

Contested Memory: A contribution to the story of the emergence of Methodism in Umlazi

Mbongeleni Philani Dlamini

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Philani Dlamini

Student



Philippe Denis

Supervisor

15 August 2016

For the black Church which continues to contribute to the story of Christianity
in Southern Africa.

CONTENT

| | |
|--|------------------|
| <u>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT</u> | <u>7</u> |
| <u>ABSTRACT</u> | <u>8</u> |
| <u>ABBREVIATIONS</u> | <u>9</u> |
| <u>CHAPTER ONE.....</u> | <u>10</u> |
| <u>THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK METHODOLOGY</u> | <u>10</u> |
| INTRODUCTION..... | 10 |
| BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH PROBLEM AND LOCATION OF THE STUDY | 10 |
| THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK | 12 |
| RESEARCH METHODOLOGY | 13 |
| RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND OBJECTIVES | 14 |
| LITERATURE REVIEW | 15 |
| <i>Methodism in South Africa and KwaZulu-Natal.....</i> | <i>15</i> |
| <i>Natal and Umlazi Township</i> | <i>17</i> |
| <i>Memory Studies</i> | <i>18</i> |
| VALIDITY AND RIGOR | 20 |
| <u>CHAPTER TWO.....</u> | <u>23</u> |
| <u>A HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF UMLAZI.....</u> | <u>23</u> |
| INTRODUCTION..... | 23 |
| UMLAZI RESERVE AND MISSION STATION | 23 |
| UMLAZI TOWNSHIP | 27 |
| ALBERT LUTHULI AND THE CRISIS OF UMLAZI | 28 |
| CONCLUSION | 32 |
| <u>CHAPTER THREE</u> | <u>35</u> |
| <u>METHODISM IN DURBAN</u> | <u>35</u> |
| INTRODUCTION..... | 35 |
| METHODIST BEGINNINGS | 35 |
| METHODISM IN SOUTH AFRICA | 37 |
| MISSIONARIES IN NATAL..... | 40 |
| BLACK MISSIONARIES IN NATAL | 42 |
| CONCLUSION | 44 |
| <u>CHAPTER FOUR.....</u> | <u>45</u> |
| <u>METHODIST WORSHIP IN UMLAZI.....</u> | <u>45</u> |
| INTRODUCTION..... | 45 |
| THE DURBAN AFRICAN CIRCUIT | 45 |
| THE UMLAZI GLEBE GROUP..... | 47 |
| THE UMLAZI GROUP | 51 |
| THE MALUKAZI GROUP..... | 54 |

| | |
|---|-----------|
| CONCLUSION..... | 58 |
| CHAPTER FIVE..... | 59 |
| CONTESTATION AND THE CREATION OF HISTORICAL KNOWLEDGE IN UMLAZI..... | 59 |
| INTRODUCTION..... | 59 |
| USING WRITTEN ARCHIVES TO TELL THE STORY OF UMLAZI..... | 59 |
| ORAL HISTORY AS A TOOL..... | 60 |
| MEMORY AND THE PRODUCTION OF TRUTH..... | 62 |
| WE WERE HERE FIRST: CONTESTATION IN THE NARRATIVE OF METHODISM IN UMLAZI | 63 |
| CONCLUSION..... | 66 |
| CHAPTER SIX..... | 67 |
| CONCLUDING REMARKS..... | 67 |
| REFERENCE LIST | 69 |
| PRIMARY SOURCES | 69 |
| <i>Archival sources</i> | 69 |
| <i>Oral sources</i> | 70 |

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to show how the telling of a story about the emergence of a church can be affected by not giving attention to the history of the area that church is in. In addition to that, this study shows how the process of remembering is subject to human limitations and aspirations. Methodist people in Umlazi had already started telling stories about how their church found itself in that area. Three contesting memories have emerged as this unfolds. Therefore, this paper seeks to study how the contestations came about. This was not done in order to suggest truthfulness or to promote one narrative over another. This study sought to bring up different memories that exist around this topic. In doing this, this study explores the richness of Methodist history in KwaZulu-Natal as well as proposes a way in which congregations can go about collecting and preserving their stories. The conclusion drawn in this study is that when people give the honour of pioneering to a particular group of people, this can result in contestation as well as the elevation of one group over another. This study has not been concerned with pointing out who the true pioneers are but to show that different stories about Methodist emergence exist amongst people of this church in the area of Umlazi.

Abbreviations

| | |
|------|---|
| ANC | African National Congress |
| DCC | Durban City Council |
| IFP | Inkatha Freedom Party |
| MCSA | The Methodist Church of Southern Africa |
| MRA | Mission Reserve Association |
| WMMS | Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society |

Chapter One

Theoretical Framework Methodology

Introduction

Local congregations of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa have started the process of remembering how they came to exist. This process of remembering has been more defined amongst Methodist people who are residents of townships around the City of Durban in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. In the month of June 2013 a congregation in Umlazi in the Durban Circuit 0712 held a service to honour those that they called pioneers of Methodism in Umlazi. About two years later on the 1st of March 2015 another congregation in the same Circuit unveiled a huge stone in memory of those they call pioneers of Methodism in the area. This paper seeks to study these memories about the emergence of Methodism in the area known as Umlazi.

This chapter seeks to breakdown the process that was followed in conducting this research. Firstly, to explain the motivation for such a project, this chapter presents a background to the research problem. Secondly, this chapter shows how the new field of memory studies has contributed a theoretical framework for this paper. Thirdly, this chapter presents the methodology that has been used to conduct this study. For any research project there has to be a guiding question. Therefore, this chapter presents the research question and the objectives of this study as well as the sub-questions that guide the project. A section on the literature used in this paper is also part of this chapter in the form of a literature review. Lastly, this chapter presents a case for the validity and rigor of this study.

Background to the research problem and location of the study

As a student in the discipline of History of Christianity, I have been interested in memory studies in the past few years. I have been trained in the field of Oral History while I was working as a research assistant at the Sinomlando Research Unit. For my Honours degree I used memory studies to study the different layers of memory that exist on the political violence that once plagued the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands. The focus of this study was the

township of Mpophomeni in the mid-1980s. On this subject I have also co-authored a paper titled ‘Multiple Layers of Memory: The History of Mpophomeni Told and Retold.’¹

I was born and raised in Umlazi. I have been a Methodist my whole life and a member of one of the congregations of the Durban Circuit 0712. Currently I am a student minister in the Methodist Church of Southern Africa where I hope to serve in the ministry of Word and Sacrament. This means that I have not only acquired knowledge in the field that I wish to conduct this study in but I also conduct this study from the position of an insider. I have been a member of the congregation that had a commemorative service in 2013 where those that are called pioneer were honoured by this church. I left this congregation in 2010 to pursue my theological training at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Therefore, though I have not been part of this congregation full-time for the past six years, I have been part of it my whole life. I have had to work out a balance for the sake of validity of this study between being a researcher and an insider.

There are written accounts on the history of Methodism in South Africa as well as in KwaZulu-Natal but there has not been a focus on Umlazi or the Durban African Circuit as it was called then. There are three layers of memory on how Methodism found its way to this area known as Umlazi. The numbers given to them are not according to a chronological order; they are simply a way of listing them. Calling the group the first group does not mean that this is the earliest memory of this is the first group of Methodists in the area. Also, first memory does not mean that this memory was the earliest.

Those who hold the first strand of memory claims that the development of Methodism in the Township of Umlazi coincided with the implementation of the Group Areas Act of 1950. This Act was followed by the arrival of those who had been residents of Cato Manor who were moved to the newly established Umlazi Township. There were other in this group who were not residents of Cato Manor but were staying other places around Durban which were now going to be strictly white areas. For example, the Ngxingweni family had been residents of the area known today as Bellair where they had a tin structure as a home near the Coedmore Quarry.

However, some Methodists who had been staying at the Anglican Glebe have different memories about the early Methodists who held church services in the area. Their story starts

¹ Philippe, Denis and Philani, Dlamini., ‘Multiple layer of Memory: The History of Mpophomeni Told and Retold’ *Alternation*, Vol 22, No.2, 2015, Page 73 – 99.

earlier than the first one and they recognise a different group as the pioneers of Methodism in this township. Those who hold the third strand of memory are those people who were never incorporated into the township and there are other people they recognise as pioneers of Methodism in the area. It is this group that had a service on the 1st of March 2015 to unveil a memorial stone in honour of those they call pioneers of Methodism in the area. Therefore, this study seeks to collect and study these different memories and make a contribution to the story that is told about the emergence of Methodism in the township of Umlazi.

The geographical location of this study is the south-western parts of the Durban area. This is where Umlazi the township is located as well as those areas that feature in this study namely, Imbumbulu and Folweni. The period studied in this paper is the time between 1845 and 2014. This period is significant because it covers the time when the area was under colonial administration, apartheid administration and the current dispensation. This period is also important because it enables us to see how people found themselves in this area. The earliest of the research participants tells a story of Methodism that goes back as far as 1885. Lastly, this period is also significant because it covers a time when a need to honour those that are called pioneer was recognised by Methodists in Umlazi.

As one of the biggest townships in South Africa, Umlazi has a mixture of people from the poorest of the poor to the rich and affluent. There is currently political tolerance especially between the two major parties in the area the IFP and the ANC. These two used to be in conflict with each other as it was the same in other places in the country.

Academically, this study is located within the studies of theology and particularly in the discipline of History of Christianity. It does borrow tools from other disciplines to help the validity and rigor of the research process. Methodist history and missionary activity in Natal is the subject of this project.

Theoretical framework

The present shapes the memory of the past and oral history is the handmaiden of memory studies.² This means that when there are no documented narratives about the past or there are contestations about a past event, studying the way people remember can give insight into the past. The paper will use the poststructuralist approach to study these memories. Memory

² Anna, Green, 'Can Memory be Collective?', In Donald, Ritchie, ed. *The Oxford Handbook of Oral History*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2010.

studies take into consideration the subjectivity of oral history in historical research and introduce theories that focus on how subjects recollect events in their social settings.³ When studying the different layers of memory that exist today amongst those who were the early Methodists in Umlazi, their social class will form a part of the discourse. This paper will also study the implications of being the first group or the founding group in the way people remember the story of Methodism. Collective memory as well as individual memory is not isolated from the memory of others groups or individuals but can even spread over it. Memory studies also focuses on the changing nature of memory. In studying the varied layers of memory, this paper will highlights any changes that may be there in the stories told by the three groups.

However, the process of remembering is not a passive one. Those who remember have reasons or may be probed by a particular reason. Also, those who remember generate historical knowledge about the past. This knowledge can privilege some over others and give them power. This means that all processes of knowledge creation need to be tested. This paper will use the work of a French philosopher and historian Michel Foucault who has contributed to the discourse of knowledge and power.⁴ It is important to say here that Foucault's work is too vast and complex for a Masters degree to discuss it completely. In light of that, this paper will use a selection of the work from this philosopher particularly the work that focuses on the relationship between knowledge and power. Therefore, Foucault provides a framework to study further the contestations that exist about who were the first Methodists in Umlazi.

Research methodology

In terms of methodology, this study uses a combination of methods. Oral History Research as a methodology is used and interviews were conducted in Umlazi with the people who were part of the early Methodists in this area.

Studies on the history of Umlazi are scarce. Therefore, this paper relies mostly on archival documents that can be found in two repositories. The Killie Campbell Library in Durban was consulted for purposes of tracing the history of this township. The reports of those who were

³Green, 'Can Memory be Collective'.

⁴Michel, Foucault, 'The Subject of Power', *Essential Foucault: Selection from Essential Works of Foucault, 1954-1984*, London, The New Press, 1982. As well as in Michel Foucault, 'The Concern for the Truth,' in *Foucault Live: Interviews, 1966-1984*, New York, Semiotext 1984.

colonial administrators and superintendents of the township found in the Pietermaritzburg National Archives were also consulted.

Because this study involves human research participants, the process of conducting research amongst them does ensure that they are protected and no harm is done to their dignity. Firstly, this research takes into consideration the consent of the participants and a consent form will be given to each participant. Secondly, this research respects the rights of those participants who may want to remain anonymous and will make provision for those who wish to use pseudonyms. There is no misuse of the information provided by the participants. Information discovered in this research is used solely for this research.

Stratified random sampling as a tool to select participants is used in this study. This method is used as an attempt to represent all three groups fairly. At least five interviews were conducted amongst each of the three groups. Therefore, a total of at least fifteen interviews was used. In each group, there are at least three male interviewees and at least one or two females. The main reason for selecting older members of this church to participate in the interviews is because those who have produced memories on the subject matter are those who were there when Umlazi as a township was established.

The participants in the interviews from the group that is called the 'Umlazi's first group' are Mr Themba Ngxingweni, Mrs Tracey Ngxingweni (the owner of the second house used for worship by this group and one of the first to worship with this group), Miss Mabindisa (daughter of the owner of the first house used for worship by this group), and Miss Sdudla Goba and Malcom Mbanjwa. From the group referred to as the 'Glebe residents' it will be Mr Linda Hlubi, Mr Guy Vezi and Mr Nqaki Ndaba. From the third group referred to as the 'Outer Umlazi' residents it will be Mr Johannes Nhlapo, Mrs Mzoneli, Mr Thilomu Magcaba, Mr Kenneth Zungu and Mr Jeffery Shezi. The minister who initiated commemorative services was also interviewed. An interview conducted with Rev. Dr. Mgojo will also be used in this research project. This brings the total of interviews us in this project to fifteen.

Research questions and objectives

The key research question for this study is: How can the existence of contested memory about the emergence of Methodism in the township of Umlazi be explained, and what are the implications of this in the process of historical knowledge creation?

There are also research sub-questions that try to assist in the structuring of this study and guiding the research process. These sub-questions are:

- i) What memories are there about the establishment of Umlazi?
- ii) What memories are contested over the emergence of Methodism in Umlazi?
- iii) Why are there contestations over the emergence of Methodism in this area?
- iv) How can oral history contribute in a situation where contestations over memory exist?
- v) How can oral history help local congregations in their process of creating historical knowledge?

The aims and objectives of this study have been vaguely mentioned above. It is important for this chapter to state these more explicitly and they are as follows:

- i) To present the different layers of memory that exist about the establishment of Methodism in Umlazi.
- ii) To use oral history and memory theory to study the contested stories about Methodism in Umlazi.
- iii) To use oral history and memory studies in making a contribution to the story of Methodism in Umlazi.

Literature review

Methodism in South Africa and KwaZulu-Natal

One of the earliest work which seeks to document the history of Methodism in Southern Africa is a book by Rev. Clifford Holden called *A Brief History of Methodism and of Methodist Mission in South Africa* published in 1877. In this book, Holden attempts to give a short but comprehensive account of Methodism in South Africa. However, the scope of Holden's work is very limited and is written for European Colonists and uses a language that would only be accepted by his target audience (that is the use of words like heathens and kaffir when referring to indigenous people of South Africa).⁵

What could be the most read and most referenced work on Methodism in South Africa is by J. Whiteside. In 1906 Whiteside published a book titled *History of the Wesleyan Methodist*

⁵ Clifford, Holden, *A Brief History of Methodism and of Methodist Mission in South Africa*, London, Wesleyan Conference Office, 1877.

Church of Southern Africa. This book gives a background to the Origins of the Methodist Church in England and how Methodism evolved as a result of the Wesley brothers John and Charles facing rejection in the Church of England. Within Whiteside's book one finds a comprehensive history of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of South Africa (currently known as the Methodist Church of Southern Africa or MCSA) and how this Church spread from the Cape of Storms to the rest of the English colony. Whiteside also gives details about Methodist Missions in what was known as the Transvaal. The scope of Whiteside's work goes beyond South Africa and also focuses on Methodist Missions in what was known as Rhodesia, currently Zimbabwe. Section 25 and 26 of Whiteside's book starts by explaining how William Shaw had intended to include Natal in his chain of Mission Stations. Though this was not realised, other missionaries after Shaw continued the work and spread Methodism to Natal.⁶

Another important book in the study of Methodism on South Africa is by Hewson.⁷ Published in 1950, Hewson's book titled *An introduction to South African Methodists* contributes some insight on who were the pioneers of Methodism in South Africa. There is also a section on Methodism in Natal in this book. However, this book is a product of its time and also makes use of the word Kaffir when referring to black South Africans. Hewson agrees with Whiteside on the fact that William Shaw had intended to spread Methodism to Natal as well when he established the chain of Mission Stations.

Balia in a book called *Black Methodist and White Supremacy* has dealt with issue of race relations within the Methodist Church in Southern Africa. Balia's includes a section on Nzonelelo which is a movement that played an important role in propagating Methodism in Natal.⁸ Nzonelelo became a key movement in the Methodist Church of Southern Africa when it came to establishing infrastructure for the Methodist Church in Natal. One of the most recent works on Methodism in Natal is by Simanga Kumalo in the book titled *Methodists With a White History and a Black Future*. As a way of focusing on the arrival of Methodism in Natal, Kumalo's book will be used. In this book, Kumalo also focuses on Durban and the arrival of Methodism in this town.⁹ Kumalo makes use of archival material such as journals of missionaries particularly William Shaw. Kumalo shows that Shaka had struck fear in the

⁶ J, Whiteside, *History of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of South Africa*, Cape Town, JUTA & CO, 1906.

⁷ Leslie, Hewson, *An Introduction to South African Methodists*, Cape Town, The Standard Press, 1950.

⁸ Daryl, Balia, *Black Methodist and White Supremacy in South Africa*, Durban, Madiba Publishers 1991.

⁹ Simangaliso, Kumalo, *Methodists with a White History and a Black Future: The People Called Methodist in KwaZulu-Natal*, Gauteng, Upper Room Ministries, 2009.

hearts of missionaries. This may explain why Shaw's chain of Mission Stations could not spread to Natal.¹⁰

The history of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa falls within the metanarrative of Christianity in Southern Africa. The impact Christianity has had in the South African context has been a subject of a book edited by Elphick and Davenport titled *Christianity in South Africa: A Political, Social and Cultural History*. This book has helped in locating the MCSA in the greater story of Christianity in Southern Africa. In this book, different contributors touch on varied aspects of Methodism which have impacted the story of Christianity in South Africa. Elphick and Davenport's book shows how when other Christians in South Africa supported and rallied behind state initiated segregation, other Christians opposed it and some of these Christians were Methodist.¹¹

Some Methodist historians have taken the initiative of writing solely about Methodist Missionary activity in South Africa. One such a historian is Donald Cragg. In the book titled *A spark of Grace: The Wesleyan Methodist Mission in South Africa 1816-1883*, Cragg discusses how the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society (WMMS) went about conducting their activities in South Africa. This period of this book is before that of this research. However, it does contribute insight as to how Methodism spread in South Africa through the WMMS.

Most Methodist historians have written their work from a white missionary perspective where even the language they use in their work is typical of their time and to an extent derogatory. However, Kumalo and Balia may be exceptions in this regard. Kumalo and Balia write from the perspective of black Methodist intellectuals. This study seeks to pay attention to the lives of ordinary black Methodists in the township. Though Kumalo and Balia write from the perspective of black Methodists, they do not focus on the life of ordinary township Methodists which is what this research seeks to do with a specific reference to Umlazi.

Natal and Umlazi Township

The history of Umlazi falls within the history of Natal. As a way of giving a historical background to Umlazi as well as Methodist missionary activity in Natal, Edgar Brookes and

¹⁰ Kumalo, *Methodists with a White History*, Page 53.

¹¹ Richard, Elphick and Rodney, Davenport, *Christianity in South Africa: A Political, Social, and Cultural History*, Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1997, Page 14.

Colin Webb's book titled *A History of Natal* will be use. Brookes and Webb saw the Methodist Church as one of the most active churches in terms of missionary activity in the late 1800s. Brookes and Webb's book also contributes to the story of the arrival of Methodism in Durban through missionary initiatives by Archbell.

Another important book for giving historical background to Natal and Umlazi Reserve is a book by Hattersley titled *More Annals of Natal*. In this book, Hattersley discusses how Theophilus Shepstone's approach to traditional sanctions and mores of black people in Natal influenced his policies. Subsequently, these policies would lead to Reserves being established (one being Umlazi Reserve) and black people in Natal being left to govern each other through their chiefs with Shepstone as some form of principal chief.¹²

One of the important figures in the establishment of Umlazi is Albert Luthuli. In a book by Luthuli, some of the political issues that gave birth to the establishment of the township are discussed.¹³ Luthuli's book titled *Let My People Go*, is autobiographical and only has aspects of the history of Umlazi that Luthuli himself was involved in such as the land controversy between the Durban Municipal Council and residents of Umlazi.

Umlazi has a history of youth involvement in political activity during apartheid. Nombuso Dlamini gives a brief history of these political activities in the book titled *Youth and Identity Politics in South Africa 1990-1994*. Though this author focuses on a four year period, this book still has something to contribute to this study. Literature on the history of Umlazi is scarce. On the history of Umlazi, this paper will rely on archival material as indicated above.

Memory Studies

The emerging discipline of memory studies forms a major section in the bibliography of this paper. Knowledge about the past involves remembering and Radstone specifically the book *Memory and Methodology* will direct the process of methodology in this study.¹⁴ The study of collective memory is dealt with in the book by Jacques Le Goff's book *History and Memory* and this paper will deal with the evolution of society and how that impacts on memory.¹⁵ Since this is a qualitative research paper, a book titled *Using Narrative in Social*

¹² A.F., Hattersley, *More Annals of Natal*, Pietermaritzburg, Shuter & Shooter, 1936.

¹³ Albert, Luthuli, *Let My People Go: The Autobiography of Albert Luthuli*, Cape Town, Tafelberg and Mafube 2006,

¹⁴ S, Radford, *Memory and Method*, Oxford, Berg. 2000.

¹⁵ Jacques, Goff, *History and Memory*, New York, Colombia University Press, 1992.

Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches will also guide the process of using stories in social research, specifically those narrated by the three groups which will be studied in this paper.¹⁶ Since the process of data collection is oral history research, *The Oxford Handbook of Oral History* will be one of the prominent pieces of literature in this paper, particularly Ann Green's paper on collective memory.¹⁷

The people interviewed in this research project have memories about places they were moved from to Umlazi as well as memories about how things used to be in Umlazi. Sean Field's book titled *Oral History, Community and Displacement: Imagining Memories in Post-Apartheid South Africa*. In this book, Field uses oral history methodology to document stories of people in Cape Town who have been victims of forced removals. Though Field's book focuses on Cape Town, it provides a context that pioneers of oral history should be read within in South Africa (and in the case of this research, in Natal). Field sees those who have been forcibly removed as having not only memories about the places they were moved from but also having emotional attachment to those places. For Field, this emotional attachment impacts how people remember things.¹⁸

Another important book for oral history research is by Paul Thompson titled *The Voice of the Past: Oral History*. In this book, Paul Thompson starts by explaining the role psychoanalysis can play in oral history. Needless to say, this research is not conducted as means to psychoanalyse Methodist people in Umlazi but as Thompson says, "psychoanalysis is the magic of our time."¹⁹ As it is the case with every person who embarks on a journey of remembrance, remembering the stories of the establishment of Methodism in Umlazi has psychological implications. However, Thompson does acknowledge the fact psychoanalysis requires years of training and that most practitioners in oral history may have never had this training.²⁰ The interview situation and a psychoanalysis session is not the same. Thompson views the two as different but help full to each other. Though the purpose of an oral history interview is not psychoanalysis and the aim of psychoanalysis is not the creation of historical knowledge, Thompson believes that "thinking about the implications of psychoanalysis... has

¹⁶ J, Elliott, *Using Narrative in Social Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*, London SAGE Publications, 2005.

¹⁷ Ann, Green, 'Can Memory be Collective?' in D, Ritchie, ed, *The Oxford Handbook of Oral History*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2010.

¹⁸ Sean, Field, *Oral History, Community, and Displacement: Imagining Memories in Post-Apartheid South Africa*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2012. Page 11.

¹⁹ Paul, Thompson, *The Voice of the Past*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2000. Page 173.

²⁰ Thompson, P, *The Voice of the Past*, Page 173.

undoubtedly provided one major stimulus for the advances in our understanding of oral memory as evidence...”²¹ The process of remembering the establishment of Methodism in Umlazi may not necessarily be traumatic, but this research has been cognisant of the psychological implications of narrating these stories.

Two oral history researchers have taken up the task of studying traumatic memory in South Africa and that is Philippe Denis and Radikobo Ntsimane. Denis and Ntsimane have edited a book titled *Oral History in a Wounded Country: Interactive Interviewing in South Africa*. In this book, contributors examine the relevance of oral history in education and in the telling of stories of South Africa’s past which has been plagued by apartheid. This book also provides guidelines for those who conduct oral history research by discussing the dynamics of interviewing situations. As stated by Denis in the introduction, this book studies how “... cultural, political, socio-economic and intellectual evolutions affect oral history process.”²²

Validity and Rigor

Firstly, the intended academic contribution this study makes is to show how local congregations can go about telling their stories. This is done using academically sound research tools such as oral history and archival research. This study uses triangulation to validate the process of data collecting by using oral history, archives and documentary research. Interviews are conducted amongst those who have taken the initiative to tell the story of the establishment and development of Methodism in Umlazi as well as the history of the Anglican Glebe which features prominently in this study. Primary sources in the Pietermaritzburg National Archives as well as the Killie Campbell Library are also consulted to ensure validity and rigour of the study. To validate some of the points made in the interviews particularly about the history of Methodism in Southern Africa, authors in this subject are used. Memory Studies as a theoretical framework provides a pathway for this study and has been used in the study of history. The scope of the study tries to present a model for other congregations who wish to tell their stories. This model is a congregation in a township. Congregations in rural areas may not necessarily relate to the model being proposed in this study. There are congregations particularly in rural areas that may not have a

²¹ Thompson, P, *The Voice of the Past*, Page 174.

²² Philippe, Denis and Radikobo, Ntsimane, *Oral History in a Wounded Country: Interactive Interviewing in South Africa*, Pietermaritzburg, University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2008, Page 2.

similar problem of varied memories about their establishment. However, if there are congregations that seek to tell their stories, they can use this one as an example.

Conclusion

This chapter has mapped out the process of conducting this research project. As background, this chapter has shown what the motivation for this study is. Memory Studies is used as a theoretical framework to study how the people of Umlazi remember the emergence of Methodism in their area. To add to this, Michel Foucault is also be used to study the process of historical knowledge creation amongst people in Umlazi. A combination of methods is used in this study. In the data collection process, this study uses oral history research as well archival research. Individual interviews were conducted amongst the three groups as explained above. Archival research was conducted in the Killie Campbell Library in Durban as well as at the Pietermaritzburg National Archives. This chapter has also presented the key research question for this study as well as sub-questions that guide the research process. The aims and objectives of the study have also been presented. The literature that is used in this study has also been reviewed. This chapter has explained the validity and rigor of this paper by highlighting the research process and how it contributes to the academia.

Chapter Two

A Historical Background of Umlazi

Introduction

The second half of the 19th century saw the establishment of many locations and mission stations in colonial Natal. These locations and mission stations would become home to most black people of colonial Natal and later develop into townships under the Group Areas Act of 1950. Before then, some townships had already been established. For example, townships like Lamontville in Durban and Sobantu in Pietermaritzburg already existed. The telling of the history of Umlazi has to take into consideration that this area was not always a township. Therefore, this part of the research seeks to highlight three phases of change that this area went through under the colonial administration and under apartheid. At first Umlazi was a reserve later a mission station and much later in the mid nineteenth century a township.

Most of the changes in the area started from around the same time that the British settlers came to the shores of Port Natal in the 1840s. More change was to come in the late mid-20th century under the apartheid administration. It is then fitting that this section of the paper focuses on the period between 1845 and 1967. This period contains some of the most interesting attitudes of the colonial as well as the apartheid governments towards black people in Natal. Therefore, this paper will discuss how the changes Umlazi underwent were affected by negative and positive attitudes of both the colonial and the apartheid governments. And lastly, towards the end of this chapter, the focus of the discourse will be Umlazi Township and how it came about.

Umlazi reserve and mission station

As early as the days of Dingani King Shaka's brother, the Cele chief Magaye has been said to have marched his people south of Natal.²³ The areas between the Lovu and Umlazi Rivers are said to have been dominated by the Cele and the Khanya people.²⁴ It is this area that is the

²³ A.F, Hattersley, *More Annals of Natal- with historical introductions and notes*, Pietermaritzburg, Shuter&Shooter, 1936, Page 65

²⁴ Jeff, Guy, *Theophilus Shepstone and the Forging of Natal*, Scottsville, University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2013. Page 99.

main subject of this paper. The Cele name dominates most stories that are told by those who try to pass down knowledge about the history of Umlazi.

Dingani was more receptive of missionaries who sought to establish mission stations in the Zulu kingdom though some of his advisers urged him to be cautious. At Port Natal, the American Board missionary George Champion was granted permission by Town Committee of Durban on the 12 of March 1836 to use land along the Umlazi River.²⁵ This was the beginning of the creation of mission stations in Natal. A few years after Champion, Rev. Aldin Grout and Dr. Newton Adams would soon follow suit. Both Grout and Newton were missionaries of the American Board. The mission station established by Grout in Umvoti came to be known as Groutville and the one established by Adams in Umlazi Reserve came to be known as Adams Mission.

The British colonial administration had started dividing the land in the colonial Natal into five different categories towards the end of the 19th century. These categories were locations, mission reserves, Crown lands, private land and special Trusts.²⁶ The locations and mission reserves were meant to be inhabited by the Black people in the colony. The demarcating of locations may have started in the year 1846. The first location that was demarcated was in Pietermaritzburg and was called Zwart Kop or Zwartkops. Zwartkops was demarcated in November 1846. The Location Commission recommended the carving of three more locations in the Natal colony. The following year three more locations were demarcated on the 8th of March.²⁷ These were Umvoti, Inanda and Umlazi locations.²⁸ At this time the Adams mission had already been operational in the location. As early as 1847 in the Amanzimtoti Mission Reserve, Dr. Newton Adams an American Board Missionary had already opened a school and built for himself and his family a house close to it.²⁹

In the same year that Adams built his school in the Amanzimtoti Mission Reserve, the Anglican Church also began work a few kilometres inland away from Amanzimtoti.³⁰ However, Adams abandoned his site and the Anglican Church under the leadership of Bishop

²⁵ Edwin, Smith, *The Life and Times of Daniel Lindley*, London, Epworth Press, 1949. Page 127.

²⁶ An article in *The Natal Mercury*, 09-02-1905, Page 10.

²⁷ Edgar, Brookes and Colin, Webb, *A History of Natal*, Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1987. Page 60.

²⁸ Brookes and Webb, *A History of Natal*. Page 60.

²⁹ H.C., Lugg, *Historic Natal and Zululand*, Pietermaritzburg, Shuter and Shooter, 1949. Page 13.

³⁰ Lugg, *Historic Natal*, Page 12.

Colenso acquired it on behalf of this church in 1857.³¹ In the same year a Selected Committee reported on the colonial government's plans to grant tribal titles of land to the black population to avoid massing together of these people.³² These plans lead to be the birth of the Anglican Mission Reserve of Umlazi as well as other Reserves. This Mission Reserve was close to the Umlazi location which is said to have been under the chieftaincy of the Cele people.

Locations were created to solve the problem of land claims both amongst white and blacks in the colony. However, this solution was not seen as amicable by all the colonial authorities. For some, locations posed a serious administrative challenge to the colonial government. One of the opponents of locations was Lieutenant Governor Benjamin Pine.³³ For Pine, the locations were too large to be controllable by the British Colony. This was regardless of the fact that the land that was given to the natives was not always easy to cultivate or even use for grazing.³⁴ In fact most of the land that was farmable was reserved for the white settlers who were a minority in the colony. Pine tried to sell a portion of the Umlazi location even though Bishop Gray and Shepstone were opposed to this.³⁵ The portion that was sold by Pine was the area of the Bluff which was under Chief Umnini who had retained it throughout the Shaka regime.³⁶ However, according to some in the colonial administration, the size of the location was not a major issue. In fact some colonists believed that the locations created a labour shortage for them. Holden recorded that as a result of the locations, sourcing labour of black people has been a challenge for the colony and most of the owners of farming establishments have had to work their own land themselves.³⁷ Pine's interest may not only have been the solving of administrative issues by selling some of the locations but it may have also been the attempt to acquire the labour of the black inhabitants of the locations.³⁸

It is important to note here that Umlazi Mission Station was on one hand an attempt by the Anglican Church to Christianise the people of the colony of Natal and on the other hand, a mission stations which sought to civilise the converts and give them European education.³⁹

³¹ Lugg, *Historic Natal*, Page 12.

³² Report of Commission appointed to consider and report on extension of boundaries, Selected Documents Presented to Legislative Council, 1857-1861, Pietermaritzburg.

³³ Brookes and Webb, *A History of Natal*, Page 69.

³⁴ Brookes and Webb, *A History of Natal*, Page 69.

³⁵ Brookes and Webb, *A History of Natal*, Page 69.

³⁶ Brookes and Webb, *A History of Natal*. Page 69.

³⁷ W.C., Holden, *History of the Colony of Natal*, Cape Town, C. Struik, 1963. Page 177.

³⁸ Brookes and Webb, *A History of Natal*. Page 70.

³⁹ Smith, *The Life and Times*. Page 225.

The education of the native people of the locations would be placed in the hands of the missionaries who ran and managed the mission stations.

Before speaking about Umlazi Township it is important to discuss here the distinction made by Brookes and Hurwitz between mission stations and mission reserves. According to Brookes and Hurwitz, mission reserves were unique to Natal and were born out of the work done in the mission stations.⁴⁰ Mission reserves were different from locations in the sense that they created space for the mission work of a particular denomination in the area and most of the inhabitants of the mission reserved subsequently converted to Christianity and were taught reading, writing and arithmetic in the missionary schools.⁴¹ The ideas of Theophilus Shepstone may have played a major role in the way the Anglican Church went about establishing itself amongst the natives of Natal. For Shepstone, the Anglican Church was in a good position to introduce Christianity and civilise the black population that had migrated closer to Port Natal to form Zulu settlements around the port.⁴² To ensure that the area close to the mission station was occupied by a more permanent people, the Anglican Church introduced the system of mission reserves in their mission stations and rent was to be collected from those who occupied land in the Umlazi Glebe lands.⁴³ It is important to note here that at this time there had been no structures built by the Anglican Church for the people of Umlazi. Those who stayed in the Umlazi Glebe lands still lived in huts they had built themselves and were more of a rural community though they were close to the fast urbanizing city of Durban. The paying of rent was not without opposition from the people of the Umlazi Glebe lands. However, the colonial administration was determined to make these residents pay their rent or else they would be removed from the Glebe. The acting Inspector of Locations Mr Roach insisted that, when people saw that his department was serious about ejecting those who do not pay, they changed their minds and complied with the system.⁴⁴ The change of attitude at the fear of being ejected from the Glebe lands may have come from the fear of losing the security that was there in mission reserves.

⁴⁰ Edgar, Brookes and Nathan, Hurwitz., *The Native Reserves of Natal*, Cape Town, Oxford Press, 1951. Page 17.

⁴¹ Smith, *The Life and Times*, Page 225

⁴² Riens, de Haan, *Mission on the Margin: A Case Study on Reformed Mission Prospects in eNkumane KwaZulu-Natal*, Pietermaritzburg, Cluster Publications, 2010, Page 171.

⁴³ Roach, Acting Inspector of Locations, Chief Native Commissioner Natal, Letters Received, 06 September 1919, Natal Archives, File 18822038/1918/328, Pietermaritzburg.

⁴⁴ Roach, Acting Inspector of Locations, Chief Native Commissioner Natal, Letters Received, 06 September 1919, Natal Archives, File 18822038/1918/328, Pietermaritzburg.

Around 1916, some Indians had also moved to the Umlazi Glebe lands. Of the nine found by the then inspector of locations F.N. Stevens, only one of them held a lease to a piece of land estimated to be sixteen and a half acres.⁴⁵ None of the Indian tenants stayed in the area for longer than five years. In fact, Rev. C.H. Chater who was priest-in-charge of Umlazi Mission Reserve in 1917 showed signs of preferring the African inhabitants of the Mission Reserve as opposed to the Indians and was willing to ensure the self-determination of these Africans. In a letter to the Native Commissioner, Chater insisted that if land was given to the Natives as opposed to the Indians, they would work at their homes and this work would benefit the whole community.⁴⁶ However, years later, a larger population of Indian people found themselves living not very far from black people after the Group Areas Act's proclamation of 1951 in this area. Most Indians in Durban were settled in the uMhlatuza River Valley less than ten kilometres north of Umlazi River and fourteen kilometres from the city of Durban.

Around the 1920s following the industrialisation of Durban and the need to create residents for the Durban workforce, talks between the Anglican Church and the Durban Municipality had started. These talks were about the selling of the Glebe lands to the Municipality to create space for the town's black labour force. However, the proposal of the Manager of the Durban Municipal Native Affairs was not accepted by the Anglican Church.⁴⁷ This made the building of hostels and other temporal structures for the labour force of Durban difficult. The building of temporal structures was to ensure that the black people of the area understand themselves as sojourners and not permanent residents of the Glebe lands. But the refusal of the Anglican Church to accept the proposal of the Durban Municipal Manager meant that such structures were not to be seen until a few years later.

Umlazi Township

In the late 1930s and early 1940s, the black people who were living in the areas around Durban were beginning to see the need to buy land so as to settle there as owners and not tenants. One of the proponents of this idea was Emmanuel Mohlala who was the head of the Native Settlement Scheme in Durban. In December 1934, Mohlala wrote a letter to the Durban Councillor John Farrel and proposed that black people should be allowed to purchase land in

⁴⁵ F.N., Stevens, Letters Received, 25 September 1916, Natal Archives, CNC File 2343/1912, Pietermaritzburg. Stevens was the Chief Inspector of Locations in Natal.

⁴⁶ C.H. Chater, Letter to the Chief Native Commissioner of Natal, CNC File 310/1917. Pietermaritzburg.

⁴⁷ Durban Town Clerk, Letter to the Anglican Trust Board, File 643 J18 Vol 6.

the black areas outside the areas incorporated on freehold.⁴⁸ The *Ilanga Lase Natali*, an isiZulu newspaper, also had an article by a Mr Nduli titled 'Umthetho omubi wokususa abantu' in its 30 May 1936 issue. Mr Nduli was also agreeing with Mohlala that black people should be allowed to purchase land and be given freehold title deeds.⁴⁹ Other educated black people also engaged with the issue of black land ownership in the areas around Durban and they either used *Ilanga Lase Natali* to raise their opinions or they engaged with the Durban government official directly. However, these engagements with the Durban government officials yielded no results. In 1942 the Mayor of Durban Ellis Brown announced that plans to purchase the Umlazi Mission Reserve from the Anglican Church were only awaiting the endorsement of the then Minister of Native Affairs Deneys Reitz.⁵⁰ Before Reitz could endorse the plans of the Durban Council, this Council went on to purchase land in the Anglican Umlazi Glebelands. This was land that was close to the Reunion Station and close to the banks of the Umlazi River. To this day this land is occupied by hostel dwellers some of whom are part of the Durban labour force.

Albert Luthuli and the crisis of Umlazi

*B4 One of the most prominent South Africans who campaigned against the removing of black people from Mission Reserves was Chief Albert Luthuli. Luthuli was born in Bulawayo in Zimbabwe in between 1898 and 1900.⁵¹ In his autobiography, Luthuli asserts that he is unsure of his date of birth.⁵² Luthuli grew up in South Africa at the Umvoti Mission Reserve where Rev. Aldin Grout had established an American Board Mission Station which came to be known as Groutville.⁵³ In 1935 Luthuli was elected chief of the Umvoti Mission Reserve succeeding Josiah Mqebu.⁵⁴ As soon as Luthuli took up the position of chief in Umvoti, he started noticing the strife of the black people when it came to land ownership. Luthuli started campaigning for land ownership for blacks through the Mission Reserve Association.

Luthuli's activities through the Mission Reserve Association were not only limited to Groutville where he was chief but they also moved to the south of Natal to deal with the

⁴⁸ Natal Archives, File No. 1934643 J/18 Vol.6, Pietermaritzburg

⁴⁹ An article in *Ilanga Lase Natali*, titled 'Umthetho Omubi Wokususa Abantu, 30 May 1936.

⁵⁰ Natal Archives, Mayors Minutes, 1942. Page 6.

⁵¹ Albert, Luthuli, *Let My People Go: The Autobiography of Albert Luthuli*, Cape Town, Tafelberg and Mafube 2006, Page 8.

⁵² Albert, Luthuli, *Let My People Go: The Autobiography of Albert Luthuli*, Page 8.

⁵³ Albert, Luthuli, *Let My People Go: The Autobiography of Albert Luthuli*, Page 9.

⁵⁴ Albert, Luthuli, *Let My People Go: The Autobiography of Albert Luthuli*, Page 6.

people of the Umlazi Mission Reserve. During the days when Luthuli was engaging with what was called the Durban Corporation, the Anglican Church had already sold parts of Umlazi Glebe to the Durban City Council (as noted above) and another European Company.⁵⁵ The reason given by the Anglican Church for selling the Umlazi Glebe was that it needed to fund its educational development programmes in the Mission Reserve and to expand its mission activities.⁵⁶ However, as noted above, the Durban City Council had been courting the Anglican Church as far back as the 1920s to sell this land to the City Council. Therefore, the question to ask here is: was this a deal that was to help fund the mission of the Anglican Church or was this a deal that was long overdue since the Anglican Church was entertaining the idea of selling this land to the Durban City Council? Whatever the case may have been, it became clear that the purchase of the Umlazi Glebe only marked the beginning of the Durban City Council's plans to build houses for the black people of who lived close to the city.

This deal between the Anglican Church and the Durban City Council also upset some black people who had been asking that rather than building houses in this area for people who were not of the Mission Reserve, the City Council would allow that black people who lived in the Mission Reserve be given an opportunity to buy land and be give title deeds. One of the educated black people who were residents of the Mission Reserve Mr Daba wrote in *Ilanga Lase Natali*, and had these questions and concerns directed to the Anglican Church:

“Our question is; is this land that is being sold not the Black people's land? How is it being sold? The seller, who in this case is the missionary, when he carries mission work, where will the people he ministers be living? You Black priests why do you keep quiet when white priests are selling your estates? Even a black priest himself what will happen to him after some time when he retires where will he live? He has no place. This land should instead be sold to the residents themselves and to the black priests too who should buy sites where they will get shelter after retirement.”⁵⁷

This article makes it clear that the deal made by the Anglican Church with the Durban Corporation had upset black people. Luthuli was also one of those people who saw the deal between the Anglican Church and the Durban Corporation as a great disadvantage for the black people of Umlazi who were going to “cease to be farmers and become out-of-work

⁵⁵ Albert, Luthuli, *Let My People Go: The Autobiography of Albert Luthuli*, Page 58.

⁵⁶ Albert, Luthuli, *Let My People Go: The Autobiography of Albert Luthuli*, Page 58.

⁵⁷ An Article in *Ilanga Lase Natali*, 'About the Glebelands at Umlazi Mission', 7 February 1942, Page 6.

denizens of a sub-economic housing estate.”⁵⁸ For Luthuli, the Durban Corporation was planning to dump its surplus people in the Umlazi Reserve once they had the go ahead from the Minister of Native Affairs.⁵⁹ Before then, the Umlazi Glebe was already being developed into a resident area for black people. Houses were built and some black people from other areas purchased houses in this area. This did not stop Luthuli and his Mission Reserve Association from inciting the people of Umlazi to oppose the Durban Corporation. For Luthuli, the people of Umlazi were not difficult to organise because they had already shown that they were opposed to the plans of the Durban Corporation and they only needed an organised body that was going to help them make their views known to the Durban City Council as opposed to just individuals expressing their views of a local newspaper or by writing letters that were usually ignored by the City Council.⁶⁰ The body that was to carry this task was the newly revived Mission Reserve Association. The Mission Reserve Association approached the Department of Native Affairs and expressed its concerns about Umlazi and the Minister of Native Affairs called a conference which consisted of delegates from Umlazi, and representatives of the Durban Corporation.⁶¹ The main item on the table at this conference was no longer the already purchased and already developing Umlazi Glebe but it was the negotiations to curb further purchasing of Umlazi Mission Reserve for establishing a township. Luthuli felt that the Department of Native Affairs was in agreement with the Durban Corporations plans to establish a township in the Umlazi Mission Reserve though he (Luthuli) felt that the township which was going to be established would be nothing more than locations elsewhere where black people would be given retractable acknowledgements of occupation and not title deeds.⁶² During the conference with the Department of Native Affairs and the Mission Reserve Association, an agreement was reached that of the eight thousand acres only one thousand would be used for the Durban Corporation’s housing scheme.⁶³ The remaining seven thousand was not going to be affected and would come under the administration of the Native Affairs.⁶⁴ For Luthuli, it seemed like

⁵⁸ Albert, Luthuli, *Let My People Go: The Autobiography of Albert Luthuli*, Page 59.

⁵⁹ Albert, Luthuli, *Let My People Go: The Autobiography of Albert Luthuli*, Page 59.

⁶⁰ Albert, Luthuli, *Let My People Go: The Autobiography of Albert Luthuli*, Page 59.

⁶¹ Albert, Luthuli, *Let My People Go: The Autobiography of Albert Luthuli*, Page 59.

⁶² Albert, Luthuli, *Let My People Go: The Autobiography of Albert Luthuli*, Page 60.

⁶³ Albert, Luthuli, *Let My People Go: The Autobiography of Albert Luthuli*, Page 60.

⁶⁴ Albert, Luthuli, *Let My People Go: The Autobiography of Albert Luthuli*, Page 60.

a wonderful compromise which would avoid the total loss of the eight thousand acres that was home to the people of Umlazi Mission Reserve.⁶⁵

The Mission Reserve Association went on to inform the people of Umlazi about what they felt was a good compromise between itself, the Department of Native Affairs and the Durban Corporation. However, most of the people in Umlazi felt that they did not have to compromise because even the one thousand acres were their land.⁶⁶ The cries for the land taken by the Durban City Council through the Durban Corporation were phrased in isiZulu as “bathatha izwe lethu.” This isiZulu phrase became the name of the area where the first phase of the building of Umlazi Township started. To this day the school at the entrance of the township, the first train station you meet as you enter Umlazi are both called Zwelethu after the cries of those people who were removed from this place to make way for the development plans of the Durban City Council.

By the 1950s the Durban City Council was having difficulty dealing with the slums close to the city. This was because the Durban City council had not introduced strict restrictions on the people seeking to enter the city and Durban employers relied greatly on the rural labour force that was flocking the city.⁶⁷ The most famous of the historic slums of Durban was Cato Manor named after George Christopher Cato colonial trader, first mayor of Durban and friend to Theophilus Shepstone.⁶⁸ Another name for this place was uMkhumbane. In Cato Manor the Indians were allowing Africans to lease land as early as the 1920s. However, by the 1950s this place was overpopulated by Africans who had all come to work in Durban. The Durban City Council made a point to make freehold land ownership hard for the African people.⁶⁹ Therefore people in uMkhumba were crammed and lived under conditions that were bad for their health. The clean-up campaigns of the Durban City Council came in response to the typhoid fever treat of the 1950s.⁷⁰ These clean-up campaigns interfered with the businesses of the women who were selling home brewed beer. These campaigns and other apartheid government operations in the area resulted in the African people of the area rioting against the government. In one of the women’s campaigns against the municipal beerhalls, nine

⁶⁵ Albert, Luthuli, *Let My People Go: The Autobiography of Albert Luthuli*, Page 60.

⁶⁶ Albert, Luthuli, *Let My People Go: The Autobiography of Albert Luthuli*, Page 60.

⁶⁷ Bill, Freund, ‘Confrontation and Social Change: Natal and the Forging of Apartheid 1949-72’ in Robert, Morrell, *Political Economy and Identities in KwaZulu-Natal: History and Social Perspectives*, Durban, Indicator Press, 1996, Page 128.

⁶⁸ Guy, *Theophilus Shepstone*, Page 62.

⁶⁹ Freund, ‘Confrontation and Social Change’, Page 129.

⁷⁰ Freund, ‘Confrontation and Social Change’, Page 129.

policemen died at the hands of an angry mob.⁷¹ This event and others similar to this one resulted in the Durban City Council deciding to get rid of this slum. Those being moved from Cato Manor were to become residents of the newly established Umlazi Township.⁷²

Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to give a brief history of the development of Umlazi as a township. However, this cannot be done without discussing the state this area was in before it became a township. Therefore, this paper discussed those who were the inhabitants of the area between the Umlazi River and the Lovu River which came to be known as Umlazi Mission Reserve. In this discussion, the Celes and the Khanyas were found to have been the most dominant people around the 1850s when the area was acquired for the Anglican Church. This paper also discussed the three most important distinctions between a Mission reserve, a mission station and a township. A mission reserve was an area where people were allowed to live freely without paying hut tax, but a mission station was an area where most of the missionary activity was taking place and the people who lived there paid hut tax to the mission station. Missionary activity was strong in mission stations and would spread from there towards the whole mission reserve. A township can be said to be the area where people were allowed to own houses.

Even before a deal was reached between the Anglican Church and the Durban City Council, the Anglican Church had for years been entertaining the idea of selling this land to the Durban City Council. However, the Church cited raising funds for its mission as the main reason for selling the land

This paper noted that Umlazi captured the attention of Albert Luthuli who was the chief of the Umvoti Mission Reserve. Luthuli campaigned for the preservation of Umlazi Mission Reserve through the Mission Reserve Association. After talks between this Association and the Durban City Council (represented by the Durban Corporation) and the Department of Native Affairs a compromise was reached where only one thousand acres of the eight thousand would be used for the development plans of the Durban City Council.

Following the problems that were faced by the Durban City Council in the 1950s and 1960s a way of dealing with the slums that surrounded Durban was necessary. Umlazi became one of

⁷¹ Freund, 'Confrontation and Social Change', Page 129.

⁷² Albert, Luthuli, *Let My People Go: The Autobiography of Albert Luthuli*, Page 58.

the areas where black people would be moved to. This was the establishment of Umlazi Township.

Chapter Three

Methodism in Durban

Introduction

Methodism in South Africa traces its beginning in eighteenth century England. Any discourse that seeks to study Methodism has to take this into account. This chapter is a study of the history of Methodism in Natal with a focus on Durban and its surrounding areas. That being said, this chapter will give a brief history of the arrival of Methodism in South Africa. Secondly, this chapter will also give a history of Methodist activity in Natal from the days when Methodism came to the shores of Port Natal. In this section, this chapter will discuss those individuals who became important figures for Methodism in Natal amongst both white Methodists and black Methodists.

Methodist Beginnings

John and Charles Wesley as well as their friends are credited with the starting of a movement that was to become a great part of eighteenth century England's history. This movement was later known as the Methodist Church. Some would say that John and Charles Wesley had not intended to start a church outside of the Church of England. As sons of a cleric of the High Church, John and Charles Wesley saw themselves as High Church men born of High Church men and they both had great respect for the Church of England.⁷³ However, after John Wesley's death on the 2nd of March 1791, talks of starting a church that would be independent of the Church of England really started to gain momentum amongst those who were his followers.

Wesley's reluctant use of lay preachers may have been the reason why Methodism spread so much during eighteenth century England. This meant that ordinary people started to see themselves as playing a part in the activities a church that was once seen as a church of the rich and affluent.⁷⁴ Some say that John Wesley's act of ordaining two preachers to be ministers of the Methodist movement in America in 1784 was an act of affirming the

⁷³ Leonard, Hulley, *Wesley: A Plain Man for Plain People*, Woodstock, Methodist Publishing House, 2006, Page 33.

⁷⁴ Hulley, *Wesley: A Plain Man*, Page 30.

independence of the Methodist movement from the Church of England.⁷⁵ Other attributes this move by John Wesley to the fact that the Church of England was refusing to ordain priests for America because of the American Civil War. Regardless of this, a need had risen in America for priests to come and administer sacraments to the people who were there as Methodists. With the newly ordained priests who were now to preside over the sacraments in America, Wesley sent Dr. Thomas Coke a priest of the Church of England to be the superintendent of the work in America. This was to be the beginning of the work of ordained Methodists outside of the shores of Great Britain.

Initially, John Wesley saw the Methodist movement as an extension of the Church of England and not independent of it. When the world of the Methodist movement started spreading across England in the form of societies, it was met with opposition from those who were strong adherents of the Church of England.⁷⁶ Within societies, Methodists were encouraged to meet in smaller groups called classes. A class leader would facilitate the process of each member accounting to the group about their struggles and other spiritual matters. Societies came together to form a cluster of societies which was then going to be under the supervision of a superintendent.⁷⁷ A cluster of circuits were to become a district and every district elected its own chairman of the district who would supervise the work that was being done in their region.⁷⁸ Even after organising the movement in this manner, Wesley did not see this as a new church. The work that was supposed to be Wesley's attempt at reviving the Church of England from within started to unsettle many people in this Church. At times, Wesley himself would be attacked by those who saw the Methodists as dissenters. Wesley believed that the Methodist movement was his and his brother's attempt at being real Christians.⁷⁹

Under Wesley, the Methodist movement held its first conference in London in June 1744 which consisted of a few clergymen.⁸⁰ In later years, lay preachers were to be allowed to join the conference. The main item in the agenda of the first conference as Wesley himself says, was the "how to save their own souls (that is clergymen) and those of the people who heard

⁷⁵ Hulley, *Wesley: A Plain Man*, Page 50.

⁷⁶ Daryl, Balia, *Black Methodist and White Supremacy in South Africa*, Durban, Madiba Publishers, Page 13.

⁷⁷ Daryl, Balia, *Black Methodist and White Supremacy*, Page 13.

⁷⁸ Daryl, Balia, *Black Methodist and White Supremacy*, Page 13.

⁷⁹ Hulley, *Wesley: A Plain Man*, Page 32.

⁸⁰ Daryl, Balia, *Black Methodist and White Supremacy*, Page 14.

them.”⁸¹ However, later conferences were to deliberate on other issues that concerned the work that was being done by the Methodist movement in England and in other countries.

The conference of 1813 saw a need for a body that would monitor the work being done outside of England. This was to be the task of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society (WMMS). The WMMS had a system of reporting to the conference called Wesleyan Mission Notes.⁸² These notes documented the life and activities of the Wesleyan missionaries who had undertaken work outside of England. The WMMS sent missionaries to all the colonies of the British Empire. However, it is important to note here that, initially Wesleyan missionaries were not sent to evangelise the people who were seen by some missionaries as the “lost” or “heathens.” The WMMS sent missionaries to minister to those who were Methodists in the colonies of the British Empire.⁸³ These would have been political administrators of the colonies as well as those who served the Crown as soldiers.

Methodism in South Africa

In South Africa, it would seem the first group of Methodists to arrive were soldiers of the Crown of England. Four years after John Wesley’s death, British troops were stationed for the first time at the Cape of Good Hope.⁸⁴ Amongst these troops were men who had become members of the Methodist movement. The number of these troops is estimated between four or five.⁸⁵ As would most Methodists, these soldiers would meet in their small meeting resembling the class meetings that were going on in England. These men were later transferred to the East Indies to serve the Crown there.⁸⁶ These Methodists were then followed by an enthusiastic Methodist who was not afraid to share his convictions with others in the regiment. The name of this Methodist was George Middlemiss.⁸⁷ Middlemiss was serving under a General Baird who believed strongly that the Church of England was the only church that should be allowed in the colonies.⁸⁸ He had arrived in the colony after the second British occupation of the Cape in 1806.⁸⁹ Though Baird opposed Methodism, it seems that this did not stop people like Middlemiss from sharing their faith. Six years after Middlemiss’

⁸¹ Hulley, *Wesley: A Plain Man*, Page 29.

⁸² Daryl, Balia, *Black Methodist and White Supremacy*, Page 14.

⁸³ Daryl, Balia, *Black Methodist and White Supremacy*, Page 14.

⁸⁴ Daryl, Balia, *Black Methodist and White Supremacy*, Page 14.

⁸⁵ Daryl, Balia, *Black Methodist and White Supremacy*, Page 14.

⁸⁶ Daryl, Balia, *Black Methodist and White Supremacy*, Page 14.

⁸⁷ Daryl, Balia, *Black Methodist and White Supremacy*, Page 15.

⁸⁸ Daryl, Balia, *Black Methodist and White Supremacy*, Page 15.

⁸⁹ Daryl, Balia, *Black Methodist and White Supremacy*, Page 15.

arrival in the Cape another Methodist followed. This was Sergeant Kendrick. Kendrick was a class leader and a lay preacher of note.⁹⁰ Grassow agrees with Balia who says that one of the most important lay preachers of this time was Sergeant John Kendrick of the 21st Yorkshire Light Dragoons.⁹¹ Though Kendrick also faced opposition from the authorities in the army who disapproved of Methodists, his work in the Cape grew tremendously. Noticing how the work was flourishing in the Cape, Kendrick sent a letter to the WMMS in London and requested that an ordained minister be sent to South Africa to supervise the work that he had done.⁹² The WMMS sent from the ministers who were in London a Reverend McKenny in 1814.⁹³ Like those before him, McKenny faced opposition from those who were authorities in the Cape. He was refused by the authorities to carry out his pastoral duties to the soldiers and was told that the Crown has already provided chaplains to the soldiers.⁹⁴ McKenny appealed to the colonial office in England to lift the restrictions placed on him which hindered him from ministering to Methodists but there was no answer. Later after realising how difficult working in the Cape was going to be, McKenny left for British Ceylon and had a successful ministry there.⁹⁵ The strong opposition McKenny faced may have been because he was not just a lay preacher but an ordained minister. Having an ordained minister from what was a repugnant movement in England come to a British colony must have been seen by the authorities of the Cape as a threat to the sovereignty of the Church of England in the colonies.

However, Methodist soldiers were determined to have an ordained minister looking after their spiritual wellbeing. For this reason they wrote to the WMMS once again requesting that a minister be sent to look after their spiritual need.⁹⁶ The WMMS sent Barnabas Shaw in 1861. Shaw was also refused permission to preach or minister to the troops of the British Empire. It may seem that Shaw's concern was different from those of the Methodists who had come to the Cape before him. Shaw was more concerned with saving those who were known by missionaries as heathens.⁹⁷ After realising the difficulty of working in the Cape, Shaw started to move further inland on journeys that were funded by him at times.⁹⁸ This saw

⁹⁰ Daryl, Balia, *Black Methodist and White Supremacy*, Page 15.

⁹¹ Grassow, Settlers, Missionaries and Converts: A theological case study of the missionary activity of William Shaw in the Eastern Cape', PhD Thesis, University of Cape Town, 2012. Page 123.

⁹² Daryl, Balia, *Black Methodist and White Supremacy*, Page 15.

⁹³ Daryl, Balia, *Black Methodist and White Supremacy*, Page 15.

⁹⁴ Daryl, Balia, *Black Methodist and White Supremacy*, Page 15.

⁹⁵ Daryl, Balia, *Black Methodist and White Supremacy*, Page 15.

⁹⁶ Daryl, Balia, *Black Methodist and White Supremacy*, Page 15.

⁹⁷ Daryl, Balia, *Black Methodist and White Supremacy*, Page 15.

⁹⁸ Joan, Jackson, *Mission Namaqualand: How Barnabas Shaw unleashed the Methodist Church in the Cape*, Rosebank, The Wesley Society of Southern Africa, 2009, Page 16.

the beginning of Methodist work amongst the natives of South Africa. Barnabas Shaw's missionary work was mostly amongst the Nama people. On the 8th of October 1816 he crossed the Oliphants River.⁹⁹ Upon crossing this river, he was met by a Namaqua chief who was accompanied by some of his headsmen on their way to the Cape to request that a missionary be sent to their people. For Shaw this was a sign that God was with him in his missionary journeys.

Before Barnabas Shaw, the missionary work of the WMMS had only focused on those who were soldiers of the Empire and other Methodists who were in the colony. However, after Shaw's arrival, missionary work became stronger amongst the natives. About twenty years after Barnabas Shaw had worked amongst the Nama people another missionary came to South Africa with the sole purpose of evangelising the natives of the country. The name of this missionary was William Shaw (no relation). William Shaw arrived in the Cape on the 1st of May 1820 with a missionary zeal that is well documented in his memoirs.¹⁰⁰ It may seem that Shaw was preoccupied with the taming of the land which he saw as unpopulated and uncultivated. Shaw was to embark on a mission to tame Eastern Cape by building mission stations.¹⁰¹ These mission stations stretched from the Eastern Cape to the Southern parts of Natal.

In Natal, missionary work was difficult to execute in the early nineteenth century because missionaries feared Shaka who had a reputation of being a cruel king (this picture of who Shaka may have been a popular opinion of settlers and may not have been entirely true).¹⁰² With the intention to expand his missionary work into Natal, William Shaw sent a minister to Natal in 1831.¹⁰³ The name of this minister was Robert Snowdall. Snowdall did not make it to Natal because he had died in Grahamstown before he could take his appointment there.¹⁰⁴ This did not stop Shaw from advocating that another minister be sent to Natal. The year after Snowdall's death, Shaw sent another minister to work amongst the Zulu people. This was Reverend William Satchell. Satchell was assigned to work in Natal in 1831 but he also did

⁹⁹ Jackson, *Mission Namaqualand*, Page 28.

¹⁰⁰ Grassow, *Settlers, Missionaries and Converts*. Page 127.

¹⁰¹ Grassow, *Settlers, Missionaries and Converts*. Page 129.

¹⁰² Carolyn, Hamilton, *Terrific Majesty: The Power of Shaka Zulu and the Limits of Historical Invention*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1998.

¹⁰³ Simangaliso, Kumalo, *Methodists with a White History and a Black Future: The People Called Methodist in KwaZulu-Natal*, Gauteng, Upper Room Ministries, 2009, Page 104.

¹⁰⁴ Kumalo, *Methodists with a White History*, Page 104.

not make it in to Natal and decided to work amongst the Pondo people instead.¹⁰⁵ For Kumalo and others, actions such as those of missionaries like Satchell were the result of their fear of Shaka who was painted as a cruel king who killed at will. Other missionaries like the American Board had already been to Natal by the time the WMMS decided to send their minister to work there.¹⁰⁶ Therefore, Methodists were not the first to do missionary work in Natal though plans to evangelise what Methodist missionaries called “Tshaka’s tribe” had been in place as early as 1829.¹⁰⁷

Missionaries in Natal

In the book by Brooke and Webb, the Methodist Church is said to be one of the most important religious bodies to undertake missionary work in Natal.¹⁰⁸ One of the most notable missionaries that represented the Methodist Church in missionary work was Reverend James Archbell. Archbell, his wife and their five sons arrived in Durban on the 4th of May 1842 in the company of British troops who were sent by Sir George Napier to annex Natal.¹⁰⁹ Natal was not Archbell’s first missionary work. He had done work in the Namaqualand and Bechuanaland. In 1836, Archbell served Boers who were part of the Voortrekkers while they were passing Bechuanaland.¹¹⁰ Earlier, Archbell is said to have had the desire to serve as a minister amongst these Voortrekker Boers. With the help of a Bechuana chief Moroka, he provided food to starving people who were part of the Voortrekker movement.¹¹¹ It seems that Archbell was more than delighted when he was sent to work in Natal. In 1840, he had penned these words in his diary before his appointment to Natal was announced; “Only time is waiting to transform Durban into the most popular and delightfully situated town on the coast of Africa.”¹¹² Working amongst the natives was the first thing that Archbell did when he arrived in Durban. Upon arrival he mediated between the British and the Boers in a war that ended in a standoff.¹¹³ A year after his arrival in Durban, he built a church with a thatched roof which may have been the first building of the Methodist Church in this town.¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁵ Kumalo, *Methodists with a White History*, Page 104.

¹⁰⁶ Leslie, Hewson, *An Introduction to South African Methodists*, Cape Town, The Standard Press, 1950, Page 41.

¹⁰⁷ Kumalo, *Methodists with a White History*, Page 104.

¹⁰⁸ Brooke and Webb, *A History of Natal*, Page 72.

¹⁰⁹ Kumalo, *Methodists with a White History*, Page 105.

¹¹⁰ Brooke and Webb, *A History of Natal*, Page 72.

¹¹¹ Brooke and Webb, *A History of Natal*, Page 72.

¹¹² Cited in Kumalo, *Methodists with a White History*, Page 105.

¹¹³ Kumalo, *Methodists with a White History*, Page 105.

¹¹⁴ Kumalo, *Methodists with a White History*, Page 105. See also Brooke and Webb, *A History of Natal*, Page 73.

With the help of other people of the colony who were his congregants, he built a manse for himself and his family to live in.¹¹⁵ Contrary to missionaries who joined him later, Archbell's work may have been stronger in the city of Durban and places closer to the coast.

Two other Methodist missionaries joined Archbell in Natal four years after his arrival in Durban. They were Reverends J. Richards and W. J. Davis. After the arrival of Reverends Richards and Davis in 1846, it seemed that the growth and strengthening of Methodist missionary activity in Natal was inevitable.¹¹⁶ Richards moved further inland and worked mostly in Pietermaritzburg where he did better than Davis. Richards' congregation in Pietermaritzburg was mostly an ecumenical congregation. This is because there were no other Protestant ministers in the area to minister to the English speaking people who were no Methodists.¹¹⁷ By this time the settlers had already established Pietermaritzburg as a settlement and a chief town of the Republic of Natal.¹¹⁸ In one of his diaries Richards explained the kind of congregation he had as "having a Governor, Secretary, Judge, Surveyor-General and Captain" and this made him see himself as a "Court Preacher."¹¹⁹

Another Methodist who was to do wonderful work in Natal was Clifford W. Holden. Holden had been a minister in Grahamstown before his appointment to Natal.¹²⁰ He arrived in Durban a year after Richards and Davis.¹²¹ Upon arrival in 1847, he took over the work that had been done by Archbell before him. When he arrived, Davis moved to Zwaartkop, a location that was not far from Durban. With the help of George Cato, Holden built a chapel in Durban which came to be known as the Durban Methodist Chapel. This chapel was opened in 1850 and had its Divine worship in May that year.¹²² At the beginning of missionary work in Natal most missionaries had focused more on those who were British citizens of the colony. However, by the 1850s most Methodist missionaries were determined to work amongst the Zulu people of Natal. Therefore, missionaries like Holden gave themselves more to the work of evangelising the natives of Natal without however abandoning their pastoral duties to the white settlers in Natal.¹²³

¹¹⁵ Kumalo, *Methodists with a White History*, Page 106.

¹¹⁶ Kumalo, *Methodists with a White History*, Page 106.

¹¹⁷ Brooke and Webb, *A History of Natal*, Page 73.

¹¹⁸ Guy, *Theophilus Shepstone*, Page 39.

¹¹⁹ Hewson, *An Introduction to South Africa Methodism*, Page 41.

¹²⁰ Kumalo, *Methodists with a White History*, Page 106.

¹²¹ Kumalo, *Methodists with a White History*, Page 106.

¹²² Hewson, *An Introduction to South Africa Methodism*, Page 42.

¹²³ Hewson, *An Introduction to South Africa Methodism*, Page 42.

Black missionaries in Natal

The work of Methodist missionaries amongst the natives of the then British colony would not have been possible without the natives who accompanied them. These people were not fully equipped or formally appointed missionaries but were simple and uneducated natives.¹²⁴ Balia describes these missionaries as the unpaid black Methodist missionaries who through their ability to interpret scripture and preach to their fellow natives were equals to their European accompaniers. The first to be discussed in this chapter is Charles Pamla. Pamla was born in Gcuwa (Butterworth) near East London in 1834.¹²⁵ A descendant of the Mfingo people, Pamla was raised in a Christian home. Though he was a Christian, Pamla did not have a problem with drinking traditional beer as was done by other people in that time. However, a quarterly meeting had forbidden Methodists from drinking traditional beer and from that day, Pamla never drank any alcoholic beverage.¹²⁶ Like most people of his time, he taught himself to speak the English language as well as another three languages.¹²⁷ He was not only a linguist but was also a fine preacher. He had trained himself by reading John Wesley's sermons.¹²⁸ In 1866, he was allowed to candidate for ministry in the Methodist Church after convincing the quarterly meeting of 1865 that he was a suitable candidate.¹²⁹

In 1866 Lamplough introduced Pamla to one of the people who would become his long term companion in the mission to evangelise the natives of Natal. This was Reverend William Taylor. Pamla and Taylor conducted many successful revival meetings. When Taylor moved to Natal work in areas like Pietermaritzburg, Edendale and Verulam Pamla went there with him.¹³⁰ Taylor's preaching concentrated amongst the white people in the area while Pamla worked with the black congregations. When Pamla preached at Edendale, the whole area might have very well been converted to Christianity.¹³¹ The membership of the Methodist Church in the area rose from 1064 to 1551 in the year that Pamla was there as a preacher.¹³² To Taylor, Pamla was more than an interpreter; he was a preacher in his own right. Taylor went back home to London and Pamla also went to continue his work in Port Elizabeth where

¹²⁴ Daryl, Balia, *Black Methodist and White Supremacy*, Page 16.

¹²⁵ Daryl, Balia, *Black Methodist and White Supremacy*, Page 21.

¹²⁶ Daryl, Balia, *Black Methodist and White Supremacy*, Page 21.

¹²⁷ Daryl, Balia, *Black Methodist and White Supremacy*, Page 22.

¹²⁸ Daryl, Balia, *Black Methodist and White Supremacy*, Page 22.

¹²⁹ Daryl, Balia, *Black Methodist and White Supremacy*, Page 22.

¹³⁰ Daryl, Balia, *Black Methodist and White Supremacy*, Page 25.

¹³¹ Daryl, Balia, *Black Methodist and White Supremacy*, Page 25.

¹³² Daryl, Balia, *Black Methodist and White Supremacy*, Page 25.

he was joined by other devout Methodist evangelists who preached to the natives there. The names of these preachers were Boyce Mama, Joseph Tele and William Shaw Kama who formed with Pamla a powerful band of preachers of the Gospel in the Eastern Cape.¹³³

Durban had its own native evangelists who were not formally appointed of fully equipped missionaries. One of these native missionaries was William Kongo. Kongo was a descendent of the Mfingo people of uMzumkhulu.¹³⁴ A few years before the coming together of Taylor and Pamla, Holden and Kongo were working in the Durban area. Kongo was an interpreter for Holden though he was also an evangelist in his own right. With the help of Kongo, he had his first class meeting in Natal on the 4th of May 1848.¹³⁵ Holden noted that amongst the natives who attended the meeting “two were clothed, three partly clothed and three naked.”¹³⁶ This was a clear picture that natives in Durban had not been fully Christianised or civilised according to the standards of European missionaries. The growth of the work in Durban necessitated the building of a church in this town. Land along West Street was purchased in 1877 for a sum of £ 500.¹³⁷ In this new church Kongo served the black congregation and Holden served the white congregation. The church was also used as a school for those amongst the natives who wished to receive education. Other buildings were to follow after this one was built. Methodist churches such as Addington Methodist Church and Gray Street were to follow after this one. There was no mix of races during services in these congregations and this is still the case in the present day. White services were held in the morning and black services were held in the afternoons.

¹³³ Daryl, Balia, *Black Methodist and White Supremacy*, Page 27.

¹³⁴ Kumalo, *Methodists with a White History*, Page 107.

¹³⁵ Kumalo, *Methodists with a White History*, Page 107.

¹³⁶ Kumalo, *Methodists with a White History*, Page 107.

¹³⁷ Kumalo, *Methodists with a White History*, Page 107.

Conclusion

The history of Methodism in Natal cannot be studied fully without taking into consideration the history of the Methodist Church in England. This chapter has provided a brief history of the Methodist Church starting with the conception of Methodism in eighteenth century England. It has been noted that John and his brother Charles Wesley and some of their friends were responsible for starting the movement that was to be known later as the Methodist Church. The Methodist Church also started missionary work in the British colonies and this work started in America and eventually through the Wesleyan Missionary Society found its way to South Africa. Most Methodist missionaries who landed in South Africa in the 1800s faced restrictions from the authorities of the Cape colony to practice their ministry. However, Barnabas Shaw and William Shaw were determined to go further inland to evangelise the natives of the colony. Barnabas went to the Namaqualand and William started mission stations that stretched all the way from the Eastern Cape to the southern parts of Natal. Determined to evangelise the Zulu people of Natal, William Shaw sent Reverend James Archbell to Natal and this was the start of missionary work in Natal. Archbell was later joined by other missionaries and the work moved further inland to places like Pietermaritzburg and Edendale. The European white missionaries would not have been successful in Natal if it wasn't for the black natives of South Africa who accompanied them as interpreters, guides and evangelists in their own right. This chapter has given a brief history of two of these evangelists namely Charles Pamla and William Kongo.

Chapter Four

Methodist Worship in Umlazi

Introduction

People who found themselves migrating to Natal from different places in the country may have brought with them different denominations. This chapter focuses on Umlazi and surrounding areas as it studies how different groups of Methodists found themselves in various pockets of this area. This will be done by studying memories of those who are connected to these groups. Three groups have been identified in this chapter. The interviews conducted amongst members of these groups that are being studied in this chapter will be the main source. As a way of introduction to the geography of the area being studied in this paper, this chapter will discuss the state of the then Durban African Circuit as well as the current Durban Circuit 0712. Firstly, there is a group of Methodists who used to worship at the Umlazi Glebe and refers to this group as the Umlazi Glebe Group. Secondly, another group used to worship in Umlazi Township when it was started and this will be referred to as Umlazi Group. Thirdly, this chapter refers to those who used to worship as Methodist in Malukazi and the surrounding areas as the Malukazi Group. This chapter will also present those who were key figures amongst all three groups. The rest of the chapter will move on to highlight differences and similarities in the memories that exist about Methodism in Umlazi.

The Durban African Circuit

In the chapter before this one, the focus has been on Methodist activity in Natal. It is clear that from the early 1840s Methodism could be found in Natal though it was stronger amongst white citizens of the British Empire. In years to follow, Methodism would find its way to the most remote of areas in Natal whether through the work of white missionaries or their black companions. The growth of Methodism in Natal led to the Methodist Church of Southern Africa declaring the coastal area from uThongathi to Umkhomazi as the Durban African Circuit.¹³⁸ This was a mega circuit which was divided into sections. The area from uThongathi to KwaMashu bordering Claremont was known as section one. From Claremont

¹³⁸ Khoza Mgojo interviewed by Akhona Gxamza, Kumalo files, 10 November 2011. In Gamalakhe.

to the borders of Lamontville it was known as section two. From Lamontville to Umkhomazi it was known as section four.¹³⁹

This mega circuit proved to be a challenge for ministers and lay preachers alike. Ministers and preachers had to travel long distances to honour their preaching appointments. Some trips to a preaching station would take preachers the whole day. Seeing this challenge, the Methodist Conference of 1992 introduced what came to be known as Geographic Circuits. These were going to be circuits that were demarcated according to where Methodist societies were. The area from Umlazi River as well as Isipingo and parts of iMbumbulu such as Stone Hill, Mangamazini, Golokodo, Nungwana, Mpaphala, Folweni and Nsimbini is called the Durban Circuit 0712. In total, the circuit had thirty societies including those that were built when Umlazi the township was established. In the year 2004 the Durban Circuit was still seen as a huge circuit and had to be re-demarcated to allow the societies closer to Amanzimtoti and Umgababa to fall under the Upper South Coast Circuit. This chapter focuses on the memory of those from societies which remained in the Durban Circuit 0712. The following are societies of the Durban Circuit 0712:

- 1) Rev. Dr. E.Z. Sikhakhane Methodist Society in Umlazi Township V Section. This society used to be known as Zwelethu Methodist Church.
- 2) Siphumelele Methodist Society in Umlazi Township C Section
- 3) Umlazi 'D' Methodist Society in Umlazi Township D Section
- 4) Phila Methodist Society in Umlazi Township G Section
- 5) Ekuphilisweni Methodist Society in Umlazi Township H Section
- 6) Ndumiso Methodist Society in Umlazi Township M Section
- 7) Esikhumbuzweni Methodist Society in Umlazi Township N Section
- 8) Malukazi Methodist Society in Umlazi Township U Section
- 9) John Wesley Methodist Society in Umlazi Township AA Section
- 10) Umlazi 'CC' Methodist Society in Umlazi Township CC Section
- 11) Guga Methodist Society in Nsimbini
- 12) Chibini Methodist Society in Mangamazini
- 13) Folweni Methodist Society in Folweni

¹³⁹ Khoza Mgojo interviewed by Akhona Gxamza, Kumalo files, 10 November 2011, in Gamalakhe.

Societies in Umlazi Township had not existed before the establishment of the township. As the township grew into more sections, a need to establish more societies arose. This was to make the Methodist Church accessible to all those who wished to worship in various sections.

Currently, the Durban African Circuit is under the Superintendence of Rev. Linda Mandindi. Rev. Mandindi has played an active role in the process of recalling the history of the Circuit. It is Rev. Mandindi who initiated most of the commemorative services in the Circuit. In the interview conducted with him, Linda Mandindi took the liberty to include a statement in the biographical part of the interview with highlighting the fact that the place where the interview with him was being conducted in is a historical place in the Circuit.¹⁴⁰ It is Rev. Mandindi's keen interest in the history of the Circuit that has seen people embark on a journey to remembering. In his interview, Rev. Mandindi seems to be aware of past events that took place during his time under the Superintendence of Rev. Dr. Khoza Mgojo.

Though Rev. Mandindi only came to the Circuit in the early 1990s, he seems to have been engaging with people about the history of the place. In his interview, Rev. Mandindi recalls how he had found out what he knew about the Circuit from Mrs Lydia Mzoneli and Kenneth Zungu who are also interviewed in this project.

The Umlazi Glebe Group

In chapter three of this paper we saw how the Durban Corporation was able to acquire the Umlazi Glebe from the Anglican Church after years of negotiations. In 1951 the then Minister of Native Affairs Dr. H. F. Verwoerd visited Durban with the aim of dealing with the issues that were facing the city in relation to the natives of the town.¹⁴¹ After this visit, the Department of Native Affairs decided that it was now going to speed up the process of building permanent native houses in the area.¹⁴² The City Council was going to spend £114,000 on these houses that were going to be built in this area.¹⁴³ However, at this point the City Council had not been granted land in the Umlazi Reserve. A 1952 extract from the City Council's minutes point number 5 is a proclamation of Umlazi Glebe as a Native village.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴⁰ Linda Mandindi interviewed by Philani Dlamini, 28 April 2016.

¹⁴¹ 'Big Push to Native Housing,' *Natal Mercury*, 07 November 1951.

¹⁴² 'Big Push to Native Housing,' *Natal Mercury*, 07 November 1951.

¹⁴³ 'Big Push to Native Housing,' *Natal Mercury*, 07 November 1951.

¹⁴⁴ Extract from the City Council Minutes title, Proclamation of Umlazi Glebe as a Native Village. 30 September 1952.

This meant that those who had lived in Umlazi Glebe be it as refugees of migrant workers in Durban and surrounding areas could now own houses in the Glebe.

This study has identified three Methodist families that were amongst those who moved into the houses that were built by the City Council through the Durban Corporation. They were the Goba, Vezi and the Hlubi families. This part of the chapter will focus on the memories of Methodist worship as recalled by those whose families who were worshipping in the area. One member from each family has been identified and interviewed for this purpose.

The first memory to be discussed in this chapter is that of Nomnambithi Sdudla Goba. She was born in Pietermaritzburg in 1955 and said that this was a time of forced removals.¹⁴⁵ Her family had come from Mnambithi near Ladysmith and settled in Edendale in Pietermaritzburg.¹⁴⁶ She says that her family was attached to Mnambithi and were hoping to move back to this place from Pietermaritzburg, that is why her father named her Nomnambithi.¹⁴⁷ In the early 1960 her family moved to the Umlazi Glebe and she started school at Lindokuhle Primary School.¹⁴⁸ Her father Reggie Goba was a graduate from Fort Hare and at this time was working at Mobil Oil and later became a teacher and a principal at Ohlange.¹⁴⁹ Both her parents had met at Adams College where they were training as teachers.¹⁵⁰

Sdudla's Mother was a cousin to Albert Luthuli who later became very interested in the issue of land and housing in Umlazi Glebe. She was a teacher and had grown up in Groutville.¹⁵¹ She remembers her mother as a devout Christian and attributes that to the fact that she had grown up in Groutville Mission Station.¹⁵² Sdudla recalls how he mother had taught them all about Christ and insisted that they go to church.

The memory of Methodist worship as narrated by Sdudla Goba does not include worship in the Glebe. For Sdudla, she recalls worshipping at Grey Street in town and not anywhere close to the Glebe. Sdudla's recollection quickly moves to the time when the Zwelethu Methodist church was started. The Zwelethu Methodist Church was a project that started in the late

¹⁴⁵ Sdudla Goba, interviewed by Philani Dlamini, 29 April 2016, in Umlazi.

¹⁴⁶ Sdudla Goba interviewed by Philani Dlamini, 29 April 2016, in Umlazi.

¹⁴⁷ Sdudla Goba interviewed by Philani Dlamini, 29 April 2016, in Umlazi.

¹⁴⁸ Sdudla Goba interviewed by Philani Dlamini, 29 April 2016, in Umlazi.

¹⁴⁹ Sdudla Goba interviewed by Philani Dlamini, 29 April 2016, in Umlazi.

¹⁵⁰ Sdudla Goba interviewed by Philani Dlamini, 29 April 2016, in Umlazi.

¹⁵¹ Sdudla Goba interviewed by Philani Dlamini, 29 April 2016, in Umlazi.

¹⁵² Sdudla Goba interviewed by Philani Dlamini, 29 April 2016, in Umlazi.

1950s after Umlazi the Township was established. The Zwelethu Methodist Church was later named Rev. Dr. E.Z. Skhakhane Methodist Society. The official opening of this church was on the 3rd of December 1960. This means that, even though the Goba family were residents of the Umlazi Glebe, it seems that her family only went into town for worship and was not worshipping with those who were worshipping in Umlazi Glebe.

Reggie Goba was a person who valued education. According to Sdudla, he was not afraid to raise funds for young people in the area to go to school.¹⁵³ He later became a circuit steward in the Durban Circuit and played major roles in different projects of the circuit.

Within this group there are those who claim to have held Methodist worship in the Umlazi Glebe. This memory comes from a son of another prominent Methodist in the area of Umlazi and surrounding areas. This is our second strand of memory in this group as recalled by Lindinjabulo Abner Hlubi. Linda Hlubi as he is known was born and brought up in Umlazi Glebe.¹⁵⁴ Linda also went to Lindokuhle Primary School. He recalls that Umlazi Glebe was a tin-town which later developed to a township with permanent structures for people to live in.¹⁵⁵ It seems that Linda was aware of the fact that Umlazi Glebe belonged to the Anglican Church even though he does not say how he knew this. He was also aware of the fact that Umlazi Glebe was not part of Umlazi Reserve.

Linda's father Walter Hlubi was from eMpolweni in Pietermaritzburg and he had moved to Edendale and eventually to Umlazi Glebe where Linda was born.¹⁵⁶ Walter Hlubi was a businessman and a devout Christian. Linda recalls how his father got involved in many building projects for the Methodist Church of Southern Africa in Natal. Linda counts his father as one of the people who were responsible for the building of the Lay Centre in Edendale along with people like Rev. Dr. E.Z. Skhakhane.¹⁵⁷ Walter Hlubi became one of the most powerful advocates of the Nzondelelo mission movement in Natal. This movement had its first meetings in Edendale where Walter Hlubi was from in August 1875.¹⁵⁸ It is no wonder that those who came from this part of the province became strong promoters of this movement.

¹⁵³ Sdudla Goba interviewed by Philani Dlamini, 29 April 2016, in Umlazi.

¹⁵⁴ Linda Hlubi interviewed by Philani Dlamini, 28 April 2016, in Pietermaritzburg,

¹⁵⁵ Linda Hlubi interviewed by Philani, 28 April 2016, in Pietermaritzburg,

¹⁵⁶ Linda Hlubi interviewed by Philani Dlamini, 28 April 2016, in Pietermaritzburg,

¹⁵⁷ Linda Hlubi interviewed by Philani Dlamini, 28 April 2016, in Pietermaritzburg,

¹⁵⁸ Balia, Black Methodists and White Supremacy, Page 36.

Linda Hlubi recalls that they used to worship as Methodists in different people's home at the Umlazi Glebe when he was young. His family's home was one of the houses that were used by those who were Methodists in the area for Sunday worship.¹⁵⁹ Linda's father was a Local Preacher and he used to conduct services in their home for those who were Methodists of the Umlazi Glebe. Linda's memory of worship at their home in number 742 Umlazi Glebe is very clear and is articulated with a lot of sound clarity. For Linda, worship at the Umlazi Glebe went on until the forced removal of people from Umlazi Glebe in 1966.¹⁶⁰ Currently, Linda lives in Pietermaritzburg but he travels to Durban every Sunday for worship in the now Rev. Dr. E.Z. Skhakhane Methodist Society. For him this is because his family was one of the first families that held Methodist worship in the area before others came.¹⁶¹

The third memory of Methodist worship amongst the Umlazi Glebe Group comes from Bongani James Vezi. Bongani is affectionately known as Guy to those who worship with him. Guy was born in Clermont in 1951 but grew up in the Umlazi Glebe.¹⁶² He started school at Mdladla in 1957 and went to Lindokuhle in 1959.¹⁶³ Guy was part of the first group that joined a theatrical production called Mabatha. He calls the decision to join this group as the most irresponsible thing he ever did even though acting was his passion and he really enjoyed travelling the world and performing in front of people of different races and cultures.¹⁶⁴

After his involvement with Mabatha, Guy joined a group of young people who participated in a National Youth Leadership programme which was initiated by Ernest Bartmaan who was a Methodist minister. Those who used to facilitate at this programme included people like Otto Mbangula, Simon Gqubule, Ruben Phillips and Khoza Mgojo.¹⁶⁵ After this programme, Guy went on to work at the Lay Centre with Rev. Dr. E.Z. Skhakhane as a youth worker.

For Guy, Methodist worship was going on on the Glebe when he was a child in the 1950s. He recalls that his father was a class leader and his mother as well.¹⁶⁶ He also remembers that his family's home was one of the houses that were used to hold worship by those who were Methodists in the Umlazi Glebe. He also agrees with Linda Hlubi that Linda's father Walter

¹⁵⁹ Linda Hlubi interviewed by Philani Dlamini, 28 April 2016, in Pietermaritzburg,

¹⁶⁰ Linda Hlubi interviewed by Philani Dlamini, 28 April 2016, in Pietermaritzburg,

¹⁶¹ Linda Hlubi interviewed by Philani Dlamini, 28 April 2016, in Pietermaritzburg,

¹⁶² Bongani Vezi interviewed by Philani Dlamini, 25 April 2016, in Umlazi.

¹⁶³ Bongani Vezi interviewed by Philani Dlamini, 25 April 2016, in Umlazi.

¹⁶⁴ Bongani Vezi interviewed by Philani Dlamini, 25 April 2016, in Umlazi.

¹⁶⁵ Bongani Vezi interviewed by Philani Dlamini, 25 April 2016, in Umlazi.

¹⁶⁶ Bongani Vezi interviewed by Philani Dlamini, 25 April 2016, in Umlazi.

Hlubi was one of the people who used to lead worship in the area. Guy mentions Mrs Cele who was a Sunday School teacher as another person who opened their home to Methodist worship in the area. Another interviewee Bonginkosi Ndaba recalls how Mrs Cele taught them Sunday School in this same house.¹⁶⁷

Guy recalls that ministers were not coming to the area every Sunday. He says that they would see a minister only when it was going to be a communion service and a when there was going to be baptismal done on that Sunday.¹⁶⁸ Because there was no church building at the time, Guy says that these services would be held at Lindokuhle the school.¹⁶⁹ Guy recalls how as children in the Umlazi Glebe they saw the coming of a minister to do a service amongst them as a special occasion. He says that they were made to dress well every time a minister was going to visit the area.¹⁷⁰

The story of Methodism in the Glebe as articulated by Guy does not focus on his family or on how worship was held at his family home. Guy, however, focuses on the relationship that existed between him and Rev. Dr. E.Z. Skhakhane. Skhakhane also had a relationship with Guy's father. Guy is currently a seasoned journalist with his own newspaper which is dedicated to telling stories about what happens in different congregations. For him, this was as a result of the influence Skhakhane had on him.

The Umlazi Group

In the earliest stages of the establishment of Umlazi as a township, there was a group of Methodists who occupied the first houses were built in this township. Two families are known to have opened their home to those who were Methodists in at this new township. This is the Nxingweni family and the Mabindisa family. This part of the chapter now focuses on the memory of Methodism as recalled by members of these families.

The first strand of memory to be dealt with in this chapter is going to come from the Mabindisa family. This is the family of Alson Mabindisa which was from the Eastern Cape.¹⁷¹ Alson had moved from the Eastern Cape and was one of the tenants of Indian landlords in Cato Manor. When Umlazi the township was established, Mr Mabindisa moved

¹⁶⁷ Bonginkosi Ndaba interviewed by Philani Dlamini, 25 April 2016, Umlazi.

¹⁶⁸ Bongani Vezi interviewed by Philani Dlamini, 25 April 2016, in Umlazi.

¹⁶⁹ Bongani Vezi interviewed by Philani Dlamini, 25 April 2016, in Umlazi.

¹⁷⁰ Bongani Vezi interviewed by Philani Dlamini, 25 April 2016, in Umlazi.

¹⁷¹ Fikile Mabindisa interviewed by Philani Dlamini, 25 April 2016, in Umlazi.

from Cato Manor to Umlazi Township with his family. They occupied houses in the area called KwaStambu in Umlazi Township V Section. Mr Mabindisa worked at the Durban Airport until he lost his job in 1955. Alson is remembered by his daughter as someone who encouraged his children to go to church and to live a Christian life.

The daughter of Alson Mabindisa Fikile Mabindisa recalls how Methodist worship was held in their home. Though Alson Mabindisa was not involved in the everyday life of the church, he opened his house to Methodists to come and worship in his house. Every Sunday the family would wake up early and move out of the house their furniture so that people could setup wooden benches inside the lounge and the kitchen.¹⁷² However, worship at the Mabindisa house was not for a long period of time. In 1955 Methodist worship in the area had to be moved to the Ngxingweni house.¹⁷³ Fikile attributes the move from worshipping at their home to the Ngxingweni house to the fact that her father had lost his job at the Durban Airport.¹⁷⁴ However, it seems that the Ngxingwenis give a different reason as to why Methodist worship moved from the Mabindisa home to their home.

This moves us to the second strand of memory in this group. This is a memory that comes from Tracy Ngxingweni and her son Themba Ngxingweni. Thulisile Tracy Ngxingweni was born in KwaDumisa in Mzinto. She did her teachers training in Mphumulo from 1949 to 1950.¹⁷⁵ In 1951 she met with Lancelot Ngxingweni and they married in the same year.¹⁷⁶ They moved as a family to Coedmore Quarry (called KwaMagxalaba in isiZulu) in Bellair near Durban. The father of Lancelot Ngxingweni was working in this place in a cement manufacturing firm and he lived with his family in the company's barracks. Therefore, when Tracy and Lancelot got married, they moved to this area.

Tracy recalls how they participated in Methodist worship while they were staying in Coedmore Quarry. A corrugated iron structure was built in this area and worship was held there for people who worked at Coedmore Quarry and surrounding areas.¹⁷⁷ Tracy's son, Themba, was baptised in this corrugated iron structure. Worship in this structure was short lived because they had to be moved following the Group Areas Act of 1951.¹⁷⁸ The family

¹⁷² Fikile Mabindisa interviewed by Philani Dlamini, 25 April 2016, in Umlazi.

¹⁷³ Fikile Mabindisa interviewed by Philani Dlamini, 25 April 2016, in Umlazi.

¹⁷⁴ Fikile Mabindisa interviewed by Philani Dlamini, 25 April 2016, in Umlazi.

¹⁷⁵ Tracy Ngxingweni interviewed by Philani Dlamini, 26 April 2016, in Umlazi.

¹⁷⁶ Tracy Ngxingweni interviewed by Philani Dlamini, 26 April 2016, in Umlazi.

¹⁷⁷ Tracy Ngxingweni interviewed by Philani Dlamini, 26 April 2016, in Umlazi.

¹⁷⁸ Tracy Ngxingweni interviewed by Philani Dlamini, 26 April 2016, in Umlazi.

was moved to what was a new township called Umlazi in an area that used to be called Government Gazette (GG) currently known as Umlazi V Section. This area was well known for delicious samp and beans which led to it being called kwaStambu.

When the Ngxingweni family moved to Umlazi Township, they did not know of any place where Methodist worship was held in the area. Because they were still allowed to hold worship in places like Roseburg and Umbilo they used to commute from Umlazi Township to these places.¹⁷⁹ Tracy recalls that it was during bus trips to these places that they started noticing that people wearing Women's Manyano and Young Men's Guild uniforms were regularly taking these trips to go and worship in different places.¹⁸⁰ This gave them the idea that they should open their homes to these people so that they don't have to go all the way to these areas to worship. As noted above, the Mabindisa family home was the first venue for these services. Tracy says that the reason for the move from the Mabindisa house to her home was because the number of Methodist worshippers had grown significantly.¹⁸¹ All types of services were held at the Ngxingweni house because it was bigger than the Mabindisa house including communion services and baptismal services.¹⁸² However, these services did not include funerals and weddings.¹⁸³ From 1955 until the building of the Zwelethu Methodist Church in 1960, Methodist worship in the Township was held in the Ngxingweni house.

Themba Ngxingweni recalls how the initiative to build a church was a joint venture between those who worshipped at his house and those who worshipped at the Umlazi Glebe. Rev J.C. Mvusi was responsible for bringing together those who were worshipping at the Umlazi Glebe and those who worshiped at the Ngxingweni house.¹⁸⁴ This may be because Mvusi was aware of the two groups that were having Methodist worship in different locations though they were close to each other. Mvusi may have had to conduct communion and baptism services for both these groups and saw it as unnecessary to have two Methodist gatherings so close together. This union was the start of the Zwelethu Methodist Church.

In a telephonic interview conducted with Malcom Mbanjwa, Mbangwa remembers days when Mr Nxingweni approached his uncle who was Samuel (Gandeduze) Mdlalose who was

¹⁷⁹ Tracy Ngxingweni interviewed by Philani Dlamini, 26 April 2016, in Umlazi.

¹⁸⁰ Tracy Ngxingweni interviewed by Philani Dlamini, 26 April 2016, in Umlazi.

¹⁸¹ Tracy Ngxingweni interviewed by Philani Dlamini, 26 April 2016, in Umlazi.

¹⁸² Tracy Ngxingweni interviewed by Philani Dlamini, 26 April 2016, in Umlazi.

¹⁸³ Tracy Ngxingweni interviewed by Philani Dlamini, 26 April 2016, in Umlazi.

¹⁸⁴ Themba Ngxingweni interviewed by Philani Dlamini, 26 April 2016, in Umlazi.

an employee of the Durban Cooperation.¹⁸⁵ Mbanjwa also seeks Rev. Dr. E.Z. Skakane as one of the most important minister in the life of the Methodist Church in Umlazi. This is regardless of the fact that Skakane came after Mvusi. According to Mbanjwa, his uncle helped with the building of the church building in this part of Umlazi.

The Malukazi Group

There exists a memory of Methodist activity in Umlazi that predates all others. This memory comes from a descendant of immigrants from Mozambique. The participant this time is an eighty-five-year old Mrs Lydia Mzoneli. Mrs Mzoneli was born in Ndaleni on the 21st of March 1930 and went to school in this area. She started her own business and has been an entrepreneur all her life.¹⁸⁶ She has been in different business committees as president and deputy as well.¹⁸⁷

The story of the arrival of the Methodists in the Umlazi area as told by Mrs Mzoneli is different because it starts not with South Africans who were removed by forces but with Mozambicans who came to South Africa willingly. According to Mrs Mzoneli, a group of Mozambicans walked from Mozambique to South Africa in the year 1884. This group arrived in South Africa in 1885 in a place called Gqwabagqwaba.¹⁸⁸ The total number of people in this group that had left Mozambique was fifteen.¹⁸⁹ However, only four of them reached what was to be later called Malukazi.¹⁹⁰ Amongst them was Mrs Mzoneli's great grandfather. Her great grand father's name was Enoch Masinga.¹⁹¹ According to the story passed down to her, Enoch faced a lot of difficulties in this journey from Mozambique to South Africa. At some point in the journey Enoch's feet started swelling up to a point that he could not walk anymore. His companions left him with some food and told him to stay until he could walk again. As a way of making sure that he did not lose his companions, Masinga would point the head of his stick in the direction they were going.¹⁹² A few days later, he joined and they

¹⁸⁵ Malcom Mbanjwa interviewed by Philani Dlamini, 26 June 2017, Telephonic interview.

¹⁸⁶ Lydia Mzoneli interviewed by Philani Dlamini, 10 June 2016, in Ballito.

¹⁸⁷ Lydia Mzoneli interviewed by Philani Dlamini, 10 June 2016, in Ballito.

¹⁸⁸ Lydia Mzoneli interviewed by Philani Dlamini, 10 June 2016, in Ballito.

¹⁸⁹ Lydia Mzoneli interviewed by Philani Dlamini, 10 June 2016, in Ballito.

¹⁹⁰ Lydia Mzoneli interviewed by Philani Dlamini, 10 June 2016, in Ballito.

¹⁹¹ Lydia Mzoneli interviewed by Philani Dlamini, 10 June 2016, in Ballito.

¹⁹² Lydia Mzoneli interviewed by Philani Dlamini, 10 June 2016, in Ballito.

arrived in Malukazi together.¹⁹³ In this area they came across a Cele chief who gave them land to settle in.

From the four men who had arrived in Gqwabagqwaba, one went on to cross another river. This man's name was Tembe. When he crossed a river with large rocks he named it eZimbokodweni (the place of rocks or a rocky place). Masinga and Mashiyane were left in Gqwabagqwaba and they built their homes there and Tembe built his across the eZimbokodweni River. The area where Masinga and Mashiyani established themselves was named by them Malukazi. The root of the word Malukazi may have been a Mozambican Portuguese colloquial which means we have arrived or we have gone far enough.¹⁹⁴ This is because they had felt that the area they were in was far enough for them to settle and start their new lives.

It seems that all these men were Methodists. Tembe is said to have established Methodism across the eZimbokondweni River. Most of the people who joined Tembe across the eZimbokodweni River were people from the Eastern Cape. Mrs Mzoneli remembers names like Rubuluza, Jam Jam and Jafta as those of people who worshipped where Tembe had established Methodism.¹⁹⁵ Masinga and Mashiyani established Methodism in Malukazi. Mrs Mzoneli recalls a structure that was build using paraffin containers which was used for worship in her days as a young lady. According to her, this structure had been built by Masinga and Mashiyani for their worship as Methodists.¹⁹⁶ At this time the church had a membership of forty people.¹⁹⁷ This structure was later replaced by a stick and mud structure that was built when Mrs Mzoneli herself was a grown woman.¹⁹⁸

Mrs Mzoneli had fond memories of gatherings like Easter Conventions which were held in the area in the 1940s. She also remembers how those who had joined the church established by Tembe would meet with them in these gatherings.¹⁹⁹ For Easter she says that they did not even have proper venues to hold their convention and would just meet in a plain and sit on

¹⁹³ Lydia Mzoneli interviewed by Philani Dlamini, 10 June 2016, in Ballito.

¹⁹⁴ Lydia Mzoneli interviewed by Philani Dlamini, 10 June 2016, in Ballito.

¹⁹⁵ Lydia Mzoneli interviewed by Philani Dlamini, 10 June 2016, in Ballito.

¹⁹⁶ Lydia Mzoneli interviewed by Philani Dlamini, 10 June 2016, in Ballito.

¹⁹⁷ Lydia Mzoneli interviewed by Philani Dlamini, 10 June 2016, in Ballito.

¹⁹⁸ Lydia Mzoneli interviewed by Philani Dlamini, 10 June 2016, in Ballito.

¹⁹⁹ Lydia Mzoneli interviewed by Philani Dlamini, 10 June 2016, in Ballito.

the grass. For her, the most powerful organisations at this time were the Women's Manyano and the Young Men's Guild.²⁰⁰

Another memory from this group comes from Jeffery Shezi. Jeffery was born on the 27th of September 1951 and he went to school eMfume where his father was from.²⁰¹ Jeffery Shezi became the Vice President of the Young Men's Guild.²⁰² He says that he was given this leadership position because of his involvement with the movement from a very young age.

Shezi tells a story about how Methodist worship was going on the area where he was born years before the establishment of Umlazi Township. According to him, a certain Chamane family in eThembeni had opened their home to be used for Methodist as early as 1930.²⁰³ This house belonged to a widow who was also a Methodist. He says because this was a rural area, they used one of the rondavels to hold worship.²⁰⁴ The first society stewards who doubled up as preachers as well were Isaac Shezi and Isaac Ndlovu.²⁰⁵ Jeffery Shezi also recalls how they used to have gatherings like revivals with members of the Young Men's Guild from other societies. Jeffery also speaks about how people from the Eastern Cape were part of these revival services particularly those who worshipped in the barracks of a fertiliser company called Kynoch.²⁰⁶

From 1962 to 1964, the society at the Chamane home started looking for a place to build a church.²⁰⁷ The society stewards approached another widow Mrs Mbhele who was also worshipping in this society.²⁰⁸ Mrs Mbhele's son gave the society a piece of land to build a church and the project started. With the help a Maphumulo chief, the society registered the church building with the Ngonyama Trust Board. The name they had wanted to use to register the society was Chamane Methodist Church. However, people at the board said to them they cannot register a church using a person's surname.²⁰⁹ Isaac Ndlovu then suggested Baphehli Methodist as an alternative though they never got to use it.²¹⁰

²⁰⁰ Lydia Mzoneli interviewed by Philani Dlamini, 10 June 2016, in Ballito.

²⁰¹ Jeffery Shezi interviewed by Philani Dlamini, 10 June 2016, in Umlazi.

²⁰² Jeffery Shezi interviewed by Philani Dlamini, 10 June 2016, in Umlazi.

²⁰³ Jeffery Shezi interviewed by Philani Dlamini, 10 June 2016, in Umlazi.

²⁰⁴ Jeffery Shezi interviewed by Philani Dlamini, 10 June 2016, in Umlazi.

²⁰⁵ Jeffery Shezi interviewed by Philani Dlamini, 10 June 2016, in Umlazi.

²⁰⁶ Jeffery Shezi interviewed by Philani Dlamini, 10 June 2016, in Umlazi.

²⁰⁷ Jeffery Shezi interviewed by Philani Dlamini, 10 June 2016, in Umlazi.

²⁰⁸ Jeffery Shezi interviewed by Philani Dlamini, 10 June 2016, in Umlazi.

²⁰⁹ Jeffery Shezi interviewed by Philani Dlamini, 10 June 2016, in Umlazi.

²¹⁰ Jeffery Shezi interviewed by Philani Dlamini, 10 June 2016, in Umlazi.

It would seem that this memory also predates the memories of the Umlazi Glebe Group and the Umlazi Group about Methodist worship in this area. By the time Methodist worship was going on in the Umlazi Glebe and the Umlazi Township, this area already had seventeen societies including Malukazi which was the resident society for Rev. J.C. Mvusi.

In the late 1960, some Methodists were also worshipping in a church called eChibini in Mangamazini. One of the people who were part of this group was Richard Magcaba, known by members of the Chibini Society as Thilomu. Thilomu was born in Mid Illovo in 1954.²¹¹ His family moved from Mid Illovo to Mangamazini in 1967 and he went to a school near Mangamazini in Golokodo.²¹²

The memory that Richards has is of the Methodist worship that used to happen in a rondavel that belonged to the Mkhanya family. He recalls that sometimes this rondavel would get corroded on rainy days.²¹³ However, he says they persisted. Richard was a strong member of the Young Men's Guild and he remembers that when they arrived in Mangamazini, they used to participate in revivals that were held in Malukazi.²¹⁴ Attending services was not easy because of transport from Mangamazini to Malukazi. Those who wanted to attend services at Malukazi sometimes had to walk for about an hour or two to get to Malukazi.²¹⁵

The Chibini society was one of the societies that were on the margins of the circuit. Richard recalls how some preachers would not honour their preaching appointments because this society as well as others was too far.²¹⁶ By the time Richard and his family moved to Mangamazini Methodist worship had started from Malukazi and across the eZimbokodweni River. Chibini became one of the societies of the area that became known as Section four.

²¹¹ Richard Magcaba interviewed by Philani Dlamini, 26 April 2016, in Mangamazini.

²¹² Richard Magcaba interviewed by Philani Dlamini, 26 April 2016, in Mangamazini.

²¹³ Richard Magcaba interviewed by Philani Dlamini, 26 April 2016, in Mangamazini.

²¹⁴ Richard Magcaba interviewed by Philani Dlamini, 26 April 2016, in Mangamazini.

²¹⁵ Richard Magcaba interviewed by Philani Dlamini, 26 April 2016, in Mangamazini.

²¹⁶ Richard Magcaba interviewed by Philani Dlamini, 26 April 2016, in Mangamazini.

Conclusion

As an attempt to map out the geography of this study, this chapter has discussed the state of the Durban African Circuit which was too big for a minister and preachers to serve effectively. The Durban Circuit 0712 was declared after the Methodist conference of 1992 introduced geographical circuits. This chapter moved on to discuss the memories that are kept amongst the three groups which now form the Durban Circuit 0712. The first is the Umlazi Glebe Group which used to have worship services at people's houses in Umlazi Glebe. The second strand of memory was of the Umlazi Group which is the group that worshipped in Umlazi Township immediately after this township was established. The third group discussed is the Malukazi Group which has a memory that predates all the other memories from the other groups. It has been found here that in areas like Bhekulwandle and Mangamazini already had people who were Methodists before Umlazi Township was established.

Chapter Five

Contestation and the Creation of Historical Knowledge in Umlazi

Introduction

It has been centuries since Christianity came to the shores of South African. There exist different stories about how this religion found its way to areas where native South Africans were and in most cases still are. In recent years, many congregations have embarked on a quest to collect these stories to preserve and to pass down to the next generation. This is not envisaged critically it may give rise to contestations. This paper has been an attempt to model a way in which oral history research as well as archival research can work together to help congregations in the process of creating historical knowledge and preserving memories about themselves. This chapter is going to uses the Methodist Church in Umlazi as a case study to demonstrate how oral history can be used by congregations to preserve memories about their establishment. Subsequently, ways in which archival research can complement oral history in the process of creating historical knowledge about congregations will be suggested. Therefore, the first part of this chapter will be spent defining and explaining how archives were used for this paper. Secondly, this part of the paper is going to explain the advantages of using oral history in the process of creating historical knowledge about congregations. Thirdly, this chapter is going to try and use Michel Foucault in understanding how power relations can impact a narrative that is found in some congregations.

Using written archives to tell the story of Umlazi

When studying a phenomenon in a particular context, archival research can provide researchers with important insight. Those who are interested in histories of South African townships usually consult archival collections in order to fill gaps that may be left by other methods of creating historical knowledge about these townships. Archives can at times allow the historian to retell events and even reconstruct communities that may have existed during those periods being studied. Two resources centres have provided the necessary documents for a retelling of the story of Umlazi from the time it was a mission reserve to the time when it became a township. These places were the Killie Campbell Library in Durban and the Natal Archives in Pietermaritzburg. The Natal Archives have been a good source for

correspondences between colonial administrators and the Anglican Church. The Killie Campbell Library has provided information about meetings of the Durban City Council as well as decisions made by the Department of Native Affairs in relation to Umlazi. The Killie Campbell Library also provided Natal provincial newspapers which were also a good tool in helping to understand the burning issues of the time. It may seem that the *Natal Mercury* and *Ilanga Lase Natali* were important to those who wanted to voice their concerns about Umlazi and the surrounding areas.

All the documents mentioned above provided critical historical background information about Umlazi from the mid-1800s to the 1960s. Another benefit of using these documents was the ability to close gaps that are left by those who were participants in the oral history interviews. Most of the participants in this paper were not born in the mid-1800s and may not know what happened in that period. This is where archival work comes in handy particularly in this case to shed light on Umlazi Reserve, the Anglican Umlazi Mission Station and its Glebe and Umlazi Township. In reading archival documents it was clear to see that the area between Umlazi River and Illovo River was occupied by people before Umlazi Township was established. These people were living in the Mission Reserve and some at the Anglican Glebe and amongst them there were Methodists.

For example, many of the oral history interview participants referred to the area as belonging to the Cele people. This could be supported by archival documents such as a compensation claim that was made in 1953 by those who were tenants at the Anglican Glebe where three of the nine used the surname Cele.²¹⁷ This means that the most common surname in Umlazi even in the 1950 was the Cele surname. One of the participants in this paper also told a story about how her ancestor arrived in a place they later called Malukazi and were given land by a chief of the Cele people.

Oral History as a Tool

As discussed in chapter one of this paper, oral history has been the most important tool in collecting the memories of Methodist people in Umlazi with the aim of creating historical knowledge. This part of the chapter seeks to discuss the advantages as of using oral history in this paper. This does not suggest that there are no disadvantages in using oral history. It

²¹⁷ Compensation Claim by Tenants of the Umlazi Glebe, An extract from the Durban City Council's Agenda, 03 August 1953. Killie Campbell Library, Durban.

simply seeks to appreciate oral history in a context that has for centuries relied on orality in transmitting stories from one generation to the next. Though this has changed in recent years, Africans still appreciate telling stories about the past as one of their most critical epistemological tools.

Advantages

There are many benefits to using individual oral history interviews as they have been used in this paper. However, this was not done without the guidance of some of the most seasoned oral historians of our times. One of these scholars whose work has been used to guide the interviewing process in this paper has been Ronald Grele. In the chapter titled 'Listening to Their Voices' in the book *Envelopes of Sound: The Art of Oral History*, Grele starts by discussing the value of oral history interviews in the process of creating historical knowledge. In the beginning of this chapter Grele states; "When used carefully and creatively... interviews have been able to shed new light on once obscure historical processes."²¹⁸ For Grele, the narration of stories has a structure though the interviewee may not be conscious of that structure. Oral history helps oral historians to understand the structure of the narrated memories and therefore to put into ordered perspective complex memories about the past as it is presented by the narrator.²¹⁹ There has never been a need amongst those who tell the story of the emergence of Methodism in Umlazi to orderly structure their narratives though it must be said here that some of the participants in this study did make an attempt at ordering their narratives to a point where some of them even wrote down points before the set dates of the interviews. This was their way of getting ready for the interview that we were going to have.

Another advantage of using oral history is using the oral reminiscence of the interviewee to shed light on the messages about past events. Oral history uses reminiscences to capture stories as they have been passed down from generation to generation. These reminiscences are what Jan Vansina refers to as oral tradition. Though oral history and oral tradition should not be confused, oral history allows one to capture the oral tradition which is passed down from generation to generation. In the book *Oral Tradition as History*, Vansina states that "oral history and oral tradition... are also messages. That means that they accumulate interpretation as they are being transmitted."²²⁰ Contestations may also rise as a result of the

²¹⁸ Ronald, Grele, ed., *Envelopes of Sound: The Art of Oral History* 2nd edition, New York, Praeger, 1975, Page 213.

²¹⁹ Grele, *Envelopes of Sound*, Page 214.

²²⁰ Jan Vansina, *Oral Tradition as History*, London, James Currey, 1985, Page 195.

messages that are contained in the interviewee's account of the past. As it will be shown later in this chapter, the messages contained in the oral testimonies of those who tell the story of the establishment of Methodism in Umlazi have triggered some contestation. This makes memory the most critical element in oral history as it is the interviewee's ability to remember events that gives life to studies in this field.

Yet a human being's ability to remember has limitations. These limitations are both biological and also as a result of the subjectivity of the process to remember. Alistair Thomson suggests that the subjectivity of memory as a source of oral history needs to be appreciated. Oral historians need to understand that while there is subjectivity in memory, there is also reliability.²²¹ The subjectivity of memory does not warrant the discarding of oral accounts because these accounts have in them messages for future generations. Oral history is not preoccupied with the exact way events took place but takes seriously the fact that interviewees are human beings and the memory they generate is subject to their identity and also creates this identity.²²² Therefore, this chapter seeks to suggest that the subjectivity of a narrative does not mean that it cannot have a contribution to historical events. In the case of the people interviewed for this paper, they were in one way or the other connected to the process of establishing Methodism in areas where they or their relatives lived. And because stories about this phenomenon are not documented, oral history becomes our best bet.

Memory and the production of truth

It should be appropriate in this chapter to speak about the process of constructing truth about historical events. This is not to analyse whether any of the participants in this study were telling the truth or not but to draw to the reader's attention the most important factor at play when we speak about knowledge. Needless to say, those who construct narratives about past events construct knowledge about those events. It is this knowledge that this part of the chapter seeks to ask readers of history to carefully analyse and carefully accept as the representation of the truth about past events. In the quest to place under analytical scrutiny information produced by this paper, this chapter seeks to turn to one of the most influential thinkers of the twentieth century Michel Foucault.

²²¹ Alistair, Thomson, 'Memory and Remembering in Oral History' in Donald, Ritchie, *The Oxford Handbook of Oral History*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2010. Page 18-19.

²²² Thomson, A, 'Memory and Remembering in Oral History', Page 19.

This paper does not claim to do justice in explaining Foucault's thought system but will try to zoom in on the subject of power in relation to knowledge as can be found in this thinker's work. This chapter wants to deal with power that is as a result of Methodist people in Umlazi seeing a need to establish themselves as pioneer of Methodism there. This is done in order to analyse the relationship between the knowledge produced in the congregation and the power this knowledge give to those who produce it particularly when they claim responsibility for the establishment of a particular institution in a community. It is important to say here that Foucault does say that discussing power may have not been the main intention for the work he did in the 1970. In 'The Subject and Power' Foucault states;

“I would like to say , first of all, what has been the goal of my work during the last twenty years it has not been to analyze the phenomena of power, nor to elaborate the foundations of such analysis. My objective instead has been to create history of the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects.”²²³

Many historians have been drawn more to this subject as it helps them understand past events in relation to the phenomena of power. In the study of oral history, the human being should without a doubt be the subject. This is because in oral history human beings are responsible for remembering. Therefore human beings are responsible for the production of truth.

We were here first: contestation in the narrative of Methodism in Umlazi

The events of the year 2013 inspired the production of this paper. In June 2013 the superintendent of the Durban Circuit 0712 sought to honour two families who were said to have been responsible for pioneering Methodism in Umlazi. It was an extravagant event which was enjoyed by many in this church. Needless to say, it was mostly enjoyed by those who were given this honour. As someone who has been trained in oral history, particularly in the field of memory and how it impacts history, I was interested to hear some members of the church starting to speak about how they were in disagreement with the story that was told at this event. I began to investigate by asking around how people felt about this service. Many contesting voices started to emerge. I also started to ask the question “what does it mean to be called a pioneer of a religious institution in a given context?” The answer was in Foucault. Firstly, when one takes the three points made by Foucault in relation to power and

²²³ Michel, Foucault, 'The Subject of Power', in *Essential Foucault: Selection from Essential Works of Foucault, 1954-1984*, London, The New Press, 1982, Page 127. In this lecture, Foucault explains two meanings to the word subject and states that a human being can be a subject by being controlled and dependent on someone else as well as by being connected to their identity by conscience and self-knowledge.

knowledge, one can start to understand why any individual would aspire to be named a pioneer of a religious movement. Firstly, Foucault explains that the production of truth equals the production of knowledge (in the case of this paper, knowledge about past events) and truth should be made the object of the mind.²²⁴ Further, Foucault states that the production of truth should be placed at the heart of historical analysis.²²⁵ In a chapter that seeks to study what others have called the truth, it is fitting to place that truth under the analysis of oral history.

Secondly, Foucault explains that knowledge and power have the ability to produce each other. Those who have knowledge about the past have power over those who may not have that knowledge. Power can also be responsible for the production of knowledge. Political power can construct a narrative that maintains an organisation's position above others in the political hierarchy of a country. For example, in South Africa the ruling party has been criticised for manipulating the history of the political struggle in this country in an attempt to maintain its position above others. Other liberation movements in Africa have been criticised for doing the same. In *The History of Sexuality* Foucault explains that "the idea that the state must as source or point of confluence of power, be invoked to account for all the apparatuses in which power is organised, does not seem to be very fruitful for history."²²⁶ The same may be said in any congregation, no single individual or group should be given the privilege of being a custodian of the truth.

Foucault was not a sceptic of history and the construction of historical knowledge. However, he believed that history should be placed under analytical scrutiny to the last detail. This includes the institutions that establish power. The institution in this chapter is the church that gives power to those whom it calls pioneers. Again, this is not to institute as Foucault would say, the 'truthfulness or the falsehood' of the knowledge they produce. The aim here is to suggest that historical knowledge produced without understanding the impact power can have on knowledge may cause contestation. This has been the case in the stories told about the establishment of Methodism in Umlazi. Institutions establish power and therefore they need to be analysed from the point of view of power.²²⁷

²²⁴ Michel Foucault, 'The Concern for the Truth,' in *Foucault Live: Interviews, 1966-1984*, New York, Semiotext.

²²⁵ Foucault, 'The Concern of the Truth'

²²⁶ Michel, Foucault, 'The History of Sexuality' in *Foucault Power/Knowledge (Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977)*, Sussex, The Harvester Press, 1980. Page 188.

²²⁷ Foucault, 'The Subject and Power', Page 140.

A lot of power can be afforded anyone who is known to have pioneered an institution in a given community. In the case of the Methodist people in Umlazi, those who are known to have been the earliest Methodist in the area have been given status and respect. Some have been given positions in the church because they may be seen to know the church better. There are power relations issues in this case and understanding this may help to understand the next section of this chapter which deals with what could be the blind spots in any oral history project that does not take its context seriously.

I have observed that many congregations have started to commemorate their stories. For example, as a Methodist minister I have observed in different congregations how some people would even point at trees and explain that their parents or their grandparents were responsible for planting them. This then becomes the narrative of those congregations which is sometimes passed down from one generation to the next. This means that events of the past are slowly gaining importance amongst Methodist people. This is not to say that this phenomenon is solely motivated by people wanting power, status and honour. It is not within the scope of this chapter to study the reasons for creating knowledge about past events. This chapter seeks to suggest that this creation of knowledge about the past wittingly or unwittingly, intentionally or unintentionally does ascribe power to those who have been given monopoly over the process of historical knowledge creation by virtue of being pioneers. When studied, the interviews conducted for the purpose of this study showed that most of the people who tell the story of Methodism in the area do so from a position of privilege. By virtue of being known as pioneers, these people are elevated by those who attribute the pioneering of Methodism in Umlazi to them. Some prospective participants decided to withdraw from the project but were quick to point me to those they felt would be better suited to contribute to the study.

Conclusion

This chapter discusses the process of creating historical knowledge as it has been done by Methodist people in Umlazi. It can be concluded that oral history is the best tool to use when trying to tell the story of the establishment of a congregation in situations where documenting historical events was not prioritised. Because oral history relies on memory, some people have tried to discredit oral history because of the subjectivity of memory. However, this chapter has maintained that the subjectivity of memory does not warrant the discarding of narratives as told by some people. This chapter has discussed how archives can help in situations where there may be blind spots in oral history projects. To understand where contestations come from when it comes to knowledge production, this chapter has used Foucault. This chapter may not exhaust Foucault's thinking about history and therefore has zoomed in on the issue of power and knowledge creation. This chapter moved on to apply on the knowledge creation process of Methodists in Umlazi, three points that can be found in Foucault. Those who are seen as the pioneers of Methodism in Umlazi have the privilege of being given a blank cheque in the process of truth production. These people would then have a monopoly over the creation of knowledge about past events relating to Methodism in Umlazi. This monopoly over knowledge gives power to those it is afforded to.

Chapter Six

Concluding Remarks

The story of the emergence of Methodism in Umlazi has been told by those who have knowledge about the earliest activities of this denomination in the area. The telling of this story amongst these people may not have been concerned with any historical knowledge creation process but was an attempt by those who were early Methodists in the area to remember how they arrived in Umlazi.

When the history of Umlazi as narrated by those who tell the story of the emergence of Methodism in Umlazi is studied, it becomes clear that most of the people who tell this story may not be aware of the different stages of change the area has been through. On one hand, those who tell the story of the emergence of Methodism in Umlazi township exclude the story of the emergence of Methodism in Umlazi mission station prior to the establishment of the township. On the other hand, those who were residents of Umlazi mission station tell a story of Methodism that excludes those who were not residents of the Glebe but were in the more southern parts of the area.

Studying the history of Umlazi as documented in primary sources as well as in secondary sources produced an understanding of the background of the area. The telling of the history of Methodism may not be done justly if the history of Umlazi is not studied as well. In addition to that, the history of Methodism in Natal and Durban in particular has been important for this study. It gave insight into how Methodist found themselves in Umlazi and where were they coming from. The evangelisation of black people in Natal occurred through initiatives by some white missionaries with the help of black uneducated and ill-equipped companions.

A combination of methods has been used to study the story of Methodist emergence in Umlazi. The use of oral history research has made the hearing of the different voices around the topic to be heard. As indicated earlier, this paper may not have had the capacity to exhaust the oral history research process concerned with the topic. However, it has been able to show that there are different voices on Methodist history in Umlazi. Another research method used in this study has been archival research. Archives contribute greatly to historical knowledge especially when a historical event has created a paper trail. When one studies the

huge collection of archival material on Umlazi, one can be able to close some gaps that may be left in the process of oral history research.

The first theory used in this study has been memory studies. This has helped with analyzing how the people in Umlazi tell their story. It has been found that three narratives about the emergence of Methodism in Umlazi exist. These are told by three groups who then have those they refer to as pioneers of Methodism in the area of Umlazi. These narratives may exist because those who embrace them have not taken time to study the history of the area. The second theory used in this study is that of power knowledge creation. This helped with studying the power relations issues that may exist in the telling of the story of the emergence of Methodism in Umlazi. It seems there is continued honouring of those who are seen as pioneers of Methodism in Umlazi in the three groups that have been studied in this paper. The realisation that those who are seen as pioneers of Methodism in Umlazi have been given a particular status in this church is an impulse for the study of their memories.

Having grown up in this church I had to negotiate with myself how I was going to deal with the issue of historical knowledge creation and power. Though I was convinced that this study was necessary, being an insider in this church meant I had to challenge what some people may have held as the truth and were not willing to part with, not because they were ignorant to other stories, but because they were not trained to hear other stories. I do not believe that people tell stories about their congregations because they want to be given positions. This would have meant that I was casting aspersions about the character of the people in this church.

My position definitely had an impact on how I went about conducting this study. However, understanding that historical knowledge creation is not only a task for positivist historians help me negotiate the temptation of pointing to one story as the only true narrative.

This study does not suggest that Methodists in Umlazi deliberately twisted the story of the emergence of this denomination in the area to gain power. Also, this study does not seek to suggest that there is a true narrative and a false narrative. What this study has sought to do was to point to the fact that having a dominant narrative can have consequences for congregations and these may even be power related. Parallel to that this study has suggested a way in which local congregations can go about collecting their history. For the congregations interested in retrieving their history, oral history research can be used to collect and preserve this knowledge.

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