saw the family as being the basic fundamental unit in society. He felt that husbands and wives complement each other, that the specific vocation of husbands and wives is to perfect each other and the children, and that he and his wife had equal respect for each other's opinions. He had no regard for traditional roles within the home and took care of household chores since he was retired and his wife was still in formal employment.

Bill's understanding of his role in the home was as the father figure, not in an exalted sense but as part of the family. He considered the roles of husbands and wives to include procreation, support and companionship. Although husbands tended to be breadwinners and wives raised the children, Bill felt it was also important for fathers to be involved in their children's lives.

Rod was the only participant to hold a firm conviction that his role in the family was that of "the head and the leader". He said that although God had created "man and woman equal ... man was the head of the household". He linked the role of the

husband as head of the household to the role of men as priests in the church. He also suggested that women could be manipulative in their trying to gain power, and maintained that there were so many women in power "because men haven't stood up and done their job properly".

6.6.4. Summary

The Roman Catholic church is adamant about retaining the patriarchal nature of the priesthood, based on the incarnation of The Divine in Jesus, a male, and all but one participant supported this stance. However, further values and views associated with patriarchy do not appear to be strongly held. Among the lay research participants the human/divine nature of Mary is not clear-cut and neither is the masculine/feminine perception of The Divine. With one exception, participants espoused the equality of husbands and wives, both in task and personhood.

6.7. ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCHES: A PLACE OF COMMUNITY, RELATIONSHIP, CONTINUITY AND TRUST

Belonging to the Roman Catholic church provided its members with a sense of identity and belonging. Yvonne said that she experienced the church as her family and said: "I love being a Catholic – it's like my family ...". Although she had never missed her "blood family" she had missed church communities when she had had to move. She had resolved that if she had to marry, her husband had to be a practising catholic - in order for her to remain part of the Roman Catholic Church with his full support. Even though Bill saw himself "first and foremost as a Christian who happens to belong to a segment of the church called the Roman Catholic Church ... " he added that he was "quietly proud to be a Roman Catholic Christian or a Christian Roman Catholic". Rod had become a Roman Catholic in order to share his wife's faith.

Together with this belonging came the aspect of community and support. Paul felt himself very much "at home" in the context of the church and said "you see, in my mind, when you talk about church you're talking about people ... people of God as a living community ... ". For him they facilitated worship of The Divine, and it was through the community that he "[dealt] with God"; most of his "day-to-day, hour-to-

hour dealings with the Lord ... " being through other people. Gill noted that the church – the people – were her life and while nursing her mother through cancer the church was the place she found support, both spiritual and practical. She said she trusted The Divine and felt that she knew that if "God [was] involved it [would] pan out". She thought that if she had not had this hope, she probably would have committed suicide. Only Rod held a different position saying that he would not miss the community aspect of church, saying, "we've had a few get-togethers but they haven't really impacted".

Belonging to the church also offered security and a sense of continuity. Gill said that the Church was like having a "security thing", while Gill noted that while at church she felt that she had no worries, that nothing could hurt her, that she was safe and that she could just sit there forever. She admitted that this could be escapism, but on the other hand said that her spirituality gave her the strength to cope with husband. Paul spoke of his "journey with The Divine" and the impact it was making on his life. For Bill the community aspect of the church also revolved around the practice of his faith within the home environment; households fully aware of God's presence. Saying the Rosary together every night, and grace before meals, were practical expressions of this devotion and sense of community. Since his retirement he had become more involved in the church and the wider Roman Catholic community in his area, taking communion to the sick and those unable to attend Mass, this act of service providing a meaningful purpose in his retirement.

Furthermore, the acknowledged presence of the Divine was also a positive experience. Gill found herself very dependent on The Divine and the Church, and Paul commented that "belief in God and the things of God – the church, *et cetera*" gave meaning to his existence, while Bessie said that, with regard to her divorce, "There's no ways I would have got through that without God ... ". The presence of The Divine was as if something was "watching" and "guiding" - like a "guardian angel". During her struggle with cancer Yvonne related a journey marked by alternating trust and doubt but the time came when she once again really believed that "there [was] a God and that Jesus [was] my saviour and Mary [was] my mother ...". Rod experienced a sense of comfort "receiving God in the communion", while Paul's awareness of belonging to The Divine made him feel "totally grateful and thankful".

Belonging to the Roman Catholic church provided most research participants with a sense of identity'. It also engendered a sense of being part of a community offering security and support. Church membership facilitated a sense of cohesion within the home, as well as continuity on the *durée* of life. The awareness of the presence of The Divine was experienced as being watched, guided, protected, grateful, thankful, and comforted. There was no significant negative connotation of judgement mentioned by any of the research participants.

6.8. FREEDOM OF CHOICE AND CREATIVE EXPRESSION

Although Bessie initially had no choice with regard to faith issues, and attended a Catholic boarding school, she did later rebel and loose interest; only to return at age seventeen due to a sudden awareness of what she may have been missing. She became interested in anything "religious", asked a lot of questions and was open to finding answers in any faith. However she has remained a Catholic and a Christian - by choice - and felt that that "was actually the right place" for her. She considered herself fortunate to have been raised in the Christian faith, but did not believe that everyone needed to be converted.

Gill believed that the difficult conditions in which she found herself were "only because God [had put her] there". However, she had had the ability to choose her response and had tackled difficult situations through making positive choices. She attended courses and retreats to facilitate personal growth and had recently resumed studies to better equip herself for teaching. Because of the security found in the church she believed that she could make a difference in the world through doing her best in the "little things" in life, and had made choices contrary to popular expectation; finding herself ostracised, even arrested. Although Gill's mother eventually had the courage to leave Gill's alcoholic father, it had been Gill's conviction that she had "always thought it ... right to stay with [her] husband". She had vowed before God to do so, although she now realises that she was mistaken.

When looking at Yvonne's early involvement in the church it would seem fair to say that she was restricted in almost all aspects of her life. She had had an "earnest faith", a "commitment" beyond her years, was very serious, hardly ever smiled, and

concentrated on self-sacrifice, self-denial and self-sanctification. She had committed herself to the Covenant of love with Mary, and later the Youth Dedication in which she had, on a daily basis, devoted herself to Mary, asking Mary to be her "special mother" and to lead her to Christ. Yvonne did not enjoy making decisions and did little without being open to doing the will of The Divine and looking for signs that might indicate direction from The Divine, wanting to please The Divine in all she did. At age twenty she did make a choice and decided to leave home and move to Johannesburg. Although she still does little without seeking the will of The Divine she is much more aware of the freedom of decision which has been given to humanity and exercises that freedom with confidence.

Paul had been of the opinion that the purpose of a human being's journey through life was to enable the development "of a relationship with God the Father"; the awareness of this "presence of God in one's life being something that one [became] more conscious of as the years pass[ed]". He believed that although The Divine offered love to humanity this was not imposed on individuals. Neither did The Divine seek to control the person who responded to this love. As he had grown older he was more aware that although rules were needed, he believed that The Divine (as the one who made the rules) had an understanding of the frailty of humanity (those needing to keep the rules) and that things were therefore not "black and white". There were "grey areas" that came in as "part of the equation". He understood the commandments not as negative "Thou shalt not ..." commands, but as positive ways of showing one's love for The Divine. Paul believed that The Divine helped individuals understand that what was offered was best for the individual, but it was up to the individual to decide "yes or no ... and maybe say: no – not yet – [and] that's OK".

Rod had always been aware that he had had free choice. He recalled an occasion when, as a university student, he attended a church service with his mother, and to her "horror" refused to participate in communion. He believed that The Divine had given humanity a free choice and that "God [would] never take [one's] freedom of choice away". With regard to church dogma he was content to live with issues that he disagreed with since they were, in his opinion, only someone's interpretation of a policy. He remained a member of the church because "of the value of the wholeness of the church", and would not have wanted to change.

Bill noted that he had always wrestled a lot with the problem of free will, predestination "and all this type of thing ... [and had not] solved them but come to terms with them". He had felt that he had come to accept that humans do have the ability to choose between good and evil but that it was up to humanity to exercise that free will. On the other hand he did express a perplexing attitude to free choice with regard to his later school years (when he rebelled against study, *et cetera*) in that he said that he felt that The Divine "should have shown [him] ... perhaps a better road in terms of knuckling down to studies instead of bunking out every afternoon and going surfing". Even in his more recent past he said that "even now and then [if he went] off the rails... perhaps had too many toots¹ and [lost his temper he would] get angry with God that God [had] let [him] loose his temper".

The issues of choice and creative expression were different for each participant. It seemed that although the early years of two participants may have been characterised by demands and restrictions imposed by their faith, this was no longer the case. At the time of the interviews no one was aware of any restrictions which may have been exerted on them by the church, and which had constrained their entitlement to choice.

6.9. THE POWER OF THE CHURCH

Bessie said that she was inclined to "separate Jesus things and church things" and although the church had been important in providing security, it had not come at the cost of having to deny her own convictions. She "moved on" when she had something she disagreed with, being content to disagree while still feeling a part of the body of the church. It was interesting to note that in spite of being exposed to what she referred to as "intense" religious instruction there were well-known doctrines which she did not fully understand. However, she felt that much of this was "clutter" that the Roman Catholic Church had added to Christianity and was not an issue for her.

¹ Alcoholic beverage

As a child Gill's experienced the negative power of the church. She vividly recalled a protestant Sunday school lesson during which the Hebrew Scripture text dealing with "the sins of the father" was being studied. The teacher had turned to her and with a pointed finger said: "you'll get punished my girl – because your father drinks so much". When nuns later corrected her in a humiliating manner she accepted it as good for her. Although she believed that without the input from the church she would have been an absolutely "horrible – terrible person ..." she had not accepted the voice of the church as perfect.

It was her opinion that the pope was not infallible, that there were "a lot of fat old Italian men running the church ..." and that with regard to some of the dogma "God was laughing up his sleeve and saying – good gracious me, was this that important". She perceived the church as being out of touch with reality in some aspects, for example the need for contraception in poor countries, that the process of the annulment of marriage (and the cost involved) was unnecessary, that women should have been allowed into the Priesthood, and that although the church could evolve through the influence of its adherents, the Roman Catholic Church was being "stifled by Rome".

As a child and teenager the church had imposed many restrictions on Yvonne's life. She felt she had had to lead everyone to commitment to Mary and to Christ, and she made a second "born again" commitment to The Divine, fearing that her initial commitment may have been lacking. Although the church was a key influence in Yvonne's life as a child, remained important, and was the source of much that was positive in her life, Yvonne no longer experienced the church as a place of self-sacrifice, devoid of joy and happiness and the only way to a relationship with The Divine. She remained a Roman Catholic because of the reconciliation she experienced through Confession, the belief that the Sacrament was the true presence of Christ, and the comfort she received from this sacrament. Yvonne recognised the shortfalls of the Roman Catholic Church and its priests, felt that the Vatican had too much power and was not comfortable with the hierarchy and rules. She had moved beyond "dogma" and while she had never had open conflict with the church, she held personal opinions and followed her own mind on certain issues, for example, contraception and alternative forms of healing. She had participated in the sacrament of communion in

churches other than the Roman Catholic Church and had refused to choose between the Roman Catholic Church and the protestant para-church organisations. As a mother Yvonne was aware of her responsibility to lead her children in the Christian walk. She would not have opposed her children exploring their faith in other denominations and avoided insisting on the rigid prayer regimes she was exposed to as a child. There were, however, some aspects of Roman Catholicism which she still actively encouraged in her children.

As a child the feeling was engendered in Paul that he "owed a debt of gratitude to God ... for everything God had done" and continued to do, along with the idea that The Divine had certain rules which were expected to be obeyed. The emphasis of his catechism had been to serve The Divine, and he had entered the priesthood with this in mind, namely "to help Him [The Divine] through kind of trying to help others". However, Paul later came to believe that The Divine did not impose anything on an individual, but offered love to humanity, to be accepted or rejected. He also saw the church as a community of people, and not an instrument through which The Divine sought to control the individual. He recognised that the church could attempt to do this and that at times the church had been wrong, but felt that these things would change in time.

Throughout the three interviews there was no indication that the church had any power over Rod. During university he became agnostic, and returned to the church only when he met his wife. Although he said his faith would be weak if he had no connection with the church, he was also largely reliant on personal reading of books on spirituality. At no time did Rod refer to the Church – or belief in The Divine – as necessary for salvation.

Bill used to have a "very narrow minded vision of churches. Only Catholics could get to heaven ... [a teaching which he said] came from the misguided nuns at kindergarten level". But his concept of church had changed. At the time of the interviews he believed that anyone who believed "in God, whether ... a Muslim, a Hindu a Christian, a Methodist, a Presbyterian ..." could all get to heaven. His concept of the church was that it was "just a way of keeping in touch with God". Although he valued a spiritual zeal, he would not have wanted to "sound like a

proselytising evangelic fervour kind of guy ... because [he felt he was] not that sort of person". His attitude to Vatican II suggested that many of his beliefs changed in line with the proclamations which came out of Vatican II. He did not know the then current stance of the Roman Catholic Church on issues such as purgatory and indulgences, but felt that they should be done away with. If there was a doctrine he was unsure of, and which was important to him, he used to explore it with his priest until he was satisfied. He also attended a Bible Study Class in order to discuss and understand issues.

It appeared that many participants had moved from a state of control and domination by the church to a place where they had the freedom to hold their own opinions and, while still trying to be in line with the will of The Divine, make their own decisions. None of the participants expressed any fear of being rejected by the church, or members of the church, for holding views different to what may be expected.

6.10. RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS: PERSONAL EVALUATIONS

While it has been important to note the influence of The Divine within the context of the church, it is equally as important to assess the impact of The Divine and the church on the participants as individuals. Although each agent is a member of one of the churches being researched, each has a distinctive perception of The Divine and self-identity, and this uniqueness needs to be acknowledged.

6.10.1. Evaluation: Bessie

Bessie's only masculine perception of The Divine was of a father with a gentle power; power being masculine and gentleness associated with both the masculine and feminine, as were protection, kindness, love, and wisdom. Feminine traits of caring, friendship, companionship and dependableness were strong aspects of her understanding and relationship with The Divine and Mary. For Bessie, *imago Dei* referred to the positive and likable divine attributes that could be seen in humanity, and that could be developed through relationship with The Divine. It also implied that human beings had the potential to be like The Divine; to grow in the nature of The Divine.

Bessie was aware of - and able to communicate about – what she perceived to be her strong and weak points and was able to convey these without pride or shame. She had had a goal in that she put all she had into raising her sons and was satisfied with her efforts. She was content with her job and her uncomplicated, although busy, lifestyle. Since Bessie was not solely dependent on the church for support and comfort, was comfortable with other faiths, and did not feel compelled to comply with all that the church said, one could conclude that the church did not hold all-embracing power in her life.

Within the context of Giddens' theories of identity development one could conclude that Bessie enjoyed a relatively strong sense of self-identity. Her strongly [personal] gender-stereotypical feminine awareness of The Divine would appear to have contributed to this, assisted by her relationship with Mary. However, one could conclude that, in spite of the influence of Mary, Bessie was unlikely to make any difference to the status-quo of patriarchal control and oppression in the church. It was remotely possible that through her influence on the lives of her sons she may make a difference in society.

6.10.2. Evaluation: Gill

Gill's perceptions of The Divine as a haven and place of protection appeared to have no gender connotation. Although Gill referred to The Divine in exclusively masculine terms, she had no gender-stereotypical masculine perceptions of The Divine. Traits of love, kindness, caring, and compassion were associated with the feminine, with the qualities of trust and comfort associated predominantly with Mary, of whom she was acutely aware.

Her understanding of *imago Dei* was that humans were created in the perfect "spiritual" image of The Divine, and with free choice, and it was wrong choices that marred this image. She saw the *imago Dei* in her own life in her caring and commitment to those in her custody, as well as her attempt to live a life of correct choice.

Gill was able to speak unreservedly with reference to herself, both her areas of success and shortfall. Her desire to make a difference in the lives of children motivated her purpose in life and defined her role. She appeared to have, for the most part, risen above the possible consequences of her childhood. The church, as comprising of its individual members, had had a significant influence in her life in terms of providing support and a safe place. In spite of this significance and dependence, Gill was not bound by doctrine or blind to what she perceived to be shortfalls in the Roman Catholic Church.

Based on Giddens' observations with regard to identity formation it is suggested that Gill had an unexpectedly strong sense of self. Almost all her perceptions of The Divine, and Mary, were gender-stereotypically feminine – suggesting that a feminine perspective of The Divine, and Mary, had had a positive influence on her life. This may have been strengthened by her understanding of *imago Dei* in that she was able to relate to aspects of this in her own life. Given her awareness of the harm done by her father and her husband, and her identification with Mary, it was unlikely that Gill would perpetuate the tradition of patriarchal power. Rather, she had actively instilled in her daughter a mind-set of independence and boldness.

6.10.3. Evaluation: Yvonne

Yvonne's perception of the nature of The Divine (including Mary) was gender stereotypically both masculine and feminine. Masculine traits included love and trustworthiness, while mercy, care, selflessness, and purity were perceived as feminine. Kindness and gentleness were considered both masculine and feminine traits. Yvonne's identification with Mary, as a woman and a role model, had impacted strongly on her life.

For Yvonne, being created in the image of The Divine could imply that human beings could know the presence of The Divine and possess qualities associated with The Divine. In her own life she identified the feminine gender-stereotypical traits of faithfulness, loyalty and understanding.

Yvonne related the story of her life with ease and openness. Although her understanding with regard to her purpose in life had changed, her pursuit of both her former and present goals had been, and remained, single-minded and enthusiastic. While the imprint of both the Schoenstatt movement and the Roman Catholic Church was indubitable, Yvonne had moved beyond the oppressive control and influence of the church to a place of discernment and independence. Although she still chose to approach The Divine for guidance, she was aware that she had the liberty of free choice.

One could conclude - according to Giddens' writing on self-identity - that Yvonne enjoyed a strong sense of identity and that the church, Mary and The Divine have all had an integral influence on her life. Predominantly feminine perceptions of The Divine, coupled with her view of Mary as a role model, appear to have had a positive impact. It is unlikely that Yvonne will consciously promote a patriarchally orientated society, but in as much as she was not fully aware of the impact of patriarchy, it could become an unintended consequence of her actions. However, she was fully aware of the potentially oppressive nature of the church and actively endeavored to overcome this influence in her children, while still holding to what she perceived to be the positive values of the Roman Catholic Church.

6.10.4. Evaluation: Paul

Paul perceived The Divine as one who was powerful, and who loved, cared and forgave; these traits having been associated with both the masculine and feminine. Paul also experienced The Divine as one who was compassionate, afforded security and was the source of material provision, these traits being perceived as predominantly masculine gender stereotypes. The masculine image of The Divine as "a jolly old chap" cannot be ignored, given his emphasis on the reality of the "person" of The Divine, and his perception of himself as a "cheerful bloke who doesn't lose his rag". Mary's possible influence and contribution to the development of Paul's self-identity could have been in her humanness, given his emphasis on the practical implications of his perception of The Divine. For Paul, the capacity to love fully, to reach reasoned conclusions and to make choices was central to his concept of *imago Dei*.

Paul was aware of his strong and weak points and was able to freely communicate with regard to these areas. He was committed to his goal of serving others as an expression of his love for The Divine and for humanity, this being a practical expression of an emotional devotion to The Divine. This emphasis on service, although having its genesis during his childhood, also appears to be linked to the practical nature of his outlook on life. The church, and The Divine, have always been very important in Paul's life and although he devoted his life to the service of the church in the role of a Priest, he was able to leave when he felt it imperative to do so.

Given Giddens' criteria for self-identity development one could conclude that Paul had a strong sense of identity. His perceptions of The Divine were mainly masculine in character and would appear to have had a positive influence on his life. However there were strong indications of influence beyond gender stereotypes. Without being aware of it, Paul espouses Giddens' view that change happens as the agent introduces new concepts and ways of thinking. He was aware of change in his own life and although he was not likely to impact on the patriarchal nature of the church, he would appear to be doing so in regard to the patriarchal nature of the family.

6.10.5. Evaluation: Rod

Rod's perceptions of The Divine were gender stereotypically masculine in as much as he attributed the human traits of strength, consistency, dependability, and fatherhood to The Divine. Qualities of kindness, gentleness, and involvement with the pain of humanity were associated with both the masculine and the feminine while the traits of motherhood, graciousness, caring, and patience were perceived as feminine gender stereotypes. During the interviews The Divine was spoken of in mainly masculine terms although the possibility of feminine aspects of The Divine was alluded to. Mary seemed important to Rod's spirituality.

Rod's perception of The Divine as one who expects to be supreme (in the best interest of the human agent), and who sometimes causes suffering to facilitate this, could not easily be associated with the masculine or feminine. Due to the nature of his profession as a physician Rod encountered suffering on a daily basis, making this aspect of The Divine very relevant. His understanding of *imago Dei* as associated

with both the physical and spiritual natures of humanity would also appear to be relevant, but this relevance is not straightforward.

Rod was uninhibited when speaking about himself, his nature and his expectations of himself and others. He related a clear goal and purpose in life, and conveyed a sense of contentment with his choice of career. While the church offered a vehicle for relationship with The Divine, it did not seem important with regard to human relationships. The church did not appear to have inhibited his freedom of choice in any way, and seemed to have no hold over him.

When evaluated according to Giddens' theories of identity Rod appeared to enjoy a strong sense of self-identity and a positive self-esteem. Rod's personal gender-stereotypical perceptions of The Divine were neither strongly masculine nor feminine. It was therefore not possible to draw any tentative conclusions with regard to the role of gender perceptions of The Divine in Rod's life. In spite of his awareness of Mary, and his (most likely) hidden gender-stereotypical feminine attributes of The Divine, Rod was unlikely to make any significant changes to the patriarchal nature of either the church or society.

6.10.6. Evaluation: Bill

Bill perceived The Divine as a patriarchal Being; a serene, loving, faithful, trustworthy and loyal Divine Being who dwelt among the people. In Bill's experience, these characteristics were predominantly masculine gender stereotypes, with faithfulness, friendship, love, and involvement being both masculine and feminine. The Divine also had feminine gender-stereotypical traits of compassion, as one who cared and who provided succor to all.

His understanding of *Imago Dei* revolved around aspects of good character, righteous deeds, and justice - "in God's name". Although his picture of The Divine was anthropomorphic, this was not reflected in his view on *Imago Dei*.

He spoke freely of himself and was conscious of what he saw to be both his strong and weak points. He worked hard to achieve the goals and live the roles set for himself early in his life. He felt he had a sense of purpose in life and was content with

it. Although the church was not an overarching source of power over Bill, his ideas on the role of The Divine in his life reflected an ambivalent tendency toward holding The Divine accountable for his (Bill's) wrong decisions, while knowing that he himself had the ability to choose.

According to Giddens' criteria for a strong sense of self-identity it would appear that Bill had a positive view of himself. This was also apparent throughout the interviews. Although many of the traits associated with The Divine were both masculine and feminine gender stereotypes, it was clear that he had a very anthropomorphic picture of The Divine in his mind's eye; this picture being strongly masculine. It was therefore possible that his predominantly masculine understanding of The Divine had contributed to positive self-identity. Bill's views on the patriarchal nature of the priesthood and many of the Roman Catholic opinions on the role women indicated that it was not likely that he would have contributed to any significant changes for women, especially in the church.

6.11. SUMMARY OF THE TEACHINGS AND IMPACT OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC COMMUNITIES

Central to the experience of research participants worshipping in the Roman Catholic churches under review was the presence of Christ at Mass, specifically through the doctrine of transubstantiation. Partaking in this act of worship engendered a feeling of a one-to-one encounter with The Divine. The Divine was also a father in heaven, someone with whom one could have a relationship. An interesting observation was that, without any prompting, reference to the feminine was often made during discussion on perceptions of The Divine. In spite of this, The Divine remained almost unquestionably "male".

Mary was central to the Christian experience of all the participants. She was the one who was more approachable, her humanity and femininity in relation to motherhood facilitating this access. She commanded respect, affection and devotion and was often considered a role model.

The *imago Dei* of humanity revolved mainly around the idea of human beings being able to share in the attributes and qualities of The Divine, and to grow to becoming more like The Divine. Priests were the earthly representatives of The Divine, as revealed through the incarnation in the person of Jesus Christ, and therefore had to be male.

Although the Roman Catholic Church had many rules and regulations, and the utterances of the pope were seen to be infallible, it was reasonably clear that for the lay person in the Roman Catholic Church these were not as controlling as they perhaps ought to have been. The church, as the building or meeting place of members, appeared to provide a sense of security and retreat, while the church (as the body of believers) was, at times, experienced as a vital support structure of encouragement, assistance and a place of belonging. The idea of service and devotion to the church has to be noted.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

*"We dance round in a ring and suppose,
But the Secret sits in the middle and knows"*

from: The Secret Sits

by: Robert Frost

7.1. ORIENTATION

This thesis has been based on the premise that although the perceived existence of The Divine may not be a social activity *per se*, the implications of this belief are – for people of faith - an aspect of practical consciousness, and a basic foundation, upon which almost all aspects of their lives revolve. Together with this belief in the existence of The Divine are perceptions of The Divine which are seldom acknowledged or recognised as having an influence on everyday life, - and in the context of this thesis - the development of self-identity. Also relevant was the church as the *milieu* within which these perceptions of The Divine are safeguarded, and the vehicle through which these perceptions, and the expectations, of The Divine are relayed to the lay agent. The church, being a social institution, shares many of the characteristics of society to which Giddens refers, although the content and nature of many of these characteristics almost always differ.

For Giddens, identity formation begins when the agent is able to discursively relate something of the nature of, and purpose for, their actions. This thesis has suggested that devotion to The Divine (and membership of a church) provides not only a purpose for living, but also an environment which supports, promotes and facilitates predetermined convictions which are then assimilated by the individual. While the agent may maintain that they have made the choice to be aligned with the church and the Christian faith, the full extent of the consequence of this assimilation occurs on a level not consciously acknowledged.

7.2. COMPARISON BETWEEN THE LIGHTHOUSE COMMUNITY CHURCH AND THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCHES

7.2.1. Perceptions of The Divine and Mary

As fully expected, all research participants from both the Lighthouse Community and the Roman Catholic churches acknowledged the existence of The Divine and an awareness of The Divine as immanent and wanting a relationship with the individual; ascribing consciousness and agency to The Divine: The Divine participating in the *durée* of time.

All respondents indicated a degree of perceiving The Divine as both immanent and transcendent, speaking of an acknowledged presence as well as recognising that The Divine was mystery and beyond human reasoning. However their means of experience of The Divine differed. Members of the Lighthouse Community Church perceived The Divine as transcendent in that The Divine was ethereal in nature, yet present through the presence of the Holy Spirit – made real through Baptism of the Spirit. For the respondents from the Roman Catholic churches The Divine was transcended in that he [sic] was more often an anthropomorphic figure, ruling humanity from the heights of heaven. The Divine was however present through participation in Mass and the consumption of the elements of the Eucharist.

A further common denominator was the language used when referring to The Divine. Without exception, masculine terminology was applied in conversation with regard to The Divine and although there were participants from the Roman Catholic churches who were aware of the possibility of The Divine having a feminine facet, they nevertheless maintained the use of the masculine terms of he, father, lord, *et cetera*. Most participants of the Lighthouse Community Church had no reference to the influence of Mary with regard to their spirituality, while for members of the Roman Catholic churches – both men and women – she was revered and adored in both her humanity and her holiness.

7.2.2. *Imago Dei*

Fundamental to the Christian faith is the doctrine of *imago Dei*. Belief in this doctrine implies, among other things, that the human agent has the right to free will, is a relational being, is able to discursively relate a purpose and sense of continuity in their life (normally based on their commitment to The Divine and the will of The Divine), is able to reason, communicate and be creative, and accept responsibility for her/his actions.

Most participants understood *imago Dei* as humanity having the attributes of The Divine, attributes which were spoken of in terms common to human personality and traits. Identification with The Divine could therefore be said to depend on the degree to which these traits are recognised in both The Divine and the agent. Gender identity would then be associated with stereotypical perceptions of what is considered masculine and/or feminine.

7.2.3. Patriarchy

7.2.3.1. The Divine as Patriarch/Father

Although participants from both denominations referred to The Divine in only masculine terminology, their gender perceptions with regard to The Divine were different. There was no acknowledgement among members from the Lighthouse Community Church that The Divine could have any feminine identity, while three of the six participants from the Roman Catholic Churches grappled with this issue, volunteering the possibility of a feminine facet to The Divine.

7.2.3.2. Women and Men in the church

The patriarchal nature of the church, The Divine, and family life and society was evident in research participants from both communities. However, in the Lighthouse Community Church the aspects of the 'Father-heart of God' [sic], the male leadership of the church and the 'husband as the head of the home' were actively taught, whereas in the Roman Catholic communities these seemed to be taken for granted. Although the maleness of the priesthood in the Roman Catholic Church was a very conscious patriarchal expression of the influence of the laws of the church, patriarchy in the

home and society – as well as the exclusive patriarchal nature of The Divine - was not accentuated.

7.2.3.3. Wives and husbands

Wives from the Lighthouse Community Church were aware of their role as a support to their husbands, and their duty to submit to him. Husbands claimed this role of headship as ordained by The Divine. On the other hand, most participants in the Roman Catholic Churches understood the relationship between a wife and husband to be mutually supportive and that both were equally responsible for decisions.

The teaching of the Lighthouse Community Church denied women the right and responsibility to free choice; a fundamental principle in the doctrine of *imago Dei*, and an important building block in Giddens' philosophy on the making of identity. It also deprived women their opportunity for creative expression and reason.

7.2.4. Relationships and Security

With regard to the development of self-identity Giddens paints a picture of modern society that is less secure than that of pre-modern cultures. Time, space and place no longer ground the agent to 'the moment'. Relationships are unreliable, and truth is unstable in nature. Society today also exists in community, but according to Giddens is characterised by pure relationships; relationships which are based on mutual need satisfaction and gratification, and that offer little security, since they dissolve once the parties no longer need each other.

However, the church as a social institution appeared to offer relationships of a more secure and accepting nature, although this may have come at the price of un/acknowledged conformity. A similar tendency was observed with regard to relationship with The Divine. This relationship was based on acceptance by The Divine, but was believed to be dependent on following what was perceived or understood to be "the will of The Divine". Although a price (obedience and conformity) may have needed to be paid, the gains - a safe environment within which to develop a self-identity which reaches its potential - may have had the potential to outweigh the cost:

Community is also one of the cornerstones of *imago Dei*. The Divine is believed to be triune in nature, and there is believed to be community within The Divine. The creation myths of the Christian faith also refer to The Divine as specifically creating humanity 'in relationship'.

Most participants from the Lighthouse Community Church found a comfort and security in their relations within their church, and with The Divine. Fellowship was based on covenant relationship: informed and motivated by merely 'belonging', although the dictates of Scripture also require that relationships be honest and trustworthy. Participants from the Roman Catholic churches spoke convincingly of the sense of belonging that they found within their church and, as with the Lighthouse Community Church, their experience of the church as providing security and being a support structure. As mentioned, the presence of The Divine was experienced through the Holy Spirit in the Lighthouse Community Church, while participants of the Roman Catholic Churches encountered The Divine through their participation in Mass and the consuming of The Host.

Research participants from both the Lighthouse and Catholic communities acknowledged the role of the church as a place of fellowship, security, and trust – but there was more overt emphasis on this in the Lighthouse Community. The Lighthouse Community Church appeared to have more power over its members than did the Roman Catholic churches. It would seem this was based on the more functional demands of the Lighthouse Community Church with regard to adherence to the values which it espoused and which were claimed to be rooted on Scripture.

This sense of belonging seemed to facilitate the development of self-identity, but it appeared to be a specific identity: that of a Christian, based on belief in The Divine, and fostered within the community of the church. There was also reference to the fact that relationship with The Divine, and fellowship within the church, facilitated the discovery and use of abilities which had previously been dormant; what Giddens would call, a 'leap into the unknown'.

7.2.5. Freedom of Choice

Giddens also claims that access to free choice provides a springboard for creativity, which in turn facilitates the development of self-identity. Free choice would also imply the ability and need for the ability, to reason, and to come to one's own conclusions.

Christian believers are often told what to believe and are encouraged to accept the dictates of Scripture in a literal way, and not to think through the implications or try to understand for themselves. Faith and dependence on The Divine should be sufficient. Participants from the Lighthouse Community Church appeared to be able to exercise less choice, with submission to the dictates of the church being almost a pre-requisite for belonging to the Lighthouse Community Church. Accepting the teachings of Scripture as authoritative in one's life was also a basic requirement. There was evidence that some agents did not agree with everything the church said, but these were teachings which did not affect them. Roman Catholic Churches members also disagreed with many of the standpoints of the their church, and were outspoken about them. In a few instances this disagreement implied 'active disobedience', (for example, contraception), but there was no evidence of guilt or fear in making one's own choice.

Free will is also fundamental to the doctrine of humanity created in the image of The Divine. It is commonly believed that The Divine did not create humanity as puppets who could be manipulated from 'on high', but as free agents who could choose whether to love and worship The Divine, and care for other human beings, or prefer to 'go their own way'.

7.2.6. The Power of the Church

Because the church exerts authority in the name of The Divine – the One who has the power to condemn the agent to an eternity of suffering – the power of the church in the life of the agent, and the making of self-identity, cannot be overlooked. An example of this is seen in Pearl's reaction to those who had left the Roman Catholic Church, namely, a mental picture of the flames of hell around their feet. It would

seem that the power of the church, belief in the message of The Divine, and the value systems of religion, tend to permeate all aspects of life – perhaps more so than one would see with regard to institutions of finance, employment, education *et cetera*.

The power of the church also lies in its ability – as a social institution - to offer relationship, security, a sense of continuity and feelings of acceptance; as well as facilitating contact and relationship with The Divine. The power of The Divine lies in providing a purpose for living and a hope in dying. Although it could be said that the church has no actual power, that is, it cannot force anyone to participate in its structures, nor can it punish those who do not, it does have authority in the life of the human agent who finds within the precincts of the church the conditions necessary for the living of life, the place where needs are met, and a self-identity can be formed.

While respondents from both the Lighthouse Community Church and the Roman Catholic Churches spoke of the power of the church, they did not appear to perceive it as negative. Awareness of The Divine had made a significant impact on their lives and identity development, but none mentioned a conscious awareness of anything that they may have had to sacrifice in order to enjoy what they considered to be the positive benefits of their relationship with the church and The Divine.

Historically the Christian faith has been the predominant religious persuasion in the western world. Through the actions and utterances of its members in the construction and constitution of society it has had a strong reflexive impact on society, its structures, morals, and values. For as long as this influence continues, the church, and these Christian standards and principles are going to be – reflexively – ongoing components among the building blocks which re-create society. A degree of status quo can be expected to remain, but due to the reflexive nature of society slow change should happen. On the other hand, the tendency of the church to retreat into itself and to hold on to traditional views could mean that there will always be agents who find themselves part of religious structures which manage to elude change.

7.3. FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH: GENDER PERCEPTIONS AND IDENTITY

The findings in the literature review suggested that the virtually exclusive masculine terminology used when referring to The Divine was almost automatically and unequivocally beneficial to men and detrimental to women. It is most likely true that the findings of this previous research are correct with regard to the patriarchal power structures of religious societies, churches and many homes, namely those which are based on the theology of "orders of creation", that is: God->Men->Women. Patriarchal power suggests that men share the "gender identity" of The Divine and the exclusive use of male orientated language used to address The Divine, for example Father, Lord, Master, King *et cetera*, imbues the human holders of these titles with the power and/or authority associated with these designations.

Men answer to The Divine, and women answer to men. Patriarchy, or 'the rule of the fathers', creates a society in which 'maleness' is the norm and a man's way of doing things is the most acceptable way of approaching life, and men are in charge: men lead, women follow; men decide, women agree; men are served, women serve; men are strong and women are weak In a patriarchal society most women are generally not accorded the opportunity, respect and recognition that almost automatically goes to the majority men, and are simultaneously being denied their rights and responsibilities associated with *imago Dei*.

It was assumed that most words used to describe the nature and character of The Divine, and that the terminology associated with the roles of father, lord, master *et cetera*, carried automatic male gender-stereotypical connotations. Control, strength, power, leadership, authority *et cetera* were seen to be masculine gender-stereotypes which were deemed to have the potential to alienate women from The Divine, place her in a position of submission to men who claimed these roles and attributes for themselves, and denied women the opportunity to experience their personal self-identity as being akin to that of The Divine.

This research has discovered that when addressing the issue of the development of self-identity there appears to be a second aspect to gender-language when speaking

about The Divine; namely the personal gender-associations with the terms used to address The Divine, and the perceived characteristics and traits associated with The Divine. Individuals have their own perception of what is gender-stereotypically masculine and feminine, and these are often contrary to the assumed and taken for granted associations given by society. For example, the general assumption that the word "power" is a masculine stereotype is not necessarily so for all agents. Since gender perceptions of The Divine go beyond the language used when speaking of, and addressing, The Divine, both women and men could be equally as positively or negatively influenced by the vocabulary associated with The Divine, depending on their personal gender-stereotypical understandings of the words used to describe the qualities, traits, descriptions and perceptions of The Divine.

An analysis of the content of the interviews with the research participants who facilitated this research suggests that it is these personal understandings of masculine and/or feminine gender-stereotypical traits which influence the impact of perceptions of The Divine on personal self-identity formation. Research participants either did not refer to The Divine in feminine terms at all, or expressly stated that The Divine was masculine, yet attributed gender-stereotypical traits (as personally perceived by themselves to be masculine or feminine) to The Divine. This was an unconscious association. Although not conclusive, these traits appeared to have had an influence on their self-identity and their perceptions of themselves. Women whose perceptions of The Divine were predominantly personally gender-stereotypically feminine in nature tended toward a stronger sense of self-identity, while men whose gender associations were predominantly feminine tended toward a less strong sense of self-identity. The same trend was suggested for women and men with predominantly masculine perceptions: women were less strong in their sense of self-identity, while men were more secure in their sense of self-identity. Put another way: a woman who perceives the Divine to be caring, protecting, loving, strong, creative, clever, merciful and forgiving, and who identifies the majority these traits as feminine, would have a stronger sense of identification with the Divine Being in whose image she is created, and possibly a stronger sense of self-identity. On the other hand a man, with the same set of perceptions, would have lesser sense of identification, and possibly a weaker sense of self-identity.

The strength of this influence appears based on the anthropomorphic nature of the terms and concepts used to describe The Divine; this language normally being associated with human beings. For example, words like loving, kind, powerful *et cetera* would normally be used to describe the character of individual agents; but have also been used to describe the nature and traits of The Divine; and each has its own gender connotation.

But anthropomorphic language is not the only human aspect to perceptions of The Divine. Human beings also have the potential to perceive The Divine in either ethereal or corporal terms. In the Christian faith these bodily (or 'physical') 'pictures' are predominantly 'male-like' and would engender terms generally associated with the masculine. Although these terms may not always be perceived, by the individual, to be masculine, they present greater opportunity for masculine perception. But just as The Divine, and especially Jesus, embody the male, so too does Mary embody the female. The degree to which she is allied with The Divine, and provides [possibly feminine] perceptions which would otherwise not have been associated with The Divine, would determine the strength of her influence.

7.4. THE CONSEQUENCES OF JESUS' AND MARY'S ASSOCIATION WITH THE DIVINE

There are two human figures who are closely associated with The Divine, namely Jesus of Nazareth, believed to be God-incarnate - both fully human and fully divine - and Mary, his mother. Although there are no claims as to her divinity, she is – at least in the Roman Catholic Church – revered as Theotokos, the one who bore God, and venerated to a position almost alongside that of her son – as seen in the architecture and adornment of Roman Catholic Churches and (among other prayers and liturgies) the saying of the Rosary. Both Jesus and Mary have had their own impact on the lives of Christian believers, and this would appear to have been linked to the concept of *imago Dei*.

The maleness of Christ (or Jesus) has had a direct impact on the refusal of many churches to ordain women. The historical Jesus, the human male, was The Divine (or the representative of The Divine) on earth. Therefore any person – minister, priest or

Pastor - who is to fulfil the same role, must, of necessity, be a male. This results in a patriarchally dominated church, devoid of feminine input with regard to leadership.

xxxxxxxxxx

However, Mary, although not officially divine, does have an influence, both a role model for women and one within whom believers can find comfort and acceptance. Her humanity makes it easy to approach her, and her direct contact with The Divine imbues her with esteem and power. More than one participant was of the opinion that if Mary were to be accorded a more central place in the Christian faith there may be less abuse of women, a lesser tendency toward pornography and a greater respect of women in general.

Although not doctrinally considered to be divine, there was evidence that for some people the association was so strong that she was able to contribute to perceptions of The Divine with equal significance. Support for this may be seen in the awareness of participants from the Roman Catholic Churches that there may be a feminine face to The Divine, as well as unconscious associations of Mary with The Divine, and the tendency of more than one respondent to recount having prayed to her.

7.5. LIMITATIONS TO THIS RESEARCH

As I have neared the conclusion of this research I have become aware of a number of areas in which improvements could have been made. While everything that has been mentioned (plus a lot more) is relevant to the making of self-identity, it may have been beneficial to concentrate only on perceptions of The Divine to the degree in which they relate to personal gender-stereotypical understandings of these perceptions and self-identity development. This would have implied leaving out the role of the church in the life of the agent, and much of Giddens' reference to the making of identity. However, this would have made the findings more shallow.

On the other hand I am also aware that there are so many factors beyond those mentioned that could also affect the making of self-identity. It is possible that I have omitted giving attention to an important aspect of this research, for example, giving more credence to relationships with parental figures. However, in my selection of research participants I attempted to "match" backgrounds and although there was no

consistent background for all participants, there was normally a correlation between one participant from each denomination.

7.6. SUMMARY

Power, according to feminist psychologist Miller (in Gaffney, 1991:3,4), is the "*capacity to produce a change, that is, to move anything from point A to point B*". The church –as a social institution – possesses this authority and ability to control; power being engendered through teachings on The Divine and the threat of eternal damnation if these teachings are not endorsed. However, just as the church has the power to facilitate change it also has the power to maintain the status quo. This thesis has moved from the premise that the maintenance of patriarchal leadership is one of the aims of the evangelical and Roman Catholic churches, and that masculine language used to define and describe The Divine sustains this process, through the process of what Giddens calls Structuration Theory.

While there is evidence to support the theory that masculine terminology and of The Divine does have an impact with regard to the structures and leadership of the church, and patriarchy as a social order, this research can find no conclusive evidence of a correlation between gender language *per se* (used when speaking of, and addressing The Divine), and personal self-identity. However, there is strong evidence to support the idea that gender perceptions of The Divine have affected the identity formation and self-perception of the twelve participants in this study; the power of these perceptions being located in the personal gender-stereotypical understandings of the words used when describing, speaking of, and addressing, The Divine.

It appears that their significance is linked to the degree to which an individual perceives and describes The Divine (and the traits of The Divine) in anthropomorphic terms, that is, associations with The Divine through the allocation of human traits and characteristics. Mary, who is similarly described, appears to have an influence on the making of self-identity, the strength of this influence lying in her association with The Divine, which has the potential to accord equal value to the gender-stereotypical perceptions of the terminology associated with her.

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May 2003

Request for Research Participants.

My name is Dianne Sundberg. I started studying theology many years ago and have presently been afforded the opportunity to undertake a Masters Degree in Sociology of Religion at Rhodes University – East London Campus. For many years I have contemplated the influence that our understanding of God has in our lives. This question is now the basis of my thesis and I am currently needing to conduct interviews with people who would be willing to be interviewed as research participants.

I have spoken to [Name of pastor/priest] and he has given me permission to have this letter distributed.

Should you feel that you would be willing to assist me, I would ask that you complete and hand in the attached form (there is a box at the back of the church – with my name on it).

If you become a participant I would ask that we meet at a time and place convenient to yourself – for two or three interviews, during which time I will ask you to share some of your life experience with me. There are no ‘correct’ or ‘incorrect’ answers, only your personal experience and understanding. In order to recall the content of our interviews I would need your permission to record them.

Please consider my request. My telephone number, and e-mail address, is at the top of this letter, should you have any questions which would assist you in making your decision.

I look forward to hearing from you.

With thanks

Dianne Sundberg

PS The form is not as complicated as it looks!

Date:

Appendix 1

Dear Dianne

I _____ acknowledge that I would be willing to participate in your research project.

I understand that I will not be asked to change my views in any way and that my experience and understanding of God and my church will be respected.

Once the tape recorded interviews have been conducted I appreciate that notes will be taken under a pseudonym and the tapes erased when the research is complete. With regard to any reference to our interviews, I understand that I will refered to by my pseudonym.

It would be most convenient for me to meet you as follows:

Days of the week: _____

Best times: _____

Most suitable venue: _____

Signed: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

Please use this space for questions or comments:

Appendix 3

Personal Details

Contact Details:

Name _____ Tel Number _____

Cell Number: _____ Fax Number _____

e-mail: _____

Personal Profile:

Age: _____

Gender: _____

Female Male

Home Language: _____

English Afrikaans Xhosa Other _____

Formal Education _____

Last Educational Qualification _____ Date Attained _____

Schools attended (Please tick any appropriate block)

Private Government Convent College _____

Technician University Other _____

I am (please tick all appropriate blocks):

Engaged Living with my partner

[Have] Never Married Married

Separated Divorced

Widowed A Parent

A Grandparent

Please tick **all** the squares that apply to you (and make notes if you wish):

I grew up with both parents at home

I grew up in a one parent family

I was an only child

I had one sibling

I had two or more siblings

I am the oldest child

I am the youngest child

I grew up with my birth parents

I am an adopted child

I was born and raised in South Africa

I was very close to my father

I was very close to my mother

I was my father's favourite child

I was my mother's favourite child

Primary Care Giver:

Please indicate (as best as you can recall):

With a tick [✓] who was your primary care giver during the following ages of your life

With a cross [x] who had the most influence on your life during the following ages – if this was someone other than your primary care giver.

Birth to 1 year Mother Father Both Parents Someone else

1 year old Mother Father Both Parents Someone else

2 years old Mother Father Both Parents Someone else

3 years old Mother Father Both Parents Someone else

4 years old Mother Father Both Parents Someone else

5 years old Mother Father Both Parents Someone else

6 years old Mother Father Both Parents Someone else

7 years old Mother Father Both Parents Someone else

8 years old Mother Father Both Parents Someone else

9 years old Mother Father Both Parents Someone else

10 years old Mother Father Both Parents Someone else

11 years old Mother Father Both Parents Someone else

12 years old Mother Father Both Parents Someone else

13 years old Mother Father Both Parents Someone else

14 years old Mother Father Both Parents Someone else

15 years old Mother Father Both Parents Someone else

16 years old Mother Father Both Parents Someone else

If you would like to explain something, please feel free to so: _____

Home Environment: Please rate the following questions according to the scale provided. 1 – strongly disagree 10 – strongly agree.

Between Birth and 5 years of Age

In my opinion, I was in a Christian home 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I was basically a happy baby/toddler 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Between 5 and 8 years of age

In my opinion, I was in a Christian home 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I was basically a happy child 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Between 8 and 10 years of age

In my opinion, I was in a Christian home 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I was basically a happy child 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Between 11 and 13 years of age

In my opinion, I was in a Christian home 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I was basically a happy teenager 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Between 13 and 15 years of age

In my opinion, I was in a Christian home 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I was basically a happy teenager 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Between 16 and 18 years of age

In my opinion, I was in a Christian home 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I was basically a happy person 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

It was expected that I would go to college/university

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

It was expected that I would follow a profession

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

It was expected that I would get married and become a 'housewife'

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

It was expected that I would become an apprentice & follow a trade

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

It was expected that I would follow in my parents footsteps

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I was allowed free choice with regard to my plans for my adult life

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Church Involvement

For the purpose of this section, 'occasionally' refers to once a month or less, 'often' to two or three times a month, while 'regularly' implies attendance almost every Sunday

Between the ages of 4-6, I attended Sunday School:

Never Occasionally Often Regularly

at a Roman Catholic Church 'Charismatic' Church Other Church

Between the ages of 6-8, I attended Sunday School:

Never Occasionally Often Regularly

at a Roman Catholic Church 'Charismatic' Church Other Church

Between the ages of 8-10, I attended Sunday School:

Never Occasionally Often Regularly

at a Roman Catholic Church 'Charismatic' Church Other Church

Between the ages of 10-12, I attended Sunday School:

Never Occasionally Often Regularly

at a Roman Catholic Church 'Charismatic' Church Other Church

Between the ages of 12-14, I attended Sunday School/Youth:

Never Occasionally Often Regularly

at a Roman Catholic Church 'Charismatic' Church Other Church

Between the ages of 14-16, I attended Sunday School/Youth Church:

Never Occasionally Often Regularly

at a Roman Catholic Church 'Charismatic' Church Other Church

In my opinion, I am currently:

Very involved Involved Marginally involved Not involved

in the life and activity of the church I attend

I attend church:

3 or more times per month Twice a month Once a month Less

I have been a member of this church for:

More than 20 years 10-20 years Less than 10 years

In my opinion, I rate my understanding of church doctrine and teaching as:

Excellent Very Good Good

Fair Not good Know nothing

About God

1. Tell me about your first experience of God? How old were you. What happened? How did it make you feel?
2. What impact did it have on your life at the time? Did it have an ongoing impact?
3. What was your most significant experience of God?
4. If you were to asked to 'draw' God as a child, what would your drawing have looked like?
5. Where do you think this picture came from?
6. If you were asked to 'draw' God now, what would your drawing look like?
7. Why do you think it has changed – if it has
8. What words best describe God for you – in the past? Now?
9. Where in nature do you most experience God – in the past, now. Is there something that describes God for you?
10. To what degree do you feel you have a choice in being a Christian? Is your relationship with God something you have chosen, or something that has chosen you?
11. Can you imagine leaving the church? What would the consequences be if you did?
12. How does your sense of 'belonging to God' make you feel?
13. How do you understand suffering?
14. Have you ever felt that God has let you down?
15. Do you feel that you can get angry with God?
16. How do you handle a crisis?
17. How do you feel about the Church?
18. What role does Mary play in your faith experience?
19. How do you feel about God being present all the time?

About self-perception

1. Tell me about yourself [To see if the answer includes reference to self or only to self in relation to work, others etc], also to get a background picture. View of parents, influence of parents etc
2. What words best describe yourself?
3. What do you like most about yourself?
4. What don't you like about yourself?
5. If you could change something, what would it be? How many things would you like to change? Have you always felt this way – or has it changed over time?
6. Would you like to be your spouse i.e. married to yourself?
7. How does your spouse see you, your friends?
8. If you were setting out on a new task – what would your feelings be?
9. When you succeed – how do you feel? Have you always felt this way?
10. When you fail – how do you feel?
11. How do you handle criticism?
12. What words would best describe the 'ideal you'? If you were creating yourself – what would your 'specs' be?
13. What does it mean to you for humans to be created in the image of God?
14. What are some of the attributes of God that you see in people around you? Which ones, in whom? Do you see any of them in yourself? Why do you think this is? Has it changed over the years?
15. When you were growing up –did you have a role model? Now?

Final Interview

1. What do you see as your role or purpose in the church, the family and society?
2. Have there been any changes in your church? How do you understand what has happened?
3. [Hypothetical Question]: If your church were to decide that an aspect of their teaching, doctrine or practice had been wrong – and therefore needed to be removed or changed; what would you miss the most? What would you miss the least?
4. Would you say the teachings of the church have influenced/ changed your thinking of your life, of yourself? If so, how?
5. Why do you believe?
6. When you do good things, why do you do them?
7. What do you do when you disagree with something in the church?
8. Why do you belong to the church/denomination that you do belong to?
9. What do you do when you see evil/sadness around you? What will happen if you don't do good/oppose evil?
10. Do you think God needs humanity? Why?
11. To what degree do you feel you have the capacity or opportunity to make a difference in the church/ the world around you?
12. Who would you identify with if you have to choose a Bible Character/Saint? Why?
13. Brainstorm /Word Associations:

- mother	- father
- yourself (name of person)	- human beings
- good things about men	- good things about women
- bad things about men	- bad things about women
- Christian	- God
- Jesus	- Holy Spirit
14. What is your view on the roles of husbands and wives?
15. What is your view on the role of women as priests/pastors?
16. What role did clergy/priests/pastors/monks/nuns/brothers play in your faith experience?
17. Why did you participate in this research and has it affected you in any way?

- Please: 1. Delete what is/was not applicable
 2. Circle that which is/was very relevant
 3. Tick that which is/was partially relevant

At the age/stage _____ I would (have) describe(d) myself as:

ABRUPT	HAPPY WITH LIFE	RESERVED
AFRAID OF GOD	HAPPY GO LUCKY	RESPONSIBLE
ANALYTICAL	HEALTHY	SACRIFICIAL
AWARE OF GOD	HONEST	SCARED OF LIFE
BAD TEMPERED	HUMBLE	SELFISH
BOSSY	HUMOROUS	SHY
CHEERFUL	IMPATIENT	STRICT
COMPASSIONATE	INTENSE	SULKY
CONFIDENT	INTERESTING	TIMID
CONFLICT AVOIDER	INTROVERT	TRUSTING
CONFUSED	LAZY	UNFORGIVING
CONSERVATIVE	LEADER	UNFRIENDLY
DECISIVE	LONELY	WELL BEHAVED
DEPENDENT ON GOD	LOVED BY GOD	
EARNEST	LOYAL	ANY OTHER:
EMOTIONAL	OBJECTIVE	
EMPATHETIC	OPEN MINDED	
EXTROVERT	OUTGOING	
FORGIVING	PATIENT	
FREE THINKER	PEDANTIC	
FRIENDLY	PERFECTIONIST	
GENEROUS	PRIVILEGED	
GO GETTER	QUIET	
GOOD LISTENER	REBELLIOUS	
GOOD PARENT	REGRETFUL	

- Please: 1. Delete what is/was not applicable
 2. Circle that which is/was very relevant
 3. Tick that which is/was partially relevant

At the age/stage _____ I would (have) associated the following words with God:

ABBA	FATHER	OMNISCIENT
AGELESS	GENTLE	ON A THRONE
ANGRY	LIFE GIVER	PERFECTIONIST
AUTHORITATIVE	GRACE	POWERFUL
AWESOME	GREAT	PROTECTOR
BAPTISM in the SPIRIT	HOLY	PROVIDER
BEAUTIFUL	JEALOUS	RULER
BLESSES	JUDGE	SELF-GIVING
CARING	KIND	SOVEREIGN
CHANGEABLE	LIGHT	STERN
COMPANION	LOVING	STRONG
COMPASSIONATE	LOYAL	THOUGHTFUL
CONDEMNING	MAJESTIC	TO BE FEARED
CONSISTENT	MAKES US SUFFER	TOO BIG
CREATOR	MAN ON A THRONE	TRUSTWORTHY
DEPENDABLE	MIGHTY	UNFAIR
DISCIPLINARIAN	MOTHER	WEAK
ETERNAL	OLD MAN WITH LONG HAIR	WISE
ETHEREAL		
FAIR	OLD MAN IN A CLOUD	
FAITHFUL		ANY OTHER
FAMILIAR	OMNIPOTENT	
FAR AWAY	OMNIPRESENT	

- Please: 1. Delete what is/was not applicable
2. Circle that which is/was very relevant
3. Tick that which is/was partially relevant

At the age/stage _____ I would (have) describe(d) myself as feeling:

CONTENT / DISCONTENT

FULFILLED / UNFULFILLED

HAPPY / SAD

HOPEFUL / HOPELESS

INADEQUATE / ADEQUATE

LOVED / UNLOVED

NEGATIVE / POSITIVE

OPTIMISTIC / PESSIMISTIC

SIGNIFICANT / INSIGNIFICANT

WORTHY / UNWORTHY

ANY OTHER

- Please: 1. Delete what is/was not applicable
2. Circle that which is/was very relevant
3. Tick that which is/was partially relevant

At the age/stage _____
I would (have) describe(d) Mary as:

CO-REDEMTRIX

ETERNAL

GENTLE

GRACIOUS

HUMAN BEING

IN HEAVEN

KIND

LISTENER

MOTHER

MOTHER OF GOD

MOTHER OF JESUS

MOTHER OF THE CHURCH

ON MY SIDE

OUR LADY

POWERFUL

PROTECTOR

SAD

SELF-GIVING

STRONG

VIRGIN

WEAK

WISE

QUEEN OF HEAVEN

**UNDERSTANDING OF HUMAN
SUFFERING**

**INTERMEDIARY BETWEEN
MYSELF AND GOD**

ANY OTHER:

- Please: 1. Delete what is/was not applicable
2. Circle that which is/was very relevant
3. Tick that which is/was partially relevant

At the age/stage _____ I would (have) describe(d) the church as:

RELEVANT

IRRELEVANT

POWERFUL

A WASTE OF TIME

NECESSARY

UNNECESSARY

A GOOD PLACE TO BE

THE HOME OF GOD

A PLACE TO FIND GOD

A BUILDING

PEOPLE

A PLACE OF HOPE

A PLACE OF HEALING

RICH

POOR

ORNATE

TOO ORNATE

BEAUTIFUL

PEACEFUL

FRIENDLY

UNFRIENDLY

WELCOMING

“JUST THERE”

OTHER

IT WAS/IS

A DUTY TO GO TO CHURCH

FUN TO GO TO CHURCH

A SPECIAL EXPERIENCE

ESSENTIAL TO GO TO CHURCH

A SOCIAL GET TOGETHER

ANY OTHER:

1



Alter in the Schoenstatt Shrine depicting the centrality of Mary the Mother of Jesus.

2



3

Photographs of the interior of the Lighthouse Community Church – highlighting:

The access to the 'alter area' (2)

The informal nature of the church building (3)

The practical approach to worship – tissues visibly available should they be needed (4)

4



5



Photographs of the interior of A Roman Catholic Church depicting the more formal and austere approach to worship. The Altar separated from the people (5), and the stations of The Cross adorning the surrounding walls (6)

6



7

A picture of Mary holding the Christ Child – hanging in the entrance of St Anne's Roman Catholic Church



8



9

Analogous statuetes of Jesus (8) and Mary (9) at the front of St Anne's Roman Catholic Church. The former in the left hand corner, the latter in the right hand corner

10



11

Burning Sanctuary Lamp (left) indicating the presence of the Blessed Sacrament in the Tabernacle (right)



12



Depiction of Jesus commonly known as
the 'Sacred Heart'

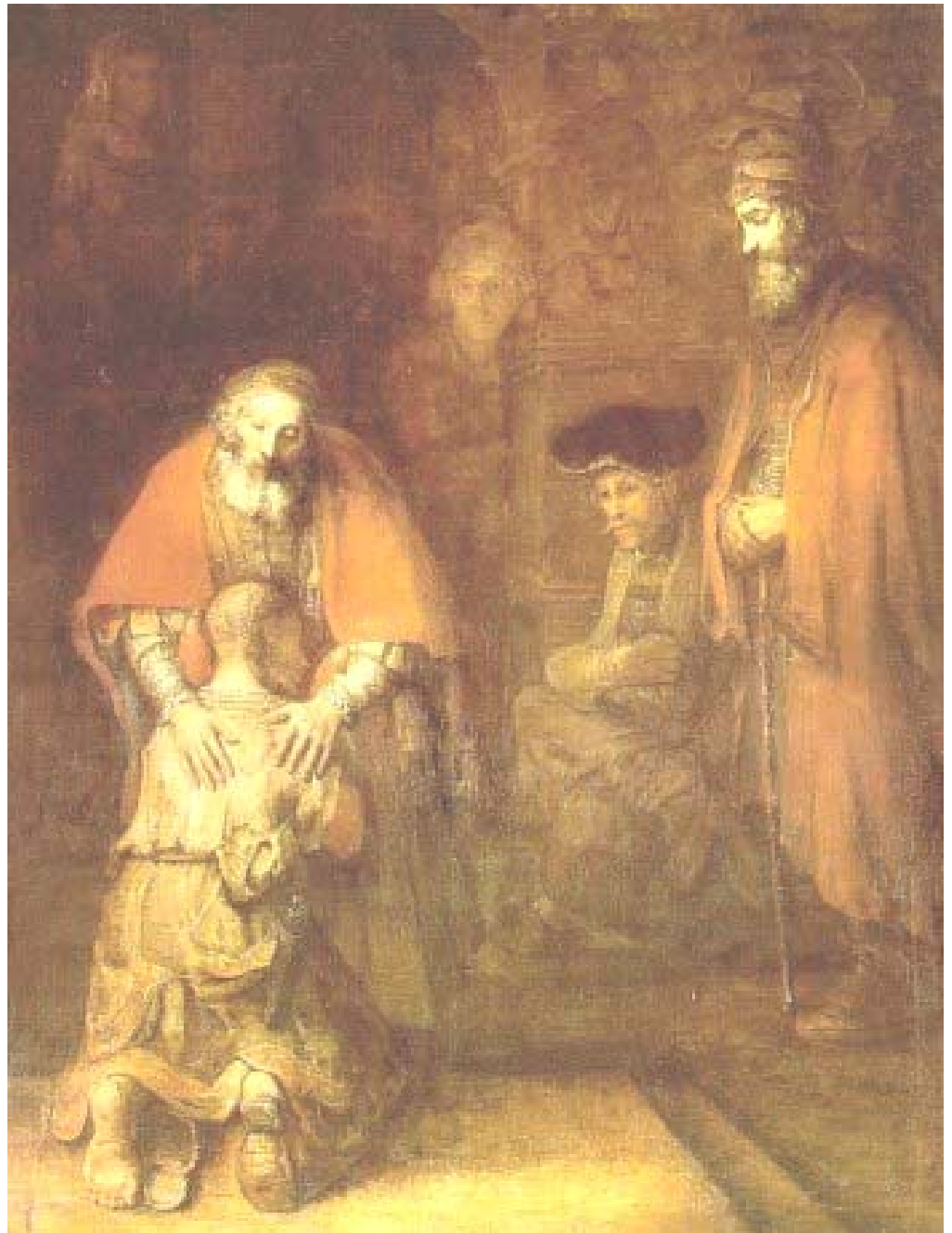


13

One of the Stations of the Cross
on the walls
of St Anne's Catholic Church:
The Virgin Mary cradling
the dead body of Jesus
after the Crucifixion

(Also known as the Pietà)

1.



Rembrandt's depiction of the reunion between the prodigal son and his father; said to image the re-union between The Divine and a sinner who 'returns home' and into relationship with The Divine

Rembrandt van Rijn: The Return of the Prodigal Son.

http://www.artchive.com/artchive/R/rembranda/prodigal_son.jpg.html

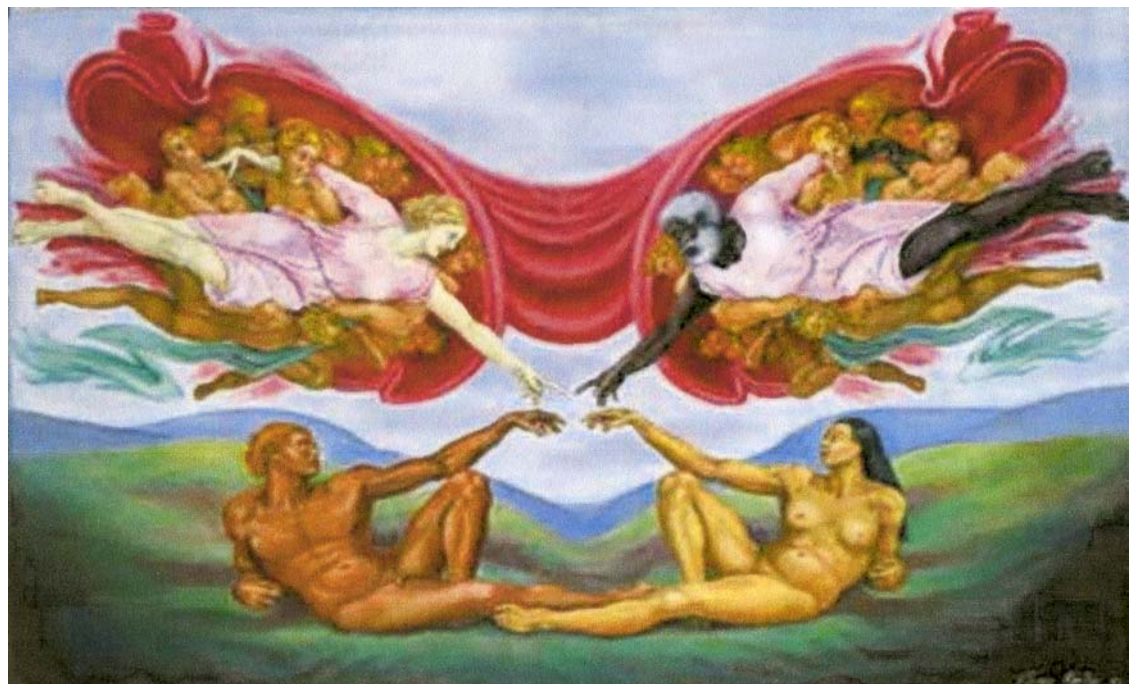
2



Creation of Adam. Michelangelo, c. 1511. Fresco: Sistine Chapel. Vatican City

<http://upload.wikimedia/commons/7/73/God2-Sistine Chapel.png>

3



Van Breda, A. Unpublished Assignment.

Kelly, N. (no date). *Creation* (graphic), Available:

http://www.newlastsupper.com/cgi-bin/web_store.cgi?details=on&hits_seen=0&cart_id=5463150_5004&product=Canvases&product_id=CRMC, 31 March 2006.

All references from the Scriptures of the Christian religion are quoted from The Revised English Bible: Oxford University Press 1989 – unless otherwise stated. Quotes are referenced according to the name of the book, followed by the chapter in the book and lastly the verse/s in the chapter.

Acts 4:19-20: "But Peter and John replied: 'Is it right in the eyes of God for us to obey you rather than him? Judge for yourselves. We cannot possibly give up speaking about what we have seen and heard' ."

Acts 14:11-13: "When the crowds saw what Paul had done, they shouted, in their native Lycaonian, 'the gods have come down to us in human form!' They called Barnabas Zeus and Paul they called Hermes, because he was the spokesman [sic]. The priest of Zeus, whose temple was just outside the city, brought oxen and garlands to the gates, and he and the people were about to offer sacrifice."

Ephesians 5:22-24: "Wives, be subject to your husbands as though to the Lord; for the man is the head of the woman, just as Christ is the head of the church. Christ is, indeed, the saviour of that body; but just as the church is subject to Christ, so must women be subject to their husbands in everything".

Exodus 20:5: "For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sins of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me"

Exodus 34:7: "... but without acquitting the guilty, one who punishes children and grandchildren to the third and fourth generation for the iniquity of their fathers ..."

Galatians 5:22,23: "But the harvest of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, fidelity, gentleness and self-control."

Genesis 1:26: [And The Divine said] "Let us make human beings in our image, after our likeness, to have dominion over the fish of the sea, and the birds of the air, the cattle, all wild animals on land, and everything that creeps on the earth".

Genesis 3:1-13: "The serpent, which was the most cunning of all the creatures the Lord God had made, asked the woman, 'Is it true that God has forbidden you to eat from any tree in the garden?' She replied, 'We may eat of the fruit of any tree in the garden, except for the tree in the middle of the garden. God has forbidden us to eat the fruit of that tree, or even to touch it; if we do we shall die.' 'Of course you will not die,' said the serpent; 'for God knows that as soon as you eat it, your eyes will be opened and you will be like God himself, knowing both good and evil.' The woman looked at the tree ... took some [fruit of the tree] and ate it; she also gave some to her husband, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened ... [a while later] ... The man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God walking about in the garden ... and they hid from him ...".

John 14:6 "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except by me".

Luke 5:43,44: "You have heard that they were told, 'Love your neighbour and hate your enemy.' But what I tell you is this: Love your enemies and pray for your persecutors ...".

Luke 10: 27: "He [a lawyer] replied 'Love the Lord ... and you neighbour as yourself.' 'That is the right answer,' said Jesus; 'do that and you will have life' ".

Luke 15:11-32: "There was once a man who had two sons; and the younger said to his father, 'Father give me my share of the property.' So he divided his estate between them A few days later the younger son turned the whole of his share into cash and left home for a distant country where he squandered it in desolate living ... [hard times presented themselves and he decided to return to his father] ... while he was still a long way off his father saw him and his heart went out to him; he ran to meet him, flung his arms around him, and kissed him ... [celebrations ensued, and the older brother was angry, but the father said] "... how can we fail to celebrate this happy day? Your brother here was dead and has come back to life; he was lost and he has been found.' ".

Mark 8:34-35: "Then he [Jesus] called the people to him, as well as his disciples and said to them. ' Anyone who wants to be a follower of mine must renounce self; he must take up his cross and follow me. Whoever wants to save his life will loose it, but whoever looses his life for my sake and for the gospel's will save it.' "

Mark 12: 29-31: "The first [commandment] is this, 'Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is the one Lord, and you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'You must love your neighbour as yourself'".

Matthew 5:13: "You are the salt of the world. And if salt becomes tasteless ... "

Matthew 7:21: "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only those who do the will of my heavenly Father".

Matthew 10:29: "Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet without your Fathers knowledge not one of them can fall to the ground ... so don't be afraid; you are worth more than any number of sparrows".

Matthew 19:19: "... and love your neighbour as yourself".

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

All references from the Scriptures of the Christian religion are quoted from The Revised English Bible: Oxford University Press 1989 – unless otherwise stated. Quotes are referenced according to the name of the book, followed by the chapter in the book and lastly the verse/s in the chapter.

'Abba': being the Aramaic word for Father, but often taught (especially but not exclusively in Charismatic churches) as meaning 'Daddy'; based on the teachings of Paul. (For example: Romans 8:15 "The spirit you have received is ... a spirit of adoption, enabling us to cry "Abba! Father!" ...").

Abstract systems: In modernity these include the routine of day-to-day life – these routines providing a source of ontological security and minimising the power of unconscious sources of anxiety - and the introduction of disembedding mechanisms necessitated through the notion of time space distantiation.

Agency: The power of actors to operate independently of the determining constraints of social structure" (Jary and Jary, 1995:10).

Agent: The term 'agent' is used to denote the idea of human beings having power to determine the course of their lives.

Agnostic, (Agnosticism): "The conviction that the existence of a first cause, and therefore of God, cannot be either proved or disproved, since the evidence was deemed inconclusive." (Deist, 1984:4).

Alter Call: With reference to a time during a worship service when the congregation is invited, by the person leading the service, to respond to a sermon and 'enter into relationship' with The Divine.

Alternative forms of healing: Acupuncture, homeopathy, *et cetera* – methods of healing which are rejected by some Christian churches.

Apparitions: For example: 1983: San Nicolas, ARG; 1981: Kibeho, Rwanda; and others (Messages from Heaven – The Apparitions of the Virgin Mary: <http://members.aol.com/bjw1106/marian12.htm>).

Assumption of the Virgin: (Dogma of the Assumption of the Virgin of 1950) "The doctrine that the virgin Mary ascended to heaven 'in body and soul'." (Deist, 1984:14).

Baptism in the Spirit: A prayer experience in which the believer asks the Holy Spirit to fill their life – often accompanied by a sign or a gift – usually the ability to pray or sing 'in tongues' (or language of the Spirit).

Blessed Sacrament: Consecrated elements kept in a locked 'safe' (Tabernacle) in the church – their presence indicated by a burning lamp.

Born Again: A term used (mainly in evangelical circles) to denote a personal dedication to The Divine, in which a specific moment of commitment to The Divine can usually be identified. It originates from the words of Jesus in John 3:3-8, and is linked with the idea of 'acceptance of Jesus as saviour'.

Cell Group Leader: One who is responsible for the pastoral care and spiritual growth of a group of people who meet once a week in the home of one of the group members, normally the cell group leader.

Cell Group: A fellowship group comprising of about ten people and which functions as a 'mini church'.

Christian Brothers: A band of lay Roman Catholic men, the initial focus of whose ministry was the education of disadvantaged youth.

Church (catholic): Christian theology distinguishes between the Catholic Church and the catholic Church; the former being the Roman Catholic (or non-protestant Church) and the latter referring to all churches – both Catholic and Protestant.

Cognitive Consistency Theory: "Suggests that information which implies the reverse of one's usual level of self-regard tends to create dissonance (Bramel, 1968; Smith, 1968) [and that] in order to avoid the discomfort of such dissonant cognitions, techniques like selective perception, distortion, and denial can be used to keep information consonant with one's self-image." (Benson & Spilka, 1973:297).

Communion giver: A lay person who takes the consecrated elements and distributes them to those too frail or ill to attend Mass.

Confession: An acknowledgement of personal sin (Deist, 1984:33); in this instance auricular confession: "Confessing one's sins anonymously to a priest or other office-bearer of the church" (Deist, 1984:15).

Creed: "A formulation of faith professed by a denomination and authorized by it to be in accordance with its interpretation of Holy Scripture" (Deist, 1984:38).

Crucifix: "An artistic representation of Christ's crucifixion' / 'Execution by hanging ... on a cross" (Deist, 1984:39).

Deacon: In the context of the church within which she worships, this is a role involving very practical implementation of decisions taken by the eldership – and she is accountable to the eldership (who are men only).

Discernment: The task of someone having to decide whether a message is 'of God' and would be beneficial to the church; and therefore permit it to be shared with the congregation.

Disembedding: "The lifting out of social relationships from local contexts and their recombination across indefinite time/space distances" (Giddens, 1991:242).

Disembedding mechanisms: Symbolic or expert systems which facilitate interaction without the context of 'place' (Jary & Jary, 1995:170).

Divine Being: Refers to The Divine when it has been grammatically impossible to use the term 'The Divine'.

Divinisation: "Looking upon a human being as if he [sic] were a god or assigning divine status to a human being. (for example Acts 14:11-13)" (Deist, 1984:47).

Dogma: "Any settled belief or opinion having a normative tenor" or "An official statement of ecclesiastical belief or teaching that is to be regarded as authoritative" (Deist, 1984:47,48).

Durée: "the continuous flow of conduct and cognition in social life ... a continuous process in which structure and agency both play a part ..." (Jary & Jary, 1995:180).

Elder: The leadership structure of the Byway Community church comprises of Governing elders, leaders and deacons. The latter may include women, but deacons have to report to the elders (all of whom have to be male).

Evangelical Outreach: Missions [to other countries] with the purpose of introducing people of other faiths to the Christian faith.

Exegesis: "The (scholarly) explanation of the meaning of a (biblical) text." (Deist, 1984:57).

Fallen State: With reference to the idea that human beings have fallen from the grace of The Divine; based on Genesis 3.

Free Worship: A form of worship based on Old Testament Temple worship – and closely associated with the Charismatic movement - in which the congregation is led through the stages of worship (adoration, praise and thanksgiving, confession, intercession and petition) through song and prayer, as opposed to the more formal liturgies of other denominations. Clapping and raising of hands is a regular occurrence, and dance is not uncommon.

Fruit of the Spirit: "But the harvest of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, fidelity, gentleness and self-control." (Galatians 5:22,23).

'God's will' or The will of The Divine: The belief among Christians that The Divine has a path marked out for them, that they need follow this path and please The Divine in all they do. This would include asking for guidance from The Divine in decision-making (The Bible often being a gauge of what is right and wrong), and accepting both good and bad events – in an unquestioning manner - as 'God's will'.

Hidden curriculum: "a set of values, attitudes, knowledge frames, which are embodied in the organization and processing of *schooling* and which are implicitly conveyed to *pupils*" promoting "social control and an acceptance of the school's, and hence society's, authority structure." (Jary & Jary, 1995:281/282).

Holy Communion (Eucharist / Lords Supper) See 'Mass'

Homily: "An (informal) sermon meditative in its mood and didactic [to instruct or teach] in its aim" (Deist, 1984:76).

Homology: "A confession of faith" (Deist, 1984:76).

Host: The bread (or wafer) which is given by the Priest to the communicant during communion in a Roman Catholic Church; believed through consecration to be changed in substance to the real Body of Christ, although the "physical properties of the token" are not changed (Deist, 1984:177).

Hymn: "A song of praise and worship" (Deist, 1984:77).

Imago Dei: "'The image of God', an idea associated primarily with man's [sic] creation in the 'image of God' (Genesis 1:27) ..." (Deist, 1984:79).

Immaculate conception: (c.f. the dogma of the Immaculate Conception) "The doctrine that Mary, the mother of Jesus, was conceived without the blemish of original sin" (Deist, 1984:80); the latter referring the sin of all human beings – simply by being members of the human race; this sin being inherited from ones parents and automatically passed on to one's offspring (Deist, 1984:120).

Incarnation: "Becoming flesh; a god or God becoming, or taking on the form of, a human being" (Deist, 1984:81).

Inner healing: Believed to be a process (or experience) in which a Christian believer is – through prayer – healed of a previous emotional hurt or negative experience.

Interpretive Tradition (in Sociology): An approach in which the interaction between human actors is the main area of study.

Knights of De Gama: A movement within the Roman Catholic Church, specifically for men.

Lay Leader: One who holds a position of leadership within the church, but is not ordained.

Leading of The Holy Spirit: A term used to imply that one has 'heard' (or is aware of) the will of The Divine with regard to a decision or action.

Liturgy: "The prescribed form and order of the acts to be performed at a public religious ceremony, e g the rituals for celebrating the Eucharist ...". (Deist, 1984:96).

Lourdes: A town/community on Southwest France, believed to be the site of apparitions of Our Lady of Lourdes to Bernadette Soubirous in 1858; often associated with physical healing.

Madonna: " 'My Lady' (a statue or picture of) the Virgin Mary" (Deist, 1984 98).

Mainline Denominations: Often considered to be 'traditional denominations' and includes the Anglican (Church of England), Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregational denominations.

Mary (or Virgin Mary): The mother of Jesus of Nazareth, the latter also referred to as the second person of the Trinity, the Saviour, and the Son of God.

Mass: "A Roman Catholic name for the Eucharist" (Deist 1984:100), (Also referred to as Holy Communion, Communion or The Lord's table), and involves the consuming of bread (or a wafer) and wine (or grape juice in churches for whom temperance is an issue) as the experience of Divine Presence and/or as a reminder of the Last supper – or meal – which Jesus held with his disciples, *cf* Matthew 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:7-20.

Matter: "That which underlies all material existence; that which is “shaped” (i.e. actualised or determined) by form" (Deist, 1984:101).

Ministry: A time of prayer in which a believer prays for another – asking The Divine for intervention in the needs of the person being prayed for. In Charismatic churches this is often accompanied by being 'slain in the Sprit', understood to happen when a believer appears to faint and often seem oblivious of his/her surroundings; sometimes accompanied by tears or laughter.

Mortal Sin: "Sin committed deliberately against the command of love and therefore deserving eternal damnation" (Deist, 1984:108).

Omnipotence: "(The property of) being almighty, of having infinite power" (Deist, 1984:119).

Omnipresence: "(The property of) being present everywhere at the same time" (Deist, 1984:119).

Omniscience: "(The property of being all knowing, or having) infinite knowledge" (Deist, 1984:119).

Panopticon: A nineteenth century model for a prison – designed by Jeremy Bentham – comprising of a central guard tower surrounded by a circle of one-person cells, with windows positioned to allow light to pass through the cell from back to front. The guard in the tower can see what any prisoner is doing at any one moment, without the prisoners knowing when they are being observed, while the prisoners are totally unable to see the guard.

Pastor: There are a number of words used to identify the leader of a church. Many churches use the word 'minister', others 'priest/father' while charismatic/Pentecostal churches tend to use the word Pastor. The identification of a person as 'pastor' can also refer to the task of a lay person in the church, namely pastoral care of members of the church. In the context of this research Pastor refers to the leader or minister of the Lighthouse Community Church, while pastor refers to the lay person doing pastoral work.

Pietà: "An image of the Virgin Mary with the dead body of Christ on her lap" (Deist, 1984:130).

Practical consciousness: The tacit or taken-for-granted social activities which cannot always be verbally explained or expressed, but which provide the basic foundation which allows more specific activity to take place (Giddens 1991:36).

Pure relationships: "A social relation which is internally referential, that is, depends fundamentally on satisfactions or rewards generic to that relation itself." (Giddens, 1991:244).

Rosary: "A series of prayers, a form of prayer used in the Roman Catholic Church; also a string of beads used by Roman Catholics during prayers, there being 15 groups of beads and each group representing a Mystery of the Rosary to which some meditation must be devoted." (Deist, 1984:147).

Rosary Prayer:

"Hail Mary" (said over fifty times in the saying of the full Rosary) reads as follows:
Hail Mary, full of grace; the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

"Hail Holy Queen" (part of the concluding prayers of the Rosary) reads as follows:
Hail, holy Queen, Mother of Mercy! Our life, our sweetness, and our hope! To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve; to thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this valley, of tears. Turn, then, most gracious Advocate, thine eyes of mercy toward us; and after this our exile show unto us the blessed fruit of the womb, Jesus; O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary." (Source: Handout: How to say the Rosary).

Sacred Heart: The depiction of Jesus with the focal point being an 'exposed' heart. (Appendix 6: Photograph 12).

Sanctuary Lamp: Sanctuary Lamp: A light burning to indicate the presence of the Blessed Sacrament and the very presence of Christ. (Appendix 6: Photograph 10):

Schoenstatt Prayers in the home shrine: read as follows:

Covenant Prayer

"My Queen, my Mother, I give myself entirely to you and to show my devotion to you, I consecrate to you this day my eyes, my ears, my mouth, my heart, myself without reserve. As I am your own, my good Mother, guard and defend me as your property and your possession. Amen."

The Prayer of Petition

"Dear Mother of God, we ask you with great trust: From this home shrine show that you are the Mother Thrice Admirable, Queen and Victress of Schoenstatt.

Thrice Admirable Mother, set to work in our family and fill us with the spirit of love, understanding and forgiveness. Unite our hearts in the covenant with you and the Triune God.

Thrice Admirable Queen, form our family into a church in miniature. Give us faith that is strong and true.

Thrice Admirable Victress, keep the influence of the evil one far from us. Strengthen us in suffering. Accept our efforts and also our failures. Through your intercession may everything bear fruit for the renewal of families. Amen." (Source: 'Home Shrine' – a tract issued by Schoenstatt Movement.)

Scripture [The Bible]: The book believed by Christian believers to be the inspired 'Word of God'. There are 66 'books' in the Protestant Bible – deemed canonical (endowed with (Divine) authority (Deist, 1984:24))'The 'Old Testament's' 39 books are also the scripture of the Jewish tradition, the 27 books in the New Testament are unique to the Christian faith. Each book is divided into chapters, and each chapter into verses – facilitating easy reference and often distinguishing a transition in thought or story line. Although not part of the canon, the 15 books of the Apocrypha are often included in The Bible, are deemed sacred and, compared to Protestants, are held in higher regard by Roman Catholics.

Scripture Union and Student Christian Association: Evangelically orientated para-church organisations involved in schools in South Africa at the time.

Secularisation: "The emancipation of the various spheres of life from ecclesiastical and/or religious domination"; "A worldly way of life, disregarding God or the supernatural as an explanatory principal in understanding the world and as a normative principal in making moral decisions" (Deist, 1984:153).

Service Book: A book available to all worshippers in which they may follow the liturgy and find the responses required of themselves.

Shame and Guilt: According to Giddens (1991:64-67) 'shame' and 'guilt' are different in that the former relates to feelings of adequacy or inadequacy in relation to a significant other, while the latter relates to a feeling of wrong doing toward a significant other. While the former directly affects self-identity, the latter does not.

Shepherd: With reference to idea that Christians need to facilitate the spiritual growth of new converts; 'shepherd' also being term used to refer to Jesus – the great shepherd.

Shrine: A sacred place or building (Deist, 1984:157).

Singing in the Spirit: A phenomenon over which the believer would say they have little or no control and is considered – as is 'praying in the Spirit' or 'praying in tongues' – evidence of having received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Social Structure (in the context of Structuration theory): "the virtual order" of "generative rules" and "resources" (Bryant & Jary 1991:7).

Social System (in the context of Structuration theory): Surface patterns of interaction.

Stations of the Cross: 14 events believed to have occurred during Christ's walk from Jerusalem to the Mount of Golgotha, where the Crucifixion of Jesus was said to have taken place.

Structural Tradition (Structuralism): An approach in which the influence of structures in society are given priority over the role of human actors.

Substitution Theory (of Atonement): "The doctrine that when Christ by his suffering and death appeased God's wrath he did so on man's [sic] behalf and that, therefore, Christ's suffering is a substitute for every individual human being's suffering for his [sic] own sins" (Deist, 1984:164); the wrongs of the agent are atoned for by the vicarious suffering and sacrifice of Jesus. Once this sacrifice is acknowledged and embraced by the individual they are believed to be set free from any valid judgement and/or punishment which may have been exacted on them by The Divine.

Tabernacle: A safe securely fixed to the wall in which the Blessed Elements of The Mass were stored. During Easter the Blessed Elements are removed and the light extinguished. (Appendix 6:Photograph 9). During Easter the Blessed Elements are removed and the light extinguished.

The Bible: See Scripture.

The church: "Totality of Christian believers" (Deist, 1984:29) or: a body of people calling themselves Christian. [See also: Church (catholic)].

The Divine: The term 'The Divine' is used to refer to the monotheistic, triune Divine Being of the Christian faith, and is used to avoid the masculine implications of the word 'God' and the awkwardness of what would seem a more correct, but unpronounceable term – 'God/ess'; the latter coined by feminist theologian Rosemary Radford Ruether (1983:47) and used as 'a written symbol intended to combine both the masculine and feminine forms of the word for the divine while preserving the Judeo-Christian affirmation that divinity is one ... as an analytic sign to point toward that yet unnameable understanding of the divine that would transcend patriarchal limitation and signal redemptive experience for women as well as men'. A second

option could have been the word 'G*d' used by feminist theologian Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (1995:142 Footnote 6) who uses it in order 'to indicate the brokenness and inadequacy of human language to name the Divine'. When it is grammatically impossible to use the word 'The Divine', it will be substituted by the word 'Divine Being'.

The will of The Divine: See God's will.

Theotokos: "The one who bore God" (Deist, 1984:173).

Tongues or Praying in the Spirit: The uttering of words and/or syllables that are often incoherent to human beings, but are believed to be 'the language of the Spirit'. Based on Acts 2:1-13 which records the early disciples as speaking in foreign languages.

Transubstantiation: "The Roman Catholic Doctrine that, when consecrated, the bread and wine of the Eucharist change, in substance, into the real flesh and blood of Christ but that the consecration does not change the physical properties of the tokens." (Deist, 1984:176).

Trinity – Triune Being/Triune God (doctrine of): In essence, presenting a threefold divine personality existing in one being or substance (Deist, 1984:177), and traditionally referred to as the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Virgin Mary: The mother of Jesus of Nazareth, the latter also referred to as the second person of the Trinity, the Saviour, and the Son of God.

Wholeness: A word, when used in a religious context, denotes the experience of emotional (and spiritual) 'healing' and 'balance'.

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