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Social Holiness as Agency? Reactivating the Mission Imperative; “Human Empowerment and Economic Development”, in the Methodist Church of Southern Africa [MCSA]

By

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DECLARATION

I declare that this study is my own work. All citations, diagrams, references and borrowed ideas have been duly acknowledged. This work is being submitted for the degree of Master of Theology in the school of Religion, Philosophy and Classics in the College of Humanities, University of KwaZulu – Natal, Pietermaritzburg. None of the present work has been submitted previously for any degree in any other university.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my mother Lilly Khoza, a strong woman of God who sacrificed her life for the sake of my education. Even though she passed on before this work was finished I know she would have been very proud of me. I will always value her advice and belief in hard work.

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ABSTRACT

This research paper explores the ways by which the practice of social holiness can be reactivated in the lives of the members of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa in order to enhance the church's mission pillar on human empowerment and economic development in the face of the existential reality of poverty in South Africa. The MCSA is one of the largest mainline churches and it is renowned for its historical role in social transformation through the actions of members as they spread scriptural holiness. These actions are the heritage that can be traced from the Methodist movement in the 18th century England to South Africa, especially in advocacy for human rights during the apartheid era. The central problem of this research is that the "cutting edge" of Methodism in South Africa seems to be losing its sharpness in spite of its well-articulated vision, mission statement and strategies which are aimed at bringing healing and transformation. These initiatives seem to be failing to yield significant results to offset the presently escalating levels of poverty and other social ills in society in the Republic of South Africa.

This research paper traces the concept of social holiness to the Wesleyan doctrine of Christian perfection, which is central to the lives of the Methodist people. This doctrine is unpacked to show that this perfection is not an inward, purist holiness journey, but rather the spiritual formation of a character and then the community whose sole purpose is to seek to love God and his/her neighbour. This holiness is relational to the character of a disciple, whose life manifests the inner holiness outwardly in the works of mercy extending the love of God to the neighbour. The goal being a life lived in faith, to be a channel of God's love as means of grace to the world thereby ushering in the values of the kingdom of God.

This paper makes inferences to the framework of "Social Theology" which was suggested by Steve de Gruchy in Haddad (2012: 124-128). This is a multi-dimensional approach influenced by many disciplines, especially development and liberation. The suggested approach borrowed from this framework is the See - Judge - Act method. First, based on available literature, a social analysis of the existing situation of poverty in South Africa is conducted. Second, the paper judges how the members of the MCSA are practising social holiness as a virtue of moral character using the theory of virtue ethics.

According to MacIntyre (1995) the goodness of any virtue lies in its practice for the attainment of internal goods which are standards of excellence which contributes to community building.

Third, the suggested actions for the reactivation of social holiness and the enhancement of development and empowerment are developed through the sustainable-livelihood approach which recognises the role of human agency for development, according to Steve deGruchy (2003).

The conclusions of this study indicate that many people in South Africa, including the members of the MCSA, are trapped in the vicious circle of poverty and they are living in contexts of vulnerability and powerlessness. There is a decline in the practice of social holiness in the lives of the members of the MCSA which is mainly traced to the growth in numbers and structures at the expense of disciple-formation. The research concludes with a suggestion for the revival of the disciple-nurturing processes which will serve as empowerment of the individual agency to facilitate people-centred development initiatives. These will contribute to the enhancement of the mission pillar on development and human empowerment.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

MCSA – Methodist Church of Southern Africa

SLF – Sustainable Livelihoods Framework

NGO – Non-Governmental Organization

PCD – People-Centred Development

DFID – Department for International Development

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The Methodist Church of Southern Africa [MCSA] mission statement describes it as a church called by God for the proclamation of the gospel of Christ for healing and transformation. As a strategy for mission in post-apartheid South Africa, the MCSA has adopted a charter and mission imperatives which focus on reconciliation and development. This follows its mission congress in 2004 at Umthatha (Methodist Church of Southern Africa 2016: 2).

Based on personal experience of serving as a minister in different societal settings, both in the Republic of South Africa and in Swaziland, my observation is that both the faith communities and the society at large are faced with numerous challenges. These have been attributed mainly to the prevalence of high levels of poverty caused by factors which include, but are not limited to, unemployment, lack of creative opportunities for economic empowerment and poor education standards, to mention few. Hence members of the MCSA are not excluded from the effects of the high levels of poverty in South Africa, a fact that Sandy Dickie, the then Bishop of Natal West, stressed in his report to the conference of 2013 (Methodist Church of Southern Africa 2014: 60).

This negative effect by poverty to the members of the MCSA is happening inspite of the fact that the MCSA is historically renowned for its leading role in bringing change to society, contributing to the fight against social ills including apartheid, which resulted to the liberation of the people of South Africa (Bentley 2014: 6). In its activities, the MCSA is influenced by the ethos of the Methodist movement in 18th century England, which were led by John and Charles Wesley. This is what informs the mission of the MCSA, in the activities related to social transformation as it has significantly retained the heritage of its involvement in concerns around issues of that affect the lives of people in society.

However, this good record of the Methodist church, the positive contribution to social transformation seems to be on a decline, as Bentley (2014: 1) notes that even though there are social transformation initiatives through the mission praxis of the contemporary MCSA done by the various church organizations throughout the Connexion,¹ the process was observed to be rather slow low to significantly impact and alleviate the plight of the poor. On the same vein, other scholars within Wesleyan tradition in Southern Africa have also noted this decline of the MCSA contribution to social transformation (see Forster 2008:28, Vika 2008:69 and Grassow, 1998: 88).

The cutting edge of the Methodist movement through the practice of social holiness which brought well-documented social transformation in South Africa seems to be losing its sharpness. Light (2008: 148), one of the Methodist ministers, is of the view that this decline in effectiveness in the MCSA may be traced to the disconnection between the church as an institution with its top leadership; the structural governance and the realities faced by the people at grassroots level in the various circuits and societies. He laments the loss of the “brand” which used to be so effective for social transformation through which the church would be able to scratch the society where it was itching most. These are the realities of hunger, sicknesses, unemployment, abuse and many others, that the people bring with them to the church pews as they come seeking answers from God.

Forster (2008: 18) also retaliates this fact while also noting that the MCSA is still engaged in addressing the social and spiritual needs of the people, however he is of the view that there is an urgent need for the church to improve its effectiveness to meet the needs of the people many of whom are migrating to find what he called “quick fix” solutions from the many mushrooming churches around. Forster (2008) argues that this happens because of the struggle in the MCSA to bring effective and significant transformation to the society.

1.1.1 Social Holiness

It is historically recognized that in the Methodist movement, the message of the gospel of Christ was to be understood as a social gospel with practical implications on the lives of the people.

¹“ Put very simply ‘connexionalism’ is the term used to describe the principles and practices by which Methodism is intentionally interrelated and connected together”(Atkins, 2009: 17).

According to Heitzenrater (1995: 91), this gospel must seek to impact the character and life of the members who in turn became agents of change and transformation in the society. Hence, John Wesley is known for this statement on social holiness when he said:

The gospel of Christ knows no religion, but social; no holiness but social holiness. Faith working by love is the length and breadth and height of Christian perfection. This commandment have we from Christ, that he who loves God, loves his brother also; and that we manifest our love 'by doing good unto all men'; especially to them that are of the household of faith (Wesley 1872: 321).

According to the Methodist doctrine of Christian perfection, the life of social holiness emanates from a heart that is set on a path to loving God and neighbour and this becomes the central understanding of holiness. This understanding of holiness, according to the Methodism, is a life in piety which manifests itself socially in works of mercy to the neighbour (John Wesley 1872: 321). Salvation has moral implications on the life of the believer as it results in change of character which is shown in actions as he/ she bears the fruits of the spirit hence holiness is described as social.

This understanding of social holiness is not the pursuit of a religion based on good works nor on a mystical path as Field (2015: 182) noted, that it is the love of God which is experienced by the followers of Jesus Christ who then seek to live in relationships which are propelled by this love hence the benevolence actions to others. This contributes to communities which promote the values of the kingdom of God; justice, mercy and compassion among others. Holiness became the way of life for the members of the Wesleyan Methodist movement such that from the onset, Wesley (1725: 369) described the character of a Methodist in the terms of having a central purpose to love God which became the main influence in all aspects of life including leisure and business.

John Wesley's understanding of salvation was not static and rigid as it was marked with the continual conflict between the balance of faith and works in his life journey. In this case, Grassow (1989: 42) is helpful with the recognition that it was at his mature stage called the "synthesis" when he was able to recognize the role of human participation in the salvation process; what he called social holiness. He further explains that in the earlier stages, Wesley had ascribed holiness first to strict obedience to the rules, disciplines and at a later stage to the work

of God in one's life alone. It is faith in God through grace which ushers in the reality of transformation through the contact with the message of the gospel and the ultimate goal becomes holiness, which is the love of God. Therefore, Tuttle (1978: 334) alludes to Wesley's assertion that "faith is only the handmaid of love" ultimately, in this understanding the growth in holiness is the fulfilment of one's faith journey.

While this study acknowledges that there are many different views and controversies around John Wesley's meaning of social holiness, the study assumes the position that social holiness is not the pursuit of social justice but rather it relates more to the transformed character of the individual; the formation of a disciple who brings transformation to the community. This relational nature is the aspect of the Christian life which will impact on the character and behaviour of individual disciples who are called by God to spread the scriptural way of life as it is stated in the MCSA book of order (2016: 11) which serves as a signpost and guide for its members. Grassow (1989: 44) explains that the understanding of social holiness was more concerned more with individual's personal lives and their relationships in the expression of the gospel message practically. This happens in their relationships with God first and then extended to neighbours and the rest of fellow Christians.

According to Forster (2014: 2), citing the work of Thompson (2011:141) he notes the importance of understanding social holiness in the correct outlook based on the works of John Wesley especially in the South Africa context. He explains that social holiness tends to be used interchangeably with social justice and this perspective is problematic because it is a shift from the original teaching by John Wesley. Forster (2014: 11) further put emphasis on the fact that the pivotal point according to Wesley was the doctrine of Christian perfection; the growth in holiness. This was the love of God which could not be limited to the individual but it was expressed practically in the everyday life in the community. Elaborating further he notes that it was through this position that South African Methodists were able to stand firm even during the apartheid era because of the love for each other and their neighbours(Forster 2014:16).

Therefore, it is my argument in this paper that it is within those bounds that the members of the MCSA have a responsibility and accountability towards social transformation even in the present context of restructuring and reconciliation in the new South Africa. This may be done through the nurturing of transformative disciples who bring new communities of love.

This social holiness is therefore cultivated and nurtured by the use of specific processes which were developed by John Wesley for the Methodist movement and they form part of the MCSA. Outler (2004: 121) explains that the training in small groups results in the maturity of the believers which is growth in holiness. This holiness is understood in two ways. First, it refers to internal holiness, which is the growth in the love of God; the life in piety. Second, it also refers to external holiness, which then takes the shape of the love of God and neighbour.

Ultimately, this latter holiness permeates the social life of the believer as Lecleric (2011: 53) points out that all Christians have God's call on their lives to pursue holiness of heart and mind, by the grace of God and this is the heart of discipleship. The Methodist believers pursue lives of discipleship more than being mere believers through these two processes. Atkins (2009: 9), the then secretary of the British Methodist Conference, points out that Methodism has always been a movement centred on discipleship where the members are always seeking and yearning to be better disciples of Christ in their lifestyles and in offering Christ to others. She then supports her statement on discipleship then by citing John Wesley who said the following about the Methodists:

By Methodists I mean a people who profess to pursue holiness... of heart and life, inward and outward conformity in all things to the revealed will of God; who place religion in a uniform resemblance of the great object of it; in a steady imitation of Him they worship... particularly in justice, mercy and truth, or universal love filling the heart, and governing the life (Wesley in Atkins 2009: 9).

The actions of the disciples in the Methodist church is therefore envisioned to bring change to society as they live out their lives of faith. Some of the initiatives by the Methodists which led to social transformation in South Africa were attributed to the practice of social holiness. For example, Forster (2008: 5) and Bentley (2014: 6) have listed among the many activities; the establishment of schools, medical care; hospitals and the translation and publication of literature. They further explained that these contributed to the enhancement of the lives of the people during the missionary era.

While further contentions may exist in terms of the teaching and implications of Christian perfection especially with regards to Wesley's political position and the social order of his time

(see Davis 1981: 78, Bonino 1981: 57, Grassow 1989: 45), this aspect will not be investigated intensely in this Study.

1.2 Motivation for the Study

The key research focus for this study is to explore ways for reviving the transformative praxis of social holiness in the context of existential poverty in South Africa. My motivation to pursue this study is based on the emphasis of the critical role of human agency in development which was consistently observed by John Wesley.

In this case, Marquardt (1992: 119) argues that: “individual renewal precedes social renewal.” This human agency, I argue, are the followers of Jesus Christ in contemporary faith communities who practice social holiness as they transfer the love of God to their neighbours as part of their works of mercy and invariably bring change to society, especially among the poor. The human agency found at grassroots level within the Methodist Circuits and Societies is key to economic empowerment and development. This has been noted by de Gruchy (2005: 57) who argues for the recognition of the communities at grassroots level as they are the ones who are adversely affected by the social ills.

It is my argument in this study that the decline in the effectiveness of bringing social transformation to society by the MCSA in its post-apartheid era could be linked to the decline in disciples making processes following the general rule for character formation explained above. The presiding Bishop of the MCSA, Rev Zipho Siwa made a clarion call to the Methodist people in his conference address in 2013, stressing the need to revive a transformative disciple movement. Rev. Siwa lamented that the growth of the church in numbers was not translating to the formation of disciples who would bring the much needed transformation in the society, hence he coined the theme of conference “together a transforming discipleship movement.” It is within this understanding, as the basis to discipleship that the reactivation of the concept of social holiness may assist to enhance the desired outcome of the MCSA in its mission strategy towards Human empowerment and Economic Development, especially in the fight against the escalating poverty levels in South Africa. This, I argue, will enable every congregation or church society within the MCSA to become a centre for healing and transformation.

Further to this argument according to (the Foster 2008: 19) is that while in the contemporary situation, the MCSA is well positioned in terms of numbers, doctrines and strategies it appears to be having problems in achieving the reconstruction and developmental agenda in the Societies.

Vika (2008: 62) articulates the vision of the MCSA as being centred on “healing and transformation of the whole continent of Africa from disease, HIV&AIDS, poverty, conflicts and wars.” He explains that the adoption of the mission charter in 2005, together with the mission imperatives was a move towards the achievement of this vision. However, he observes that due to shortcomings with the implementation of the mission imperatives, the church seems to be experiencing immobility. He links this situation to some extent to the paralysis of its prophetic voice since the church abandoned its work of reconstruction to the fate of the state.

When the church renegades its role to the state the people suffer especially the most vulnerable. This is clearly evident through the implementation of policies aimed at development in South Africa and unfortunately such policies are not people centred because they are based on contemporary language of globalisation and market economic terms. Several writers observe that some of these so called developmental strategies are sharply centred on profit margins while people are reduced to commodities (see Vermeulen 2006: 159 and Mubangizi 2007: 449). Therefore, the church has a very important role in its public theology as a representative of the values of the kingdom of God. There are a number of scholars who have pointed out the critical role of the church especially in being the prophetic voice to the government, being the voice of the poor, holding the state accountable and seeking justice according to the values of the kingdom of God (see Koopman 2009, Bentley 2012, Forster 2012 and J de Gruchy 1979). This is also attested by Storey (2012: 13), who laments the precarious position of the MCSA in the present era in that it has lost its two key tenets; the prophetic distance and prophetic voice. On the other hand Bentley (2014: 10) argues that there is a marked improvement in the regaining of the voice of the MCSA, with the increase in the statements addressing many issues to the relevant ruling powers against cases of injustice and social ills at conference level.

Gaps in literature exist on the causes of the decline of the practice of Social Holiness yet it is so central to the life and essential for the transformation agenda of the Methodist Church. Some existing literature show that many South African Methodists recognize the need to reclaim their heritage in the quest for Christian perfection for the much needed social transformation

(Richardson, 2006, Grassow, 2006, Storey, 2006, Forster, 2008). There is a gap in the literature on how that can be achieved and this study will be a contribution to the closing of the gap.

1.3 Research Problem and Aims of the Study

The key research problem that this study addresses focuses on is the exploration of the present practice of social holiness by the Methodist People of the MCSA in the context of existential poverty in South Africa.

The key question that the study seeks to answer is:

To what extent is the MCSA's practice of Social Holiness transformative in its present context of poverty?

To address this research question, this study will seek to answer the following sub questions. First, what are the situations of powerlessness in the present context of poverty within the MCSA? Second, how does the contemporary practice of social holiness affect the plight of the poor within the MCSA? Third, how can the practice of transformative social holiness be enhanced in order to enhance development and human empowerment within the MCSA?

These questions have led to the following three objectives of this study. First, to investigate the situation of powerlessness within the MCSA in its present context of poverty. Second, to find out the effect of the present practice of Social Holiness on the plight of the poor. Third, to investigate the ways by which the transformative doctrine of Social Holiness could be enhanced for the reactivation of development within the MCSA.

1.4 Theoretical Frameworks applied in this Study

The focus of this study is the renewal of the transformative practice of social holiness by the MCSA for the purpose of enhancing a specific mission strategy which is aimed at empowerment and Development. Due to the nature of this study, a multiple theoretical approach has been applied.

This study has been carried out within the Theology and Development auspices with the underlying bias of both liberation theology and development. The "See – Judge - Act" method

which is central in the ‘Social Theology’ framework is used (de Gruchy in Haddad 2012: 124-128). De Gruchy’s main argument for this approach is that it encompasses a number of theologies ranging from liberation, contextual, Black and African theologies while it also takes into consideration contemporary sociological themes which include gender, ecology, poverty, ethnicity and many others. Issues of development and power are also considered in this framework. De Gruchy (2012) notes the following regarding these three aspects while engaging in social theology: The first part of seeing enables one to perform a social analysis of the situation using available social tools as part of the engagement with the society at large especially as people of faith seeking God’s justice in the world. The second part of judgement looks at the situation through the eyes of the gospel of Jesus Christ which carries social implications while applying the scripture and traditions to reflect on the present scenario that have been identified. Third, the action part of the process is the necessary actions required from the grassroots which can be used to challenge the status quo and give hope to the people affected as actions are implemented for restoration of justice.

The first lens will assist to address the first question of this study which seeks to find out how the present practice of social holiness addresses the problem of poverty by applying the first aspect of ‘seeing’ towards a social analysis of the situation. This will enable me to find out factors that exist within the Republic of South Africa and the MCSA which contribute to the present plight of the poor.

By applying the second aspect, ‘judge’ it is aimed at finding out how the poor are affected by the present state of powerlessness in view of Biblical teachings and church doctrines. The last aspect on ‘act’ will enable me attend to the question of the responsibility of the practice of social holiness. These concepts have been used to interrogate on how the mission strategy on empowerment and development of the MCSA can be enhanced to alleviate the plight of the poor.

The ‘act’ aspect will engage the works of Steve de Gruchy (2003), based on the paper, “*Of Agency and Appreciation: Seeking some Commonalities between Theology and Development*”, where he suggested the use of the Sustainable Development Framework as an approach for development which takes into account the agency of the people concerned. This study therefore deals with the agency of the poor, their empowerment and liberation from the conditions which led to powerlessness as they are capable of taking part in their own development by engaging

dialogue and enhancing their assets in their livelihoods. This will accelerate development at grass root levels as ordinary members take part in their development and this may be part of the action towards the enhancement of the MCSA mission strategy on human empowerment and development.

To address the present practice of social holiness within the MCSA, virtue ethics (MacIntyre 1985) as a theoretical framework which takes into account a critical engagement between philosophical and spiritual aspect will be used. . In this case, the concept of ‘practice’ as an approach in virtue ethics is used to interrogate the present ‘practice’ of social holiness within the MCSA.

As Wesley noted, social holiness should be understood as a virtue inherent in the quest for Christian perfection for which the Methodist people were raised (see Williams 1988:238) Williams therefore states:

Christian perfection is the grand depositum which God has lodged with the people called Methodists; and for the sake of propagating this chiefly He appeared to have raised us up (Wesley in Williams 1988: 260).

The above statement points to an ideal Methodist community with a clear identity of the morality which is shaped by first the love of God which is extended to others and it is manifested in the lives of social holiness among its members. Further to this point the duo of Macquarrie & Childress (1967: 648), interrogating the theory of virtue ethics by MacIntyre (1985) point out that any account of a virtue needs to be done in relation to the society tradition where it is displayed. They also assert that virtues are to be understood in terms of their ‘*telos*’ or the human existence where they contribute to goodness or to moral action. Further on this argument, Reid (1998: 2) shows that according to MacIntyre, the main purpose of the virtue is in the achievement of moral actions in humanity.

Invariably, social holiness is a virtue that is practiced by the Methodist people in their lives as communities of faith as they grow and mature in loving God and this is inherent in the Methodist roots and traditions.

According to MacIntyre :

A practice, would be some coherent and complex socially established human activities in any society from which goods internal which are characteristic to it will be attained in the ways of achieving the standards of excellence for that practice which will contribute to the extension of the human powers to excellence (MacIntyre 1985: 194).

With this understanding, the goods internal will be achieved through the participation of the community members and the standards of excellence are known having been established in the tradition of the practice in question.

Explaining further, Reid (1998: 4) citing MacIntyre's (1985) understanding of practice points out that when practices are carried out on regular basis and sustained, they help the people to grow and develop the virtues they need to fulfil in life and this becomes their basis for conducting their lives ethically.

The other type of goods which also contribute to happiness or '*eudamonia*,' which MacIntyre (1985) called 'external goods', are concerned with physical and practical matters such as shelter, clothing nutrition and many others.

This concept practice is therefore used to investigate how the members of the MCSA practice social holiness to bring social transformation in the society against social ills which include poverty based on available literature. The present practice of social holiness as a moral virtue within the MCSA institution is interrogated with an aim of ascertaining whether it is achieving the desired internal goods on the lives of the people; the formation of transformative disciples which would bring long term sustainable results of the standards of excellence in goods internal (MacIntyre 1985:194). This theme focuses on the attainment of internal goods, standards of excellence e.g. ethos, values and it will serve as the framework to critique the present practice of social holiness within the MCSA and locate the problem that has led to the present disconnect.

A connection exists in moral philosophical thinking and the theology of John Wesley especially on Christian perfection. Lecleric (2011: 54) traces the influence of the Greek ethical thinking to the thinking and writing of John Wesley especially Aristotle in particular reference to wisdom. She cites that moral wisdom is born from virtue which will lead to flourishing lifestyles [happiness; *Eudaimonia*]. This is a situation of a good human life where one's purposes are fulfilled. She explains that according to John Wesley this purpose of the human is fulfilled by loving God and others hence he explained character development in terms of Christian perfection

which was the growth in the love of God and others. The process of salvation then becomes the path for sanctification which will be a gradual growth in holiness or Christian perfection intended to result in Christ – like characters and this becomes the path to true happiness and satisfaction.

Oord (2011: 67) clarifies this point further when he notes that on the Christian perfection, Wesley adapted on the works of Aristotle who believed that perfection is the movement from the potential to the actual which can be attained by the individual. Following this argument, human beings move to the correct direction when they desire to be what God created them to be, which is Christlikeness and this is the assumption of the image of God; perfection.

Methodism from its inception was therefore driven by the concept of discipleship from an understanding of social holiness, journeying together as communities of faith in fellowship. They became faithful witnesses in the community displaying lives that were shaped by the love of God in their actions (Meadows (2009: 423). He then identifies three key values which are central to Christian perfection described in terms of practical transformed lives; which are the practice of justice, mercy and truth expected to be evident and prominent all the time. On this Meadows (2009) explains that John Wesley was adamant that genuine Christianity only exists when the inward holiness translates outwards into the community with the practice of these three values.

The virtuous character with internal [works of piety] and external [works of mercy] with the later translating to social holiness which is love shown to neighbours in benevolent actions which results in authentic happiness (Miles 2010: 208). Elaborating further he notes, John Wesley believed and taught that there was no separation from one's moral and Christian lives in that any practice of religion that was not linked to the love of God and neighbour was false. From this perspective, social holiness becomes the agency in two ways; reaching out to the poor and disadvantaged and becomes a way of practice for the Methodist.

1.5 Research Methodology

This study applied a qualitative research method of data collection based on secondary sources which included academic books, journal articles, websites; internet. The key emphasis of this non- empirical study involves an analytical assessment drawing on relevant literature based on

the MCSA, its social situation and agency. Data collection and analysis will be approached by using the interpretive analysis which involves a close examination and description of the various themes and patterns that will emerge around the key research question of this study.

This method, as suggested by Terre Blanche, Kevin, & Desmond (1999: 321,327), requires that all the contexts, processes and characteristics around the phenomenon which is the subject of the study have to be examined closely and the data arranged in themes.

The following discussion provides a structure of how the thematic analysis is achieved through employing the relevant sources of data from both primary and secondary sources.

First, will be the existential pattern of Poverty, well-being and powerlessness and the implications on the lives of the people. This has been engaged with the main themes of poverty and situations of powerlessness that exists both in the MCSA and in society (see Christian 2011, Steve deGruchy 2003, Forster 2008, Kumalo 2003 and Martins 2007). This research project will also engage with the dimensions of well beings and the holism in the lives of the poor and voices of the poor in situations of powerlessness (Chambers 1995, Narayan et al., 2000). The second, theme focus on development as a paradigm of the MCSA. This theme will analyse the definition of the MCSA's vision and mission strategies. Included here will be the pronouncements for the human empowerment and economic development agenda and how this strategy is translating on the ground in the lives of the members of the church (Methodist Church of Southern Africa 2007& 2013, Vika, 2005).

Third, Practice as defined in the philosophical understanding of virtues in the work of MacIntyre (1985). This theme will interrogate the present practice of social holiness in the MCSA based on available literature by the Methodist people and scholars (see Vermeulen 2006, Siwa 2014, Forster 2008, Light 2008, Storey 2004& 2014, Richardson 2006 and Ketshabile 2006). This theme will seek to lead towards some praxis oriented action on how the practice of social holiness within the Methodist tradition, could contribute to development and empowerment in the contemporary life of the MCSA. The fifth theme will be, reactivating the practice of social holiness in order to enhance Human empowerment and development. This theme will explore ways of empowering the human agency through the revitalisation of social holiness for

sustainable people based development and economic empowerment as a mission strategy in the MCSA.

1.6 Outline of the Study

This study is made up of seven chapters. The first chapter introduces the transformative doctrine of social holiness as a cutting edge concept for social – transformation within the MCSA and the need for its re-activation in order to enhance the MCSA’s development strategies.

The second chapter exposes the existential phenomenon of poverty and powerlessness in South Africa. In this chapter the causes of poverty and powerlessness that affect the wellbeing of people in both the MCSA and the society are explored. The third chapter is the MCSA’s Development agenda for social – transformation presented in its vision, mission statement and strategies. The main argument of the chapter is the importance of the agency of the disciples for mission compared to the church structures and the whole institution.

The fourth chapter is the transformative practice of Social Holiness where this doctrine in the Wesleyan tradition is explored, engaging how it was used as a vehicle for social – transformation in England in the 18th Century and in South Africa.

In chapter 5, the philosophical understanding of virtues in the works of Alasdair MacIntyre (1985) will serve as a framework in order to critique the present practice of Social Holiness within the MCSA and to locate the problem that has led to the present disconnect.

Chapter 6 brings together all the works from contemporary Methodist scholars on how Social Holiness can be a vehicle for social – transformation together with popular writings in the development agenda. These will be used as a way forward to solve the impasse on the practice from the insights of MacIntyre (1985) in order to suggest a way forward on how Social Holiness can reactivate the development agenda of the MCSA.

1.7 Limitations of the study

This study is limited by its key research question. Even so, the nature of the question on finding out the present practice of social holiness within the MCSA would have been best dealt with by findings gathered through conducting an empirical research to the members of the MCSA using

the relevant instruments of research. However, due to time and financial constraints, this can be a focus of another study in the future. Nonetheless, the discussions made in this study could be applicable in other Methodist contexts of similar approach and strategy to development.

The other limitation is the gap in the scholarship within Methodist women in development studies and their voices are silent in this field.

1.8 Conclusion of the Chapter

This first chapter present the background of the study together with the research questions and objectives. It also exposes the methodology together with the themes to be followed. The multi-disciplinary theoretical frameworks are explained and outlined in this chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

THE EXISTENTIAL PHENOMENON OF POVERTY AND POWERLESSNESS IN SOUTH AFRICA

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter introduced the MCSA as a church with a healing and transformation agenda in the post-apartheid era in Republic of South Africa. This church is part of the society where many people are experiencing several challenges including the escalating levels of poverty. The previous chapter also alluded to the situation of the MCSA which seem to be facing problems in the practical implementation of its mission agenda inspite of its vantage position in terms of numbers and strategies.

In this chapter a close analysis of the phenomenon of poverty in the Republic of South Africa, will be investigated with the aim of finding out its causes and effects on the people in South Africa. This will be the first stage of the See - Judge – Act and the ‘seeing’ will be the action of conducting a socio – analysis through existing literature sources on the situation of poverty, tracing it from the society at large to the MCSA.

2.2 The common definitions and understanding of the phenomenon of poverty in South Africa

The phenomenon of poverty can be defined in a number of ways, depending on the purpose and the context in question and this compounds the understanding of this situation. This complexity is explained by Magasela et al. (2007: 1), in their report on the measurement of poverty and inequality in South Africa. They found that the complexity on the conceptualization and definition of poverty is influenced by the context of the society in question. On top of that it also carries political connotations, because it is related to the policies of governance and the distribution of resources. They recognized that this phenomenon is impossible to define in a common language that cuts across several cultures, because of its diverse roots and socio-political situations.

DuToit (2005: 5) on this assertion, also notes that the classifications of whether one is poor or rich forms moral and political judgments as it is influenced by societal social and political agendas.

The complexity of poverty definitions and determinations makes it difficult to compare the situations from one country to the next. Hence, it has become common practice to define poverty in terms of available income/financial resources (World Bank 2001: 320). South Africa is also affected by this complexity. In the absence of this common definition, there is a variable understanding of the phenomenon of poverty from one government department to the other, according to Magasela et al. (2007: 6). They explain that the available statistics, which are based on linear income/expenditure, are not easy to use across the board in the various departments. This was also noted by Magasela (2005: 2), who suggest that there is a need for more research to come up with a more appropriate definition of poverty in South Africa which would take into consideration the many deprivations experienced by the people in South Africa which keep them trapped in poverty. He is of the opinion that the usage of income/expenditure as a baseline to determine poverty was a hindrance to government departments to formulate their interventions, based on a variety of definitions, yet they were guided by the same constitution.

Among the available understandings of poverty is one that was formulated by the United Nations Development Report (2000: 20), in their report on overcoming poverty. It identifies two broad definitions of poverty based on income and human capabilities. The first category which is based on the availability of income and in a situation of complete lack of income to satisfy the barest requirements of calories to survive is called absolute poverty. There is also within this category what it called relative poverty, which is the case where money is not enough to buy the other non-food items necessary for life, including clothing and shelter. Their second definition is based on the human factor, where poverty is due to lack of abilities or what we call capabilities. Lack of capabilities renders the people poor, as they cannot live and function to their potential. This results from factors and experiences including poor education and health among the many effects which happen because people have been denied their rights to have sources of energy, sanitation, drinking water and others. This report gives an understanding that poverty is much more than a lack of money, especially in its effect on limiting the capabilities that lead to the deprivations.

This is important because it gives an insight into a better understanding of the complications of this phenomenon.

The relationship between one's position in society and poverty was also highlighted by Sen (1983: 159), in his earlier writings when he recognized that there is a linkage between the existence of poverty and capabilities. In this aspect the capability becomes the ability to be able to provide for one's self to lead a decent lifestyle. Sen (1983: 159) perceived that the capabilities were part of the people's rights, so they have to be available for them to survive. These capabilities include the provision of nutrition, human dignity and participation in society. The realization of one's full capability is highly dependent on the availability of some commodities, resources and income in society. It is the unavailability of the commodities which will invariably lead to poverty or limited capabilities; it is not the fault of the poor, though it affects their dignity. This is counter to the notion that the poor are lazy and are missing opportunities, but it gives insight that poverty infringes on the rights of the people to live lives of dignity and participation in their society.

The well-being of the people is entrenched in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), as specified in the Bill of Rights sections 26, 28 and 29. These entitle its people to lives which promote their well-being by having access to proper housing, adequate health care, enough food, and clean water, provision of social security and quality education. The implication of these assertions is that the situation of poverty in South Africa infringes on the constitutional rights of the people and poses questions of their freedom.

It is because of the complexity of the poverty phenomenon that conventional methods of poverty determination based on linear indices are used. According to Martins (2007: 207), in a report on income and expenditure indices based on studies of the expenditure levels in common households in South Africa, the results indicated that poverty was caused by the inequality in the distribution of wealth in South Africa. In terms of income poverty, the poorest households spend more than half of their budget on food, compared to others who are able to afford other necessities of life besides food. These studies were based on Ernst Engel's Law and Curves of 1857, cited by Martins (2007: 214). They basically state that for poor families the priority for expenditure is food and this then becomes the best measure of the material standard of living of a population.

This points to the existence of both income and human poverty in South Africa in that there are sections of the population who have to struggle each day to meet their dietary basic requirements so that all their meagre income is spent on food, forgoing all the other necessities in life.

However, many scholars including (Noble, Ratcliffe, & Wright 2004: 282, Martins 2007: 219 and Chambers 1995: 179), argue against the use of linear income and expenditure levels to determine poverty levels, on the grounds that poverty is caused by many other factors which may include climatic effects, urbanization, trends in production and consumption and many others, which cannot be easily ignored.

Expanding on this point Chambers (1995: 179), identify two very pertinent issues which touch on the denial of the rights of the poor in participation in the processes of the definition and determination of poverty levels. The first one is the exclusion of the poor from the actual processes that are used in the generation of the statistics. He argues that normally it is the rich who describe the poor from afar in the distance of their comfort positions during workshops and conferences about poverty. He observes an infringement and oppression of the poor who are powerless and voiceless in these processes because they cannot convene workshops and write papers about their situation. This results in the rich assuming the position of being the solution to the poor who are perceived to be the problem. The effect of this outlook is that many reports written about poor are distorted and biased and may not necessarily give the perfect picture of the realities experienced by the people concerned.

The second issue according to Chambers (1995: 180), is the common view that poverty is a simple problem which can be determined in economic terms, and this view leaves out the important issues of deprivation and ill-being. He recognizes that usually these statistics leave out issues of social development and governance which are concerned with the quality of life and this tends to give a view far removed from the realities faced by the poor.

This is an indication of the problem of trying to define poverty on behalf of the poor and yet leaving out their opinions. This has almost become a normal practice even within the church, where there are many organizations which are set up as charities to help the poor yet in many the affected people are not involved.

2.3 Poverty emanates from the unequal distribution of wealth in South Africa

Based on available data using the conventional methods based on income and expenditure, the fundamental problem of unequal distribution of wealth is identified in this research as the main cause of poverty in South Africa by the work of the following scholars, among others (see Martins 2007: 107, Boesak 2005, Moller 2007: 188 and Ozler 2007: 487). The common method used to determine inequality in income distribution is the Gini coefficient. According to Martins (2007:215), the Gini coefficient index is based on the work of the Italian statistician Corrado Gini. The scale of this rating ranges between 0 and 1, where 0 indicates equal wealth between all members and 1 indicates inequality of distribution when this is used against what is called the 'Loenz curve diagram'. Using this scale, Martins (2007: 216) reports that South Africa in 2004, was rated at 0.667, suggesting high levels of inequality in terms of wealth distribution.

The social status of some members of the community were found to have made them more prone to poverty. Among these factors are issues of education, gender and the history of some provinces. This was noted by Martins (2007: 217) based on the report '*Profile of the 20% poorest and 20% wealthiest households in South Africa, 2004*', he explains that this report showed that a higher percentage of the educated people were rich compared to the poor as the report indicate that that only 42.8% of the poor were educated, compared to 82.2% of the rich. More females were found to be poor compared to males as the findings of the report indicated 54.2% of the poor were females against 17.8% rich males. The most appalling of the analysis is the many of the black people were poor compared to the white people in the sampled population. This study identified the poorest provinces as the Eastern Cape, Limpopo and KwaZulu-Natal. Recalling the history of South Africa this is where many of the apartheid era 'homelands', where people were forced to settle in barren areas where little or no development were located. This may be a direct link to the lack of capabilities in some sectors of society which makes people to become more prone to poverty and this is related to the unequal distribution of wealth in South Africa.

Unfortunately even the latest statistics on income distribution still point to rising levels of inequality in South Africa which are mainly located in certain racial groups, according to Leibbrandt, Woolard, Finn, & Argent (2010: 4), who are a team of researchers from the University of Cape Town, working in collaboration with the Directorate for Employment,

Labour and Social Affairs. In their publication '*Trends in South African Income Distribution and Poverty since the Fall of Apartheid*'. They report that the current trends indicate an increase in income inequality in South Africa between 1993 and 2008 and this inequality was also reported between the four major racial groups. This report still reveals that the acute income poverty levels are located within the African and the coloured racial groups, even though there is a reported improvement in the availability of 'non-monetary well-being', which is access to, for instance, free/affordable housing, electricity and clean water. According to the same report, inequality also exists in the labour market and it is attributed to the rising unemployment and rises in inequality earnings. They observe that the grant system was making a contribution to alleviation of poverty, especially to the poorest of the poor. These are the child support, disability and old-age pension grants. One of their important overall observation they made and they stated:

From a policy point of view it is important to flag the fact that intra-African inequality and poverty trends increasingly dominate aggregate inequality and poverty in South Africa.

The implication of these statistics on the inequality in income distribution in South Africa in the democratic era is contrary to the projections of the model that is captured in the White Paper of 1997 by the Social Welfare department. In its preamble it is envisaged that society will become more human and caring to all citizens. This is proposed to be done by upholding their welfare and assist to channel their creative energies so that they are able to grow in terms of their human capacity to become self-reliant and participate fully in all the spheres of life, be it social, economic or political Department of Social Welfare (1997). This envisions a society where people have equal opportunities and freedom to live in justice, respect and equality.

2.4 Some of the factors contributing to the inequality that exists in South Africa

Available data based on income and expenditure trends indicates that poverty is caused by unequal distribution of wealth in South Africa, such that the people are divided into rich and poor. The existence of this inequality is attributed to several factors according to some South African scholars. Among these factors is the recognition of the failure by the government to implement effective poverty eradication policies which promotes equal distribution of wealth.

One of these scholars Boesak (2005: 53), a renowned South African theologian, writer and politician, attributes the widening of the gap between rich and poor in particular to the emergence of the 'new black elites' who are products of the empowerment initiatives by the government which began during the first few years of democratic rule from 1994. He explains that unfortunately these initiatives have failed to yield positive results in the majority of cases because the wealth became concentrated in a few powerful people, whereas the vast majority of the people are growing poor every day. He explains that the envisaged trickle-down theory has fails to happen, as it is hoped that poverty would be eradicated when wealth from the rich flowed down to the poor. Instead what happens is the creation of the new black elites, who merely joins the existing largely white rich class. He puts the blame on the failure of the government to fulfil its goals of growing the economy and bringing down the unemployment levels. Hence many people live below the poverty line and the gap between the poor and the rich widens.

Magasela et al. (2007: 18) on the origins of the infamous 'trickle down' to the poor policy, they observe that the it emanated from the adoption of certain economic policies by the ruling party of South Africa, which are aimed at gradual growing of the economy to assist the poverty-stricken population. One of these is the GEAR [Growth, Employment and Redistribution] policy which aims at growing wealth through investments and growing the business sector where it is envisaged that in turn, these initiatives will create many employment opportunities and the wealth so grown would flow down to the poor. This has not been achieved, but as Magasela et al. (2007: 18) retaliated Boesak (2005: 53), they note that instead the levels of unemployment and poverty have increased, indicating a failure in the trickle down economy mechanism.

The failure of the trickle down mechanism is described as a scandal, because it has failed to reduce poverty. This was inevitable according to Klein (2008: 199), a Canadian author, social activist & political analyst who trace the problem to the political structures due to the fact that when South Africa attained its independence it was incomplete as economic powers were retained by the former masters. She also alludes to the fact that the new government inherited the debts of the former government. She is also critical of the fact that the ANC government compromised central tenets of the Freedom Charter; the redistribution of wealth and land. She explains further that this came about because of the difficulties in the negotiation processes.

Hence, the new government opted for the free market approach, which involves policies of promoting foreign investment, encouragement of privatization and free trade. These are among the many initiatives for the creation of wealth through which the wealth would ‘trickle down’ to the poor (Klein 2008: 201).

The situation of unequal wealth distribution has translated realistically into the slow pace and shape of transformation in South Africa, as observed by Moller (2007: 190). She shares the same opinion with Boesak(2005), that initiatives by the government such as Black Economic Empowerment have only benefitted a few minority black business people who have been accused of greediness and imperviousness to the plight of the rest of the people. This has widened the inequality gap between rich and poor. Apart from these ‘black elites’, Moller(2007) also identifies another prominent group of people, the ‘new political elites’, the parliamentarians and civil servants, who depend on government jobs to create and maintain lavish lifestyles. She laments that the personnel who provide essential services in such sectors as education, policing units and health are inadequately remunerated. This has worsened the shortage of skills as many have been forced to seek ‘greener pastures’ elsewhere.

2.5 How do some Methodist scholars perceive the existing poverty in South Africa?

The MCSA being a church in the society is not spared from the phenomenon of poverty as it is also part of the community. A majority of the Methodist scholars in Southern Africa trace the escalating levels of poverty to structural injustice. These scholars include (Bentley 2014:2, Vika 2008: 66 and Forster 2008: 412). They trace the existence of poverty to the inequality of wealth distribution in the population and located the source of the problem in poor education and health systems, high levels of corruption and abuse of power in the government, among many other factors. They also note that attainment of democracy has not translated into freedom for many of the people who still suffer from many effects of structural injustice, which include poverty and unequal treatment. On the same note S.R. Kumalo (2003: 4), a Methodist minister and a scholar in practical theology, based on his experiences gained while working as a minister in a church located in an informal settlement, observes that a church in any community will be affected by the same economic conditions of the society as the source of its membership.

On the source of the inequality that exists in South Africa he believes it is located in the history of the country, to the previous apartheid era of minority rule which also ruled the economy and left the majority of people living in conditions of poverty, with a lack of resources and many of them highly illiterate.

Ozler (2007: 487), also argue on the same point that poverty was inherited from the apartheid era. He supports his position with available evidence that in 1995, a year after the attainment of the democracy, 68% of the black population lived below the poverty line. This was set at R322, while at the same time there was no poverty in the white population. The Gini coefficient which was cited at 0.56 at that time made South Africa to be one of the world's most unequal societies at the onset of independence. The two other structures of inequality he identifies from the previous government were in the education sector which was divided across racial lines and the basic infrastructure the provision of clean water, housing, sanitation and other essential services. These were in dire need in the African sector, whereas in the white sector they had full access to these facilities.

2.6 Reading poverty through the “Vulnerability Contexts

It was Chambers (1995: 182), who recognized the importance of looking at poverty through the lens of the poor as they are the ones who are directly affected and can speak from an informed position. This was also acknowledged by deGruchy (2005: 60), a scholar in theology and development, when he suggested the Sustainable Livelihood Framework SLF² as an appropriate approach to development, because it recognizes the agency of the poor. This framework identifies the “vulnerability contexts” which are experienced by the poor in their livelihoods. The approach in the framework is to investigate what ‘shocks, trends and seasonality’ which were identified by deGruchy (2005: 59, 60), as the main contexts of vulnerability which are experienced by people in their societies.

² The sustainable livelihood frame work is an approach to development promoted by DFID, the British Department for International Development, which puts people at the centre of development as it recognizes the existence of livelihoods by which people are able to cope with several vulnerability contexts. The framework recognizes locally available asset portfolios available for the people. Details of the SLF are found at <www.livelihoods.org/info/info-distanceLearning.html>.

He explained that shocks are the unexpected occurrences that will happen in life, like disease, death in the family, the outbreak of war and violence, seasonal changes like drought, floods, loss of houses, poor harvest and others. These will cause various degrees of 'shock' to the family.

One of the greatest shocks which is recognized by Forster (2008: 412) in South Africa, is the high prevalence of the HIV and AIDS epidemic in South Africa. He explains that many households in South Africa will experience the effects of the HIV and AIDS epidemic directly through the loss of family members and indirectly through the added responsibilities of looking after children of relatives after the death of parents, especially through the practice of extended families. There is vast amount of data throughout the world on the effects of HIV & AIDS on the society. The ratings and reports for South Africa paints a very gloomy picture indeed as it is estimated that on the scale of the epidemic this country is in the lead as one of the worst affected in the world. According to Gennrich (2007: 6), in 2005 more than five million people living with the HIV virus in their bodies and the prevalence rate was estimated at 18%. This indeed is a shocking reality which face the people in this country. Some of these realities due to this epidemic is the high number of households where the children are left alone. A statement by Gennrich (2007: 6) captured this very well when he remarked:

The very fabric of our society is threatened by the increasing numbers of children growing up without parents.

This is a reality that is shocking to society and this has negatively impacted many households especially on the poor households. Poverty becomes the main effect leading invariably to high levels of malnutrition and increased school dropout rates amongst the children (Garner, 2000: 45).

Another shock, which is also part of the vulnerability context, lies in the instability of jobs in South Africa. This results in the escalating unemployment rate, which increases vulnerability to poverty. Looking at the post-apartheid scene, Ozler (2007: 487) recognize the growing trend of unemployment, which is reported to have been increasing since 1995. He cites data which estimated unemployment to be between 30-40% and placed South Africa as one of the countries with the highest unemployment rates in the world. He further explains that the efforts by the

government in setting up the Reconstruction and Development Programme [RDP] which was an integrated program aimed at improving employment prospects and improving service delivery.

He claims that this program was not contributing significantly to the creation of jobs to reduce poverty substantially, based on the available data. However, Moller (2007: 186) disputes this claim in her paper '*Quality of life in South Africa – the first ten years of democracy.*' She reports positive achievements under the RDP programme in terms of the delivery of free housing, clean water and electricity. Within the first decade of democracy, these had made a positive impact on the lives of people who could not previously afford them. She then traces the problem to the abandonment of the RDP program for GEAR, which is aimed at growing the economy, which had however impacted negatively with job losses as some had to be lost to allow the South African economy to compete globally. In this situation the government increased its expenses on grants to the poor as a way of alleviating poverty, which included the offering of free education to some schools.

Having recognized the positive achievements in the RDP program, Moller (2007: 187) still argues that the negative impact of the apartheid era contributed to the present rate of unemployment, especially in the education sector. Her argument is that the legacy of Bantu education where people were educated to perform menial labour still has its effects, as the education sector failed to prepare the youth with skills required to be able to compete effectively globally. The escalating rate of unemployment was exasperated by the demand for high skills which were unavailable, while there was excess of low skills and the fact that the unemployment was highest in the rural areas of South Africa. The trends of poor education among the vulnerable groups will take time to change, as (Moller, (2007: 187) points out that it was the youth who are mostly affected, as it was the age groups between 18- 35 who face the worst unemployment level, with the official unemployment record in 2006 at 26%.

Apart from the shocks which contribute to poverty, deGruchy (2005: 60) also recognized that there are trends which become part of the vulnerability contexts. These are occurrences which are predictable yet the people are helpless to avoid them. One of the trends which continue to affect many people in South Africa, making them vulnerable to poverty is located in the changes affecting the education system both in the apartheid era and in the post-apartheid period.

According to Jansen (2011: 100), a renowned educationist and author, the educational system in the post-apartheid South Africa has been very ineffective in preparing learners for a productive life in their future.

He trace the problem first to the poor instruction in the schools, where he recognizes that the teachers were not adequately prepared with subject matter to be able to impart knowledge to the learners. The second problem he points out lies in poor bureaucracy and administration where there is lack of commitment to accountability in many levels of the chain of administration, from the teachers to the high officials. Hence many schools spend many months with no textbooks (Jansen 2011: 108).

Dealing with education is part of the mission agenda of the MCSA, as education has always been part of the Methodist mission which is attested by a well-documented history of successful involvement in education. This is explained by Bentley (2014: 10), when he recalls that Methodism contributed to both social transformation and development in South Africa through the actions of the missionaries who established schools and hospitals, among other things. In the same paper, he acknowledges the recent developments where the MCSA has revisited its role in education with active engagement in the building of schools. This is in places where the government procedures are causing delays and thus the church had stepped in to assist the communities.

It is for that reason that the MCSA, in recognition of the importance of education, in 2013 added education as a new pillar of mission, hereby reviving the role of the church in education as part of its mission (Methodist Church of Southern Africa 2013: 2).

Trends of poor service delivery by the current government also form part of the vulnerability context which severely affects the people in South Africa and contributes to the poverty situation. Moller (2007: 191), explains that in the new democracy there are problems of the slow pace of service delivery by the government. Poor delivery service compromises the rights of the people to live in dignity because the resources are channelled to other places, especially where corruption is rife as Moller (2007: 191) points out. The ruling party has been rocked by many scandals linked to corruption. This directly impacts the lives of the people whose rights are

infringed and made to adjust their livelihoods to deal with these situations of being denied access to services.

2.7 The many dimensions of the deprivations which affect the ‘wellbeing’ of the poor

It has been recognized earlier on that there are deficits that are faced by the poor which serve to perpetuate the vulnerability contexts recognized above. These deficits/deprivations trap the people into poverty and it becomes very difficult to break out.

A team of scholars Narayan et al. (2000: 249, 251), explain how the poor face many dimensions of deprivation which cannot be uniformly scaled, as they vary from one context to the next. They point out that these deprivations are connected to form a web that traps the poor in vicious circles of poverty and powerlessness, which are very difficult to overcome. This team identified ten dimensions of deprivation which trap people into poverty.

The first dimension is that poor people usually lead very unstable and rather precarious livelihoods with very few resources. These are the times when ‘income poverty’ often translates to absolute poverty. In these situations life is hard because there is lack of financial, physical or social support and survival depends on hand-outs and seasonal jobs. This is the situation of people living on the streets and in makeshift houses, living from hand to mouth among other things.

The second dimension of deprivation is caused by the location of the poor in places which are very isolated and risky. Many live in places which are geographically isolated with poor roads. The people are then deprived of effective infrastructure services and are usually very poor, forced into unhygienic conditions with low standards of sanitation. These conditions unfortunately make people to become easy targets for natural disasters and disease outbreaks, where many die at a time. These are the areas with poor schools where few are able to get well-paying jobs, as experienced by the people who live in the remote, poor, rural areas of South Africa. This is where the church becomes very important, because it is located where the people are and can play a very important role to alleviate the plight of the people, as it has done in the past by providing schools and building hospitals.

The third dimension of deprivation is the lack of good nutritious food, which means many poor people suffer from hunger, with exhausted bodies which are often sick. This will affect the children severely. The poor people are usually tired as they have to work for long periods with little pay. Often they cannot afford the expensive medication and are not afforded preferential treatment because of their poverty status.

Instead, they tend to be treated with indifference and disdain, often spending hours waiting for treatment. Many cannot afford the time and effort. This deprivation might be the main reason for many of the mission stations to have care points where children and other vulnerable people come to receive at least one meal a day, which for many has become their lifeline. Unfortunately, it is only a temporary relief effort that does not address the social problems which cause this situation of vulnerability.

The fourth dimension of deprivation is centred on gender relations, the patriarchal situations which result in unequal treatment where it is common among the poor for the women to be excluded from forums of decision-making, ranging from economic to social and political. The position of the woman as the 'home maker' and the man as the 'bread winner' is prevalent among the poor.

The woman often has to work very hard fending for her family and is often denied the chance for her preferred career choice. In many rural communities, women are subject to arranged marriages for economic purposes and are not afforded an education. This deprives women in most cases of the chance to lead independent lives. Instead, they are forced to accept what the community deem fit for them, as their voices are silenced. They may also be denied access to proper education, yet they play critical roles as home makers and their contribution to development is hampered.

According to the Methodist Book of Order of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa 2014: 227), the MSCA recognizes the suffering of women in society in that their issues are often not taken seriously and they are often victims of violence and unjust treatment. The stance of the church is clear on the acknowledgement that women were also created in the image of God and they possess the potential to bring transformation, both in the church and in society at large. Part of the action to address this issue was the call to have 40% of all leadership in the church

structures to be formed by women and the deliberate actions and campaigns for the education and protection of women. Issues that affect women, including HIV and AIDS, abuse, family planning and many others are encouraged to be openly addressed in the church. There is also a call for inclusive language in all church liturgies and documents. By taking this stand the MSCA brings transformation to society when they demonstrate that in the kingdom of God there is justice and equality. This flows from Galatians 3: 28, where Paul portrayed equality in the kingdom of God when he explained that the values of the kingdom cuts across nationality and gender society constructs, as all are equal and live in unity in Christ.

The fifth dimension of deprivation emanates from the estranged social relationships because of the poverty status where the poor are often labelled as 'the masses' in development circles and are left out from decision making processes, pushed aside and treated as objects by the more powerful of society. This may be aggravated by ethnic, caste, material poverty and gender issues.

Cognisant of this deprivation which exist in society, the MCSA took a stand to be on the side of the poor, tapping on its heritage in the Methodist movement as it is stated that from the time of the Holy Club to the establishment of societies, there were deliberate initiatives to reach out to the poor and vulnerable in the community by the members.

These actions included visits to their places of abode and assistance with food, clothing and education of their children (Heitzenrater 1995: 23). This stance by the MCSA is stated in the Book of Order that it strives to affirm and implement the kingdom of God values which are centred on human dignity, justice and equality. Further to this, the MCSA recognizes the existence of inequality in South Africa in terms of human and financial resources. As a result, all societies and circuits are called to take a stand alongside the poor and form a united front to fight against poverty in society Methodist Church of Southern Africa 2014: 225, 229). With these actions the Methodist societies will then become centres of healing and transformation when the members of the church reach out in love to the community to embrace the marginalized and the less privileged against the devastating effects of this deprivation.

The sixth dimension of deprivation is the abusive behaviour which is experienced by the poor people at the hands of the more powerful, where they are treated with rudeness and lack of respect and are stripped of their dignity when their humanity is not recognized. This is what

Freire (1970: 44) identified as the dehumanization process, aimed at the distortion of what is fully human. He explained that this was achieved through the practices of injustice, oppression and sometimes violence against the poor by the oppressors who are the powerful and strive to keep the poor in this position by making them accept it as normal. Then the oppressed see their liberation only as becoming like their oppressors and not in any other way. In this way the circle of oppression is maintained by the dehumanization. The poor are denied their right to be treated with dignity and equality as human beings also created in the image of God [Genesis 1: 27].

When that happens it leads to the seventh dimension of deprivation, where the poor became more insecure and have little peace of mind as they have no social security to protect them; they become more powerless to try and solve the situation for themselves. The last two are related and they are a result of a collective effect of the above dimensions of deprivations.

These are the situations where the poor people are often isolated and suffer in pockets; it is very difficult for them to form coherent efforts to fight these deprivations as they cannot effectively network with the poor resources and other problems. This situation of insecurity among the poor is compounded by the poor capabilities, lack of skills due to poor education, isolation from information, economic opportunities and information about how to access services from government, organizations and other resources.

This team of Narayan et al. 2000: 251), concluded with the observation that it is because of these deprivations that the poor are often found with lack of confidence and they are powerless. The team summed up from the affected participants that life in poverty becomes a series of stresses, shocks and sequences of never-ending hardships which ‘knock and press’ the poor people from all sides, affecting their wellbeing, keeping them locked in powerlessness. They often have to make very difficult choices; for instance, they have to make a choice between staying hungry and using the money to send children to school, whether to accept a demeaning job or to go hungry.

2.8 Poverty as a social phenomenon

There is a need to shift from the conventional lens of viewing poverty in economic terms to this socio-political perception, which gives an insight into the issues which are usually obscured and cause poverty due to oppression and denial of rights. This outlook will enable the church to take

the appropriate liberation responses as a proper response. This is also in the roots of Methodism, as it was the stand that was also taken by John Wesley who was cited by Marquardt (1992: 31), that he was of the view that the poverty which was adversely affecting the people was not caused by laziness and listlessness but he traced it to the structures in society and he set out to address them.

According to some liberation theologians the roots of poverty are located in the economic and social structures which are created by the rich and powerful and they serve and maintain the poor in the state of poverty (see Cone 1975: 38, Boff & Boff 1987: 4). Expanding on this viewpoint of poverty, the duo of Boff & Boff (1987: 27), suggested that poverty exists as a result of economic/historical exploitation of the poor by the rich. They came to this conclusion because of the common practice that the oppressed people in the society are found marginalized at the edges of society, these are usually the youth, the old and weak, the unemployed/underutilized and are often found living in overcrowded spaces. Further on this point they explain that the poor all had a common factor that they are poor because of the economic, social and political structures that exist in society where the rich got richer at the expense of the poor.

This socio-historical poverty is then traced to its roots in the capitalist system where wealth is enjoyed by a few people at the expense of the many who labour to make it happen for them.

This assertion is in line with what Bentley (2014) & Boesak (2005) observed that in South Africa the poverty is due to the creation of the ‘elite’ few who hold the large portion of the economy, leaving the masses in poverty.

This perception of poverty is relevant to the MCSA in order to fully comprehend the plight of the poor which is part of its objective in the mission pillar for economic empowerment and development. Part of this problem as it has been mentioned is the legacy from the apartheid era, which needs to be broken for the transformation and liberation of the people. Poor people are also perceived as being ‘uncivilized’ [*amanxaba*]³ a common perception.

³ This is a derogatory term for the people who are considered backwards because they live in rural areas and they have not adopted the culture of the white people. They stick to their

This is a wrong perception of the phenomenon of poverty according to many scholars, including (see Boff & Boff 1987: 27, Korten 1990: 40, Brocklesby & Fisher 2003: 187). They explain that poverty is wrongly explained as a function of the social and economic backwardness of the people in the third world countries who are in desperate need of new technology and assistance in terms of loans from the developed countries and the poor are perceived as passive objects in need of reformation. But this is a one of the very common explanation for poverty which then form the basis of the many interventions, especially from the developed countries to the third world. The main objection of these scholars to this perception is that the poor are then perceived as passive recipients. The above perception is what drives the growth centred approach to development, especially to the poor countries by the rich superpowers, according to Korten (1990: 40), where the aim is the eradication of poverty through investment with anticipation of growth in output in terms of economic value. He explained that the approach in this aspect is in the form of assistance from the developed countries to the underdeveloped by loans and grants. In this type of practice the single issue for growth and well-being becomes the market value, with little regard to environmental output or even the well-being of the people.

Korten (1990: 40) is of the opinion that this top down approach to development has not made a significant difference in the life of the poor, beyond addressing their temporal needs; instead it has made a few people more rich and has not addressed the causes of poverty affecting many people (Korten 1990: 45).

2.8.1 Powerlessness and poverty

Powerlessness in the context of poverty is the inability and hopelessness experienced by the people when they cannot to do anything to break out of the clutches of poverty. According to Christian (2011: 53), a writer and minister who spent more than 30 years ministering among the poor in India, powerlessness of poverty is linked to the dependency syndrome, which helps create and maintain the systems of injustice at grassroots level. He identifies the main forces of culture, religion and education systems among many others which come to play in the dependency syndrome. This happens deliberately through the action of the powerful, as they keep the poor dependent by abusing them, using their position of superiority. He alludes to the

traditional dress, food, and housing and practice their traditional customs and generally do not show keenness for the foreign culture.

work of Comblin (1989: 94), who expressed this more explicitly when he claimed that the powerful crush the poor without even noticing them, as they abuse their powers in their cultural, social and political superiority. He added that religion can also play a role in the exploitation of the poor as sometimes issues that affect the poor are not attended to but are wrongly spiritualized. Arguing his point, he points out that there were structures in the church which were oppressive and which are contributing to poverty.

These oppressive structures are sinful and contradict the will of God, because they also destroy all unity and strength of the oppressed, changing the state of the poor and rendering them to be what he called non-persons or no persons. In such situations, the people become anonymous in their own lands and communities, as they are denied the right and ability to take part in their own development (Christian 2011: 58, 60).

This state of anonymity in the poor people is described by Boff & Boff (1987: 6), as the disfigurement of the image of God on the people, when the humanity of the person as God intended is maimed by the state of poverty. These sentiments of the disfigurement of the image of God on the poor is also deeply expressed by Haddad (2015: 77), after her realization that poverty was due to social structures which were against some members of the community in an unjust and systematic way. This injustice made her to question her faith in God and explore ways by which she can be an instrument of justice and social transformation.

By this assertion she adds another dimension to the understanding of poverty which goes beyond describing it in the contexts of vulnerability and the daily struggles of the various dimensions of depravation or deficit, but it describes the emotional state of the loss of identity and voice because of poverty, which directly results in situations of powerlessness.

The helplessness state which is caused by poverty cause the affected people to feel helpless and powerless to break from this web and shedding light on the causes of this state Christian (2011: 26) used the Hindu concept of *Srama* which describe efforts by humans in relationships. According to this concept, powerlessness results from inequality in relationships between the rich and the poor, where the rich few gain their power from what he called “god complexes”, a term that comes from a combination of power sources in the community which weld both primary and secondary influences on the poor (Christian 2011: 27).

These 'god complexes' all have one purpose: to render the poor powerless through the many aspects of oppression, under the pretext that the fate of the poor was destined by the gods, by so doing keeping them powerless from one generation to the next. He recognizes that these sources of power may range from powerful decision-making cliques and other systems which oppress the poor by playing god over the poor.

These oppressive god complexes in relationships are also recognized by Walter Wink in his book 'Engaging the Powers,' where he gives insights into the fact that these powers operate in poverty relationships and act out a domination system where the poor are held under domination by the powerful. This is a system that teaches the world to value power and which is portrayed as the ideal system that has to be assimilated by the whole world. He also observes that even though the domination system masks itself, its true effect is to inflict wounds on its victims and render them valueless (Wink 1992: 40, 54, 101).

The poor are dominated by the rich and powerful so that they have no say or voice in societal issues and are made to believe that it is the normal situation for them to remain powerless. The powerlessness created by the god complexes operates in the many structures of life, as Christian (2011: 131) further explains. They operate through the laws, government and religious structures which promote the powerful and make the poor powerless.

He notes that mass media becomes a strong tool which is used to influence the people's inner realities which, in turn, affect the spirituality of the people to shape their thinking patterns towards accepting their systems as true values of life so that others remain powerful and the poor accept their powerlessness. This is how the dependency syndrome is created, as the poor believe their survival depends on the 'gifts' from the rich and so they have to keep them happy all the time as the gifts help them to survive the deprivations they face.

Another painful aspect of this relationship that is noted by Christian (2011: 131), is the exclusion and estrangement of the poor from many aspects of community life and relationships, so that only a few elite members are able to benefit from the very so-called poverty alleviation programs that are designed for them. This exclusion leads to dire consequences, in that the wisdom of the poor is denied of its value by being excluded from the important decision-making processes, as they are ignored by the government as they are considered ignorant. Thus so treated

it is common to find that they lose interest in voicing their opinion and instead simply receive what they are told and given; they vote because they are promised incentives. So much so, that even when they are nominated to positions of power, they remain at the margins and not willing to participate fully (Christian 2011: 133).

The exclusion of the poor has roots in many aspects of the society structures and the most important which has already been identified as a vulnerability context is concerned with the education sector. It is common knowledge that the public schools perform below the private schools and this becomes the source of inequality and exclusion for some of the youth from the very formation stage. According to Christian (2011: 134), this is the action which maintains and perpetuates the social division between the rich and poor into the future generations. As a result, he observed that it is common to find the community divided into poor and rich villages and this breeds societies which are fragmented by the location of power bases, rendering others powerless and non-communities. He further calls upon the world to realize that the poor who are referred to in figures in statistical terms are real people who are suffering and people must realize that they face painful realities every day of their lives.

The MSCA, as one of South Africa's largest mainline churches in its mission for reconstruction in the post-apartheid era, has recognized the plight of the poor and in its noble agenda for mission is faced with the task to identify the structures, the god complexes which have rendered the people powerless to fight demeaning poverty. The analysis needs to start within the structures of the church itself as part of the membership is not spared this phenomenon.

2.9 Conclusions of the chapter

The main findings of this chapter are: Poverty is a complex issue which need a multi-dimensional understanding and approach. The South African government of is yet to come up with a relevant definition for poverty as the common systems used to determine poverty levels here are based on income and expenditure. This is inadequate to capture the reality of the poverty as experienced by the people.

This research paper will assume the understanding and definition of poverty in terms of the denial of chances and opportunities in order to take part in their development. In this

understanding poverty is stripping of dignity and reduction of the status of a person. This is what has resulted in many people who live in the rural areas suffering from poverty resulting from unequal distribution of income in South Africa, which is a legacy from the apartheid era, especially in the education sector and existing socio-political structures, which keep the people in a dependency state.

This chapter has also found that under the new democratic government a new middle class of elites has been created through the programs implemented to deal with the high levels of poverty, where the wealth is failing to trickle down to the poor. The main causes of inequality in the distribution of wealth here are the high levels of corruption, poor education systems and poor available skills which do not meet the demand, and poor service delivery which affects the wellbeing of the people. The poorest regions are Eastern Cape, Limpopo and KwaZulu-Natal. Inadequate education leads to inequality of jobs because the available jobs need highly skilled people, yet the many unemployed are poorly educated.

In this chapter it was also found that poverty distorts the image of God in the created humanity and make people to lose their identity in their powerlessness. The poor are not objects of pity which depend on the rich for survival, but poverty is a social phenomenon which needs to be addressed in its true reality, not disguised as figures of statistics.

Poverty is created and maintained by the powerful and elite in society who dominate the weak and the poor. These powers of domination create situations of powerlessness by making the poor believe they were created to be in that state as they are fed with false information. The challenge of the government lies in social restructuring against the background of apartheid history where most of the inequality began.

Religion has also been identified as a factor contributing to the powerlessness of the people when the people are exploited and made to believe that they will live better lives in heaven. This notion of 'pie in the sky theology' is contrary to the Biblical teachings of wholeness of life and well-being.

The MCSA, as a representative of the kingdom of God in its mission agenda, has placed itself to stand with the poor and the marginalized to fight the poverty caused by the inequality that exists

in the society in South Africa. It has a critical role to play with its function in social transformation addressing the poverty issues which are against kingdom values.

CHAPTER THREE

THE METHODIST CHURCH OF SOUTHERN AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter the phenomenon of poverty was identified as an existential reality for the majority of the people in South Africa, especially those living in rural areas whose vulnerable context predisposes them to live poor lives. Poverty was identified as a product of socio-historical structures which cause powerlessness to some members of the community so that they cannot escape the poverty trap they are locked in. The role of the church in addressing the issues facing the people who suffer in the poverty situations was also highlighted.

This chapter seeks to explore the agenda of the MCSA for development, which is part of the holistic approach to mission presented in the imperative aimed at human empowerment and development. This is part of the implementing strategy of the vision of “A Christ-healed Africa for the healing of nations.” In this mission statement the church sees itself as called to proclaim the gospel of Christ for healing and transformation (Methodist Church of Southern Africa 2013). This chapter will trace the development agenda as part of the mission of the MCSA, first in its inception in the Methodist Revival Movement of the 18th century in England, then briefly to the missionary era of the Methodist church in Southern Africa and finally in the reconstruction agenda in post-apartheid South Africa. The approach will be part of the social theology the liberation framework, where development will be defined in terms of liberation and transformation.

3.2 The understanding of development as part of the mission agenda of the MCSA

Development and human empowerment is intrinsic to the mission agenda of the MCSA, as it is part of its heritage from the Wesleyan tradition of taking a position to stand alongside the poor in society. This tradition can be traced to the Christian practice of the Methodist movement, which was started and led by the Wesley brothers [John and Charles] in England in the 18th century.

The Wesley brothers did not engage with the poor people only in terms of charity but they also attended to the structures that caused their plight. Their approach resulted to the transformation of many lives of the people who were able to take part in their own development.

This is said to be what contributed immensely to the success of the movement. There were two central tenets which are attributed to the success of the Methodist Movement, according to Marquardt (1992: 32). The first one was the Wesley brother's thorough investigation of the sources of the 'social injustices' which adversely affected the people. The second was the preaching of the message of the gospel which was based on the love of God; this was directed to all people irrespective of class and status. These two factors contributed to a holistic approach which brought change to the lives of many people. In that context development came as a result of the transforming power of the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ, as it brought life to the hearers and it lead to their liberation.

The evangelism aspect of mission has always been important in the Methodist movement since its inception. Many scholars pay tribute to John Wesley for being one of the greatest evangelists of his time, as he preached a unique message that brought out the liberation element of the gospel, which contributed to social transformation. The Methodist revival mission movement began when the words of scripture touched ordinary people in the English landscapes and their lives changed for the better holistically. The particular aspect of the evangelism by the Wesley brothers was effective because it involved the preaching of the gospel to all people, especially the ones at the margins of society: the mobs and the prisoners (Heitzenrater 2013: 137). This was an act of opening up the message and the implications of the gospel outside the confines of set formal structures; the pulpit in the church. Heitzenrater (1995: 99) described this method of evangelism as the "field preaching" and John Wesley adapted the style from George Whitefield. This method became the vehicle of taking the gospel message to where the people were such that even those who were not able go to church within the set times received the gospel message. As Heitzenrater (1995: 99) expanded tombs, market squares and mine pits became preaching stations and many people were attracted to these places.

John Wesley embarked on the evangelical mission and coined the slogan: "I look upon the world as my parish" as a response to the many objections from the ecclesiastical structures who deemed these methods to be illegal (Heitzenrater 1995: 102).

On the theme of the evangelical mission, the duo of Chambers & Douglas (2009: 433) expand on John Wesley's words when he referred to the world as his parish. This duo explain that these words have become synonymous with mission in the Methodist church, carrying the connotations of inclusiveness, where the message of the gospel is taken to all corners of society, across social classes, as the Methodist mission took the shape of a social outreach. They also recognize that this is holistic mission which cared for all the aspects of a person, because the gospel message is not only limited to preaching but also extended to other human needs. This duo explain further that this mission imperative followed the motif of Jesus Christ who went everywhere teaching, preaching and healing the sick. The Methodists then adopted this stance, as they are found in many places of the world on mission, with the main emphasis on the healing powers of the gospel for both the body and the soul. They then allude to the fact that this could be a good motto which has to be promoted even in this era to assist to combat the social problems, for instance the fight against HIV and AIDS.

Standing on this heritage, the mission agenda of the MCSA for development is also approached in a holistic manner, being part of the evangelism practice. The development agenda in the MCSA is within its broad mission statement which is aimed at holistic healing and transformation. This approach to development by the church is contrary to the conventional perceptions, which are usually based on the understanding of economic advancement, which ranks any person or country with more money as the more developed. This has translated to the common understanding that rich people/countries are developed, whereas the poor are not.

The perception of development in terms of economic success does not capture the correct perspective of development as a solution to poverty, according to Gutierrez (1988: 14), who explain that many people are becoming aware of the existence of many other factors, both internal and external, which may lead to situations of poverty in any country, not just the lack of money. He also points out that many of the poor countries have since realized the folly of trying to assimilate the standards of the rich countries as their path to development, but rather they have come to understand that development has to focus more on efforts to change societies to be more humane, where the sacredness of the person is respected. In this outlook, development becomes a search for a more humane society and the dehumanizing effects of poverty are correctly recognized for what they are.

Gutierrez (1988: 25) also suggests the use of the term ‘liberation’ as the understanding for the process of development, because it captures the whole concept in a better way, which then links development to the actions of the liberation of humanity from sin by Jesus Christ. The development initiatives will then be aimed at uprooting the unjust systems of oppression which keep other human beings under the dehumanizing condition of poverty which are rooted in sin. In this regard, development will be aimed at the restoration of humanity which is stripped by the multi-dimensions of depravation and powerlessness which lead to the situation of poverty in the first place. It is only when the people are liberated and their rightful position in society recognized that they are able to initiate and take part in the processes which are aimed at the improvement of their well-being. The implication is that development will have to encompass all the processes for the alleviation of the poverty conditions, many of which may be traced to the socio-historical structures of society.

The approach to economic development and human empowerment in the MCSA is aimed at transformation of the demeaning conditions of the poor and the marginalized. This is articulated in its mission imperative or strategy⁴ as it was formulated in the mission congress of 2004. The mission congress which was held at Mthatha in 2004 was described as a defining moment in the development of mission in the MCSA, because at that historic congress clear strategies and measureable goals were formulated in a bid to move the church from maintenance to mission (Vika 2008: 59). There the mission charter⁵ which is the main signpost for mission was drawn up and adopted. Vika (2008: 60), further highlights that the congress was a practical attempt to make the vision of the church a reality.

⁴ There are five mission imperative in the MCSA and these are: “Development & Economic Empowerment, Evangelism and Church Growth, Education and Christian Formation, Justice, Service & Reconciliation and Spirituality” (Methodist Church of South Africa 2016:2). These mission pillars form the main framework and policy for holistic mission in the church and their presentation in the book is given to all the Methodist people to be embraced by all local churches in their entirety as they are not optional for communities to over look and act on preference. They are central to the life of the church and always have to be part of the agenda for all meetings from grassroots level to the highest peak in the connexion, the conference.

⁵ Available in (Methodist Church of Southern Africa, 2016a: 3), where the final statement of the mission congress in Mthatha were stated in a form of a statement which gave the vision, statement, pillars and the resolve of the MCSA on mission.

These mission imperatives are not the first attempt of the MCSA to seek the shape of its mission to suite the changing contexts in the lives of the people, as Kumalo (2006: 249, 252), points out that the mission imperatives are the refinement of an earlier deliberate intention by the Methodist Church of Southern Africa to embark on a path of renewal and preparation post- apartheid, in order to prepare the people for the new life in the new democratic era. The previous process aimed at transformation signified new beginnings and was named “the journey to the new land”. He explains that this initiative from 1992 to 1997 was theologically modelled on the Biblical narrative of the liberation of the Israelites from the Egyptian bondage to the land of freedom in Canaan. The symbolism was significant of the moment of liberation for the previously disadvantaged populations through the apartheid system who were now able to live as free people and participate in the development of their country.

Kumalo (2006: 262) describes the process of the journey to the new land to have encompassed originally six calls to achieve the intended transformative action. Unfortunately as he explains, the process of the journey to the new land failed to produce the expected results due to a number of reasons. The main reason was that grassroots MCSA members were not brought on board with the vision. Many did not clearly understand how it was important to them, even though it was ground breaking and hailed in ecumenical circles as a prophetic moment.

In spite of the failed previous attempt, these six calls of this previous process have since been enhanced and adopted as the continuing calls for transformation by the MCSA and are presented as such in the Year Book (Methodist Church of Southern Africa 2014b: 2). They are listed as:

A deepening spirituality, a resolve to be guided by God’s mission, a commitment to environmental justice, a rediscovery of the priesthood of all believers, a commitment to be one so that the world may believe, a redefinition and authentication of the vocation of the clergy in the church and a re-emphasis of the servant leadership and discernment as our model for ministry.

The practical implications for the adoption of these mission strategies in the MCSA attest to its stance as the mission which is sent out to spread the life giving message of the gospel by all the members, not limited to the clergy, in line with its traditions.

The mission pillar on Development & Economic Empowerment which is the premise of this research project is expounded by Vika (2005), that it is focused on addressing the conditions of poverty faced by the poor, to take care of children's growth and education. It also includes the general improvement of the life and well-being of the people, especially the victims of the apartheid regime. Taking this stance, the MCSA becomes part of the restructuring process of the community and contributes to the development of the nation. Its development initiatives are aimed at liberation from the conditions that affect the well-being of the people, both in the church and in society. This stance is affirmed in the church's Book of Order (Methodist Church of Southern Africa (2014: 94), where the mission of the church is spelt out to extend to the disadvantaged of the community through providing for their needs and addressing the demeaning social structures. The core of the mission of the MCSA in the same Book of Order is explained to be grounded on both scripture and its heritage and roots.

The main objectives of this mission imperative on development and empowerment according to Vika (2005: 5) is to enable and equip all the people to fully participate in development, beginning with their communities. This will cascade to the whole Southern Africa region and the rest of Africa as it is not aimed at Methodists only. The importance of local churches and congregations is emphasized, as they become the sites where education and empowerment should begin.

Some of the suggested activities that formed the implementation plans included initiation of advocacy programs and projects aimed at sustainable use of available church land. This will be accompanied by the development of theological and Biblical materials to strengthen empowerment and teaching at grassroots level. It was also suggested that there should be strong drives to attract people, both members and non-members, to make investments of their time, energy and finances to the church, including bequests, as part of teaching on sacrificial giving, in order to finance and make this mission strategy a reality. The strong leadership of both the Bishops and the local ministers in this process is emphasized for the success of this strategy Vika (2005: 5). This outlook to development forms a crucial part of the identity of the MCSA, as Storey (2014: 80) explains that the identity of the Methodists is more connected to its story than to a particular doctrine. This is what set its movement apart from others as it spread moral and spiritual renewal in England and this was indeed the good news to the poor people.

With these strategy for mission the MCSA, plays a very important role of shaping and formation of the democratic society because even though the people of South Africa attained political democracy in 1994, it is becoming clear that a 'second liberation' is required, when one looks at the slow pace of transformation and the rising levels of poverty. This is acknowledged by (J. deGruchy (1995: 47), when he recognizes the importance of the role of the church for the constant nurturing of the democracy, as it needs to renew itself time and again as part of its development with the dynamic societal contexts.

(J. deGruchy (1995: 47) asserts that after the attainment of independence in South Africa in 1994, the church has to be involved in the restructuring of society as a path to a peaceful and prosperous future. This function cannot be left to the government alone. He also recognizes the need for constant theological reflection, as democracy itself is rooted in Christian ethics and faith, explaining further that development is liberation and the church has to be involved side by side with the government as part of the building of the democratic system of governance.

This approach to development by the MCSA is the path to achieve the status of freedom for the people, in line with Sen (1999: 3) who perceive that development brings freedom, pointing out that there were many factors which contribute to situations of 'un freedoms' in society, which were located in several sources. Sen (1999: 3) identifies some of these sources of freedom as poverty and oppression, deprivation/denial of economic opportunities for some members of the community, as well as deliberate negligence of important public facilities because of the ineffective and defiant social structures. Invariably these freedoms result in lack of income to meet the basic needs for food, effective health and educational facilities and clothing to the affected people who then are classified as poor. As part of the mission agenda for development and empowerment, the MCSA may have to initiate serious social analysis to identify the factors which constitute the 'un freedoms' in the society of South Africa. This is relevant and critical to the situation of the MCSA , as (Mathew (2013: 1), pointed out that in the MCSA there has been no dialogue with the local people since the enactment of the mission pillars on the impact and practice of Methodism in the post-missionary church. This is against the serious backdrop of the existence of poverty, unemployment and equality, three main threats that affect the wellbeing of the people in South Africa.

At the present era of the MCSA, the impact of the agenda for development and empowerment agenda cannot be ascertained with certainty in the absence of a formal initiative or survey to determine its impact on the lives of the people.

Transformation and development are synonymous as they represent a change of status from a point of a disadvantage to an improvement in status. This makes the MCSA's mission agenda for development even more important to address the situation of poverty which face the people of South Africa. Korten (1990: 4) takes this view when he suggests that development be approached as the transformation of society. He is of the view that the future does not necessarily depend on linear growth patterns of the amount of money available in households and even in nations. He urges that instead an authentic future depends on the transformation of the relevant establishments, their values and behaviours, together with technological advancements which will be consistent with ecological preservation in the society. It was for that reason that he suggested the adoption of a development outlook which would promote inclusiveness and togetherness where all the members of society were considered as equal partners in the development processes. This way transformation in any society will be driven by the three key values of 'justice, sustainability and inclusiveness.' Approaching development as transformation brings back those members of the society who have been pushed to the margins and excluded from the mainstream production processes. (Korten, 1990: 4) explains further that this approach also brings back the essential elements of the stewardship of the ecosystem because care is taken that the methods of production are fair and just to both the ecosystem and humanity as the resources will be equally shared.

This outlook on development has implications on the current methods of production which are driven by the market economy and consumerism as they led to competition and depletion of the natural resources hence the desperate need for transformation. This is coupled with the tendency to perceive poverty in terms of linear indices based on available household income and expenditure patterns. These prevalent tendencies tend not to promote transformation of societies to be more human but instead breed competition and power struggles for survival.

Approaching development with the aim only to grow the economy is one of the present challenges to the ecumenical church because that is the approach to development by the government of South Africa, which is impacting negatively on the poor of society.

Development initiatives by the Government of South Africa are mainly based on the free market economic system, aimed at unilateral growth in the economy which however promotes and contributes to unequal distribution of wealth, which have been identified as one of the main causes of the present poverty. This is what precipitated the reaction of the Diakonia Council of churches (2006: 1-2) to the poverty crisis in South Africa and their call for an urgent need for healing and transformation. They recognize the present scenario of escalating poverty as the present day “Kairos, a challenge, a moment of crisis and opportunity.” Their view is that this situation of poverty is a form of injustice because the market economy or neoliberalism causes deep divides between the wealthy owners of the companies and the poor workers. The reason why that is in this system the bulk of the profit goes back to the companies and less to the wages of workers. Eventually many companies close down anyway, leaving many people with no jobs. They then invited the rest of the church community, the body of Christ, to take this issue as a sign and a wake-up call to a struggle to seek for justice in the distribution of the economic resources, they coined the ‘Oikos journey’.

The Diakonia Council of Churches in the same article while acknowledging the efforts of the government of South Africa to introduce poverty alleviation programs by providing houses, health and education benefits, they are of the view that these efforts seem to be walking against the tide in the present system to fight against the high unemployment rates, low wages and poverty. They then suggest that there was a need for a new alternative approach which will involve the Biblical way to revive the economy which takes ecology into consideration as well. It is believed that there is a direct link between the present degradation of ecology and poverty. Again they identify the values which are centred on love, justice and sharing which is line with what (Korten, 1990), suggested.

These sentiments of the Diakonia Council of Churches were echoed by Haddad (2015: 142), a renowned theologian in the fields of religion and HIV and AIDS, gender and development. Working on the writings of the late Steve de Gruchy, she explains that the imagery of a funeral and four weddings was used by the late scholar in development when he described the crisis of poverty in South Africa. Haddad (2015: 142), elaborates that Steve de Gruchy described the ‘funeral’ as the depressing situation of poverty in a situation of immense wealth for others and severe environmental degradation.

In his argument Steve de Gruchy in Haddad (2015: 143) pointed out that the conventional practice of solving poverty by “industrial economy” was counterproductive, because it destroys the means to livelihood of many people, driving them into poverty as their natural habitats are destroyed. He then identified the unabated usage of natural resources with no consideration to be a dead end; hence he called it a funeral. The imagery of the four weddings represented the close relationship between the four pillars of poverty and health, poverty and education, poverty and assets and poverty and food sovereignty. The reason for this marriage was the fact that poverty is not a cut and dry case of a linkage between money and a good prosperous life but he was of the view that poverty was a reality, a lived experience which comes because of several deprivations of basic capabilities to the people. As a possible solution he also called for approaches to development which will be faith based, a revisit to God’s economy.

This exploration of development which is defined as liberation Gutierrez (1988), as freedom Sen (1999), as transformation Korten, (1990) and God’s justice Diakonia Council of churches (2006) is directly related to what the MCSA prophecy in its mission statement which calls for the proclamation of the gospel for healing and transformation.

Expanding on the theme of healing in the MCSA, Vika (2008: 62), explains that both the vision and the mission statement are linked to this central theme. Healing is not only aimed at physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual ailments which are equally important, but it is wholesome and it extends to include aspects of restorative justice and reconciliation. Vika (2008: 62) acknowledges the vision of the MCSA, one of the largest denominations in Southern Africa. This gives it capacity to lead in many initiatives that could facilitate healing and transformation to the rest of the African continent from the ravages of many diseases, including HIV and AIDS. Africa also needs healing from the conflicts and wars which are mainly caused by the many initiatives in the name of development which have left many people poor, in spite of the available natural resources. He further notes that this is the responsibility of the church as it has always carried healing and transformation as central in its life. Both liberation and freedom will have a healing effect on the community which is suffering from the dehumanising effects of social ills.

This is an urgent call for tangible action from the MCSA to demonstrate practically this alternative approach to development which is entrenched by implication in its vision, mission statement and the well-articulated strategies spelled out in the pillars.

This is what Forster (2008: 73) observed expanding on the MCSA mission and vision of healing and transformation as he perceives that the implication for the church is not limited to proclamation but to making the good news a reality in the lives of the people in the society. These statements which are well articulated they need to translate and be accelerated into more actions to ring transformation to our society.

3.3 The approach to mission in the Methodist Church of Southern Africa

The true identity of the MCSA is rooted in mission which is traced to the 18th Century Methodism. This is articulated by O'Brien (2001: 103) that mission is the DNA of the Methodist church; it draws its life and being from it and as a result draws all creation towards a common future. In so doing it fulfils the purpose of God in creation. Olivier (2005: 4) also noted that the Wesleyan mission movement is rooted in mission because it was first conceived and born as a revival mission movement, before it became a church. He asserted that the members of the first Methodist movement understood and believed themselves as apostles who were sent by God to the world to bring transformation through the message of the gospel; that formed the core of their consciousness. He then called on present day Methodists to be wary of taking the Methodist church as a rigid institution, but rather encouraged the spirit of the original movement yet expressed in a new way, for the contemporary African context.

Meadows (2013: 2), argues on the same point that the true identity of the MCSA lies in its status as a mission movement. He notes that the early Methodist people did not use the term mission directly, but rather they saw themselves as engaged in God's work and they perceived themselves as God's co-workers, as they participated directly with him. He then traces this work of God first to the act of salvation, the liberation from sin and the renewal, which is then followed by the transformation of the believer through the sanctifying grace of God. The relationship so formed is life-transforming and driven by the Holy Spirit. It transforms one to seek for a life in communion with God thus becomes involved as a 'co-worker' in his mission.

It is in this outlook, that Falls (2007: 20) recognize the importance of the agency of lay people in the mission of the early Methodist movement, when he notes also that in the beginning Methodism was a movement and it was not a church with all the structures.

Falls (2007: 20) explains further that buildings were used for administration purposes: the administration of sacraments, to conduct marriages and baptisms and other purposes. The main thrust of the mission depended on the activities of the laity; mainly the class leaders who took pastoral responsibility for the spiritual responsibility of the members of society. Falls (2007: 20) further notes that the nature of the mission of the Methodists from its conception was not a pietistic inward-looking gospel message, but it took the shape of going out to the world. This was through the effect of the formation and nurturing of disciples in the various groupings which were organized by John Wesley, who then set out to the world spreading the life transforming gospel of Jesus Christ in both word and deed.

This is the precise nature of mission such that Olivier (2005: 5) lamented for its reclamation by the present Methodist but cautioned against the folly of attempting to import the initiatives of the 18th Century England which may not be fit the present. He made a call for the contextualisation of that theology to suit Africa in the present era, an action he themed “theology cooked in the African pot”.

There are however signs that mission in the Methodist church in general is taking a turn to reclaim this heritage of discipleship. According to Meadows (2013: 1-2), he observes that the recent trends in missiology are changing from church-based mission to the formation of committed disciples who then take the gospel to the world in what is known as “mission spirituality”. Expanding on this model he explains that the emphasis of this approach is placed more on agency of the people and less on the church structures, such that discipleship then forms the bridge between missiology and ecclesiology. In this model of mission the disciples are characterized by their singleness of life intention of seeking to grow everyday spiritually through the practice of the spiritual disciplines in the small accountability groups. They desire to grow in their love of God and they seek to share this love with others in their everyday lives. In this approach the mission belongs to God and not to the church but the church is used to further the mission of God as the people, the disciples, fully participate in evangelism and they are not blocked by church structures (Meadows 2013: 2).

This approach to mission, to be sent out as disciples to the world, is rooted in John Wesley’s theology of mission, which was based on compassion, according to Roberts (2007: 46). He

explains that Wesley grounded his thinking on the text found in Luke 4:61-21, a text linked to [Isaiah 61: 1-2].

In these texts Jesus declared his mission under the influence of the Holy Spirit to bring good news to the poor, the liberation of the oppressed and the ones on the margins and the pronouncement of the coming of the kingdom of God. This text is said to have been the basis for Wesley's theology of mission and it formed the basis for the turning point in his life when he decided to take the good news of the gospel to where the poor were located, outside the confines of the church buildings, an action he described as when he perceived himself to have become "vile" (Roberts 2007: 46).

Roberts (2007: 46) then alludes to the work of Outler (1975), who explains that this was the time when Wesley's focus and actions shifted from his own self-consciousness to compassion for others. This compassion was modelled on the person of Jesus, who cared deeply for the people and broke the purity code of Judaism in order to meet the plight of the poor.

Roberts (2007: 47) argues that Wesley read the scripture through the eyes of compassion, which translated mercy into action. This influenced all his practices and understanding of the meaning of true Christianity, as he began to see them in line with the three very important tenets of the outward expressions of justice, compassion and truth. These were rooted in the inner convictions of deep faith. According to Roberts (2007: 48) this focus then became the driving force behind his benevolent actions as he made efforts to be with the poor and he committed himself to action to relieve them in their plight. This included medical care for the sick, feeding the hungry, including widows, schools for the uneducated children and other actions of social justice.

The understanding of mission for the Methodists who are members of the MCSA is that it is both personal and communal, being sent out to the world as disciples of Jesus Christ following the call of the great commission in Mathew 28: 19-20, where the church was instructed by Jesus Christ to go out and make disciples in obedience to the will of God. Aligning itself with this commission, the MCSA in its mission perceives itself as sent out to the world to spread scriptural holiness in the mission as stated in the Book of Order of 2014 (Methodist Church of Southern Africa 2014: 94). In this book of order the MCSA presents itself as being called and constituted by Christ for mission and all the members are called to commit themselves to the execution of

the great commission given by Jesus Christ. In this commission the church understands itself to be empowered by the Holy Spirit to go to the world to represent Christ and make his followers disciples who would then be “nurtured” for his service in the world through the church.

The fact of the members being sent out in mission is also acknowledged by Forster (2008: 73), when he explains that when one engages in responsible discipleship he also undertakes mission at the same time, as he notes that for Methodists a close connection exists between mission and discipleship. This was and still is the approach of mission for the Methodists; that of being sent out to the world to make disciples. This goes beyond the notion of mere belief, as Forster (2008: 74) explains further that discipleship is a very costly affair which calls for personal sacrifice and courage, as one has to be prepared to give up his will for the sake of the gospel. Mission also calls for willingness to be spent in love for the sake of the kingdom of God, which is why there are many members in the various denominations and yet there were very few disciples, according to his view. He laments this fact and that many churches have abandoned the quest for discipleship, instead becoming very comfortable Christians.

This is the legacy and the roots on which the mission approach of the MCSA is based and it extends to the whole ecumenical body that mission is not concerned for individual holiness but discipleship becomes the agency for social transformation. The transformation of the unjust structures of society is one of the marks of mission which is described by Steuernagel (2008: 62), who acknowledges the need for the holistic nature of the mission which seeks to restore all creation including humanity to wholeness, the “shalom” which embraces all situations affecting the well-being of creation. This is the driving force behind the church which is in mission and it is able to reach out in tears, in laughter, bringing hope to the hungry, thirsty, sick, hopeless, and other situations, to present the gift of love and hope given to the world by God. Steuernagel (2008: 63) recognizes also the response in loving service to the suffering members of the community as an act of compassion modelled on and motivated by the life of Jesus and it is also a quest for the transformation of the unjust structures coupled with the thirst for justice.

The action of seeking wholeness, peace and justice by the church in mission was described by Bosch (1991: 11), a renowned scholar in the subject of mission, as the moment when the church accepts the responsibility given by God, when it says: “yes to God’s mission to the world”, so that the love of God will be manifested to the world through it as it refuses to close its eyes when

others suffer from injustice, oppression, poverty and discrimination. Then the church becomes part of God's plan for liberating the world.

The church in mission becomes the representative for the better alternative world as a sign and sacrament being sent to the world to demonstrate the new alternative values of the future hope of the fulfilment of God's promises for the world; the sacrament as an outward sign (Bosch 1991: 11),.

The implication of this for the MCSA is that for it to be truthful and honest to its calling it has to acknowledge that the true mission of the church cannot be divorced from the contexts of the people, the poverty in South Africa; the church cannot distance itself from that phenomenon because of the mandate of the gospel of Christ being on the mission of Jesus. As Jacob (2008: 108), a scholar in liberation theology and mission, explains on the theology of mission, that the understanding of mission in terms of being sent out as disciples to bring transformation to the world emanates from a critical engagement with theology when the believer relates his/her faith to the context of the people. He explains that God sends people to participate in mission by bringing the reality of the message of the gospel to the daily experiences and allowing the liberating power of Christ to be a reality, as it speaks to the various situations of injustice and pain.

This was also acknowledged by Nyerere (1997: 58), when he observed that it is very important for the church in its role as sent to the world in mission to identify with the poor and the marginalized as its rightful position and not to be identified with the unjust political and economic power groups.

In the present context of the MCSA, the pertinent question for this era is still based on the aspect that Kumalo (2006) observed as a mishap of the earlier process of the Journey to the New Land programme, when he questioned the reception of mission strategies are received and understood by the majority of the membership at grassroots level in the societies where there are many who suffer from the social ills which translate to poverty. These well-articulated mission strategies may not translate to positive effects unless efforts are made for the education of the people at grassroots level. One of the ongoing transformational calls which is of critical importance to this aspect is the one which pertains to the ministry of all people, the recognition of the priesthood of

all believers which relates directly to the recognition of the agency of the lay people for development. This is connected to discipleship that needs to be empowered in order to fulfil their roles of being agents of transformation, but this seems not to be translating into positive actions to many members, at least in the rural areas.

3.4 The role of the local minister in the mission of the MCSA

The recognition of the importance of the transformed disciple in mission is to be understood in the context that the MCSA exists as several small units / circuits in various locations under the leadership of ministers and pastors. According to S. Kumalo (2003: 109), speaking from personal experience as a minister in a very poor informal settlement, he identifies the minister as a leader of the people and a catalyst for development. The minister leads the people in the social analysis processes and implementation of the necessary actions. He becomes very important in the theological reflection aspects of the praxis as S. Kumalo (2003: 117) put emphasis on the role of the Bible studies which become the starting point for all actions. The praxis involves Bible studies, reflection and practical actions, and transformation in the society will result from this process. Based on this assertion, S. Kumalo (2003: 136) then suggested an approach which will be a combination of transformation and development which is initiated by the affected people which enables them to play a major role in the decisions to be taken for their development. In all these processes the leadership of the local ministers, together with the lay people is important.

The importance of the leadership as a key factor in the transformation process is also acknowledged by Bentley (2014: 10), in his paper titled '*What is happening in the Methodist church?*' He recognizes the renewed efforts towards ministerial formation by the MCSA which is aimed at the preparation of a new crop of future ministers with transformative leadership skills in order to lead the communities both in spiritual and transformative initiatives to address the current social needs. This is done through the newly established Seth Mokitimi Methodist Seminary with its two fold training program of encompassing both theological and spiritual formation and it is envisaged that the new ministers will be agents of transformation in society (Bentley 2014: 10).

3.5 How is the MCSA implementing this strategy on Human Empowerment and Economic Development?

It may not be easy at this point to draw justified conclusions on this aspect without using results from an evaluation exercise. Yet a cursory view of the District reports to conference as they are available in the year book for 2013, for instance (Methodist Church of Southern Africa (2013: 59-69), indicate that there are many reports on the activities done as part of the mission pillar of economic empowerment and development. These initiatives range from leadership training, training in pastoral care and counselling, food gardens, small livestock farming to address food security issues, establishment of child care centres, food parcels and their distribution, training in skills development, establishment of computer training centres, feed-a-friend schemes packaging food for the needy, supplying clothes to the needy and many others. These reports are not clear on their impacts on the communities, but among these reports the Bishop of the Highveld and Swaziland noted the need to come up with programs to revise and facilitate mission at grassroots level, in order to assist the local communities who are battling with poverty. In the same note the Bishop of the Natal West District also remarked about the escalating rates of poverty in many communities.

While it is true that there are many initiatives by the various mission groups of the MCSA aimed at the improvement of the quality of life of the people, according to Bentley (2014: 12), these initiatives are addressing some of the “symptoms” of the phenomenon of the existential problem of poverty and not the root causes. It is also noted in this paper that he was not reporting directly on the MCSA development agenda, his paper is one of the few that comes close to addressing what is happening in the MCSA. He does mention that by social integration the church may become an agent “for transformation and justice”, thereby bringing the much needed transformation, but these may be a drop in the ocean which is not bringing the much needed change to the lives of the people.

Personal experience and observation, especially in the circuits that are situated in the rural areas, indicates that the contribution of this mission strategy towards improving the lives of the people is not enough to make a noticeable impact. The usual approach is to have a project by certain groups, maybe through some sponsorship, and these tend to be sporadic in nature and many are not sustainable beyond the period of the sponsorship.

I have witnessed extreme cases of poverty, especially in the rural areas, and like the rest of the community the church members rely on the government grant system for survival. This may be true in the whole connexion, as it is common knowledge that many local churches/societies face continual struggles with poverty which often sadly affect a very critical aspect of their spiritual well-being, the inability to afford the minimum stipend for a minister. This research paper maintains that the implementation of the MCSA mission strategy on economic empowerment and development is not achieving its intended purpose, especially where it is much needed where the majority of people have been rendered powerless by the escalating poverty levels. Many of our societies in the MCSA are not sources of healing and transformation especially for those which are located away from the economic centres, in the towns and industrial areas.

3.6 Conclusions of the chapter

In this chapter the MCSA is described as a church with a mission agenda which is expressed in terms of healing and transformation which is aimed at the realization of the vision for the holistic healing of Africa from its social ills. This agenda is in the form of a vision, mission statement and the ongoing transformational calls. This agenda is rooted in its heritage of the Wesleyan tradition which is multi-dimensional and anchored in scripture which comes alive in the evangelical processes. The MCSA mission agenda is in line with the approach to development in terms of liberation, transformation, and freedom. Standing on this heritage, discipleship in the MCSA is very important as the human agency to drive mission, because holiness is not for personal benefit but for the transformation of the society. This church prophecy itself to have been raised to spread scriptural holiness as a way of life driven by the great commission which was given to the church by Jesus Christ.

John Wesley's theology of mission was based on compassion and love for the suffering people and it was his actions in dealing with unjust structures, together with the transforming message of the gospel that brought holistic development to the people. Mission by the MCSA is a holistic seeking for justice and liberation, as it is aimed at addressing the poverty which is affecting the people, especially due to unequal wealth distribution, poor education, unemployment and many other factors.

The current trends in mission on the general are the shifting from the ecclesial missiology to the nurturing of individual spiritual discipleship, which put the emphasis on the agency of the ordinary people in its rightful place of importance. The pastor/spiritual leader is a very important element in the process of mission.

The existential reality of poverty in South Africa was exposed in this chapter as the new 'kairos' facing the church. There is an urgent need for action for the restoration of God's way to economic development. It is against this backdrop of poverty that it is concluded that the goodness of the MCSA mission pillar on economic empowerment and development has not up to now translated into significant changes to the lives of the many poor people in South Africa. This is especially so in dealing with the inequality in wealth distribution, which is mainly created by the approaches to development by the government of South Africa. This presents new challenges to the church to find new ways of enhancing the realisation of this pillar for social transformation in South Africa.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE TRANSFORMATIVE PRACTICE OF SOCIAL HOLINESS

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter showed the MCSA as a church on the mission of God being sent out to the world to bring transformation through the preaching of the gospel and thereby spreading scriptural holiness. The main argument of the chapter is the importance of the agency of the disciples for mission, compared to the church structures and the whole institution. The development agenda in the MCSA is explored. It was found that it is aimed at social reconstruction after the attainment of democracy in 1994, but it is not significantly translating in a practical way into social transformation in South Africa. This is especially for the rural areas where poverty and unemployment continue to negatively affect the people and the reasons for this are not clear.

In this chapter the Wesleyan practice of social holiness is investigated: how it came about, from the history of Methodism through to its present practice in the MCSA and its implications for social transformation. The task is to find out how social holiness can be enhanced as a means of empowering the disciples for mission, especially for empowerment for development.

4.2 Some background to the influences in the life of John Wesley

Many scholars agree that the Methodist mission is based on the story of its movement which was led by the Wesley brothers: John and Charles. Among the major influences in John Wesley's life which impacted on the practice of Methodism were his strict upbringing and his scholastic activities as he is said to have been an avid reader. In the life of John Wesley, several stages can be identified which are connected to both internal and external influences and they marked distinct spiritual development. It is said that the period before 1738 became a time where his life was grounded on radical obedience to God alone and the marked commitment to practice active Christianity; this was called the "thesis" stage (Grassow 1998: 188). It is recognized that in the earlier stages of his life, he pursued a life of absolute holiness, due to the influence of his

mother's teaching on strict obedience together with his readings of literature, especially the writings of such authors as Thomas à Kempis and William Law (Cannon 1946: 240).

According to Grassow (1998: 194), The second stage in Wesley's life, 1738-1764, was called the "antithesis" and this stage marked the famous heart-warming experience which happened at Aldersgate that is often referred as his day of salvation. This is the stage when he ascribed salvation only to the action of God on one's life. This last stage of the mature Wesley was called the "synthesis" when he believed and taught about 'faith being the handmaid of love'. The response to the invitation to salvation happens by faith through the grace of God. He put emphasis on the fact that the goal of every believer was to become holy by giving himself all to God in love, which in turn is extended to the love of the neighbour. This was the time when he began to describe holiness in terms of its social outlook where the one who is holy will have an impact in the relationships with God and fellow human beings Grassow (1998: 194). Wesley in his maturity got to understand that being a Christian and loving God influence the way you live and most importantly genuine Christianity extends to the social sphere as the love of God extends to others through your actions.

4.3 The Wesleyan doctrine of Christian perfection; a precursor for social holiness

Christian perfection is the Methodist doctrine which remains central to the practice of the many forms of Methodism to date and was inherited from the Methodist movement of the 18th Century. John Wesley believed that God raised the Methodist people to spread his love in society as part of their lived lives. He was cited to have said:

Christian perfection is the grand depositum which God has lodged with the people called Methodists; and for the sake of propagating this chiefly He appeared to have raised us up (Wesley in Williams 1988: 238).

The spirituality of the Methodist people based on the above statement is centred on loving God and spreading this love to the rest of creation. In his writings and sermons Wesley was convinced that the love of God is central to all life and to the new believer straight from conversion. The new birth then begins when one embarks on a path of sanctification which culminates in Christian perfection, which is simply the desire to grow more in the perfect love of God. Wesley based his argument mainly on the commandment given by Jesus in the text found in the New

Testament in Mark 12:30, which he coined the “royal law”. In this text Jesus Christ instructed his followers to love God with all their hearts, souls, minds and their strengths (Wesley 1725: 368).

John Wesley was very intentional in his teachings to his followers to put all effort and time in the growth towards loving God, as he beseeched them to have all their heart intentions curbed, “circumcised” to all worldly desires and to be focused towards loving God. This was so much such that there were many sermons, hymns and sacred poems that he composed and published with his brother Charles expressing these sentiments (Wesley 1725: 368).

It was under the auspices of the Methodist doctrine of Christian perfection that Wesley gave a description of the character of a Methodist. He/she was described as one who loved God with all the heart, soul, mind and strength. This love extended to all life activities, be it his leisure time, conversations and even the way he conducts business. The love of God permeated everything so that he walks with God continually with his soul fixed on God who becomes the invisible presence. Because of the love of God his heart is purified from all malice of sins, anger and all unkind tempers (Wesley 1725: 369). This growth in love for God which is seen in all life aspects is what Wesley understood as Christian perfection.

This teaching reveals that for the Methodists their spirituality played a determining role in their morality as one of the contemporary scholars Lecleric (2011: 48 -54), picks up the subject of the relationship between holiness and life. She explains that according to the Wesleyan theology of holiness, all Christians have God’s call on the lives to pursue the holiness of heart and mind. This becomes their main goal for their spiritual formation, because growing in purity is synonymous with growing in the love of God. This is the process which is initiated by God to cleanse the heart of all impurities and by the power of the Holy Spirit the recipient responds in grace. This process results in the growth of inner holiness which is manifested in outer holiness and the believers become people of integrity. She is of the opinion that through this process the interrelatedness of inner and outer holiness is revealed and it also affects issues of morality as the behaviours change and others are avoided. This is the journey of being set apart from the world to be used for God’s purpose in the world. Alluding to the high standards set by John Wesley on the character of a Methodist she suggests that this description can be matched by the use and practice of integrity where the outward behaviour matches the inside and she connected her thinking to virtue ethics.

Lecleric (2011: 58) recognize a strong influence of the Greek model of virtue ethics and John Wesley's thinking on holiness. She explains that when Wesley explained holiness in terms of loving God he was following Aristotle in his Greek model of virtue ethics, which was Christianized by Thomas Aquinas. This thinking place emphasis on character development as essential in ethical thinking. A person of virtue will have a well-developed character and will live a good, happy, prosperous life which will be a fulfilment of his purpose. Wesley's understanding of holiness is related to Aristotle's perception of a virtuous person who is described as one with a balance of courage, temperance, generosity and truthfulness and this will be a truly happy person (Lecleric 2011: 58).

The perception of a very holy and moral character resulting from Christian perfection was and still is a point of contention because many people believe that it cannot be attained practically in life by any person. On this issue Field (2015: 183), suggests that the interpretation of this Wesleyan doctrine of Christian perfection has caused much controversy because of the way Wesley's scholarship developed with many ambiguities. He explained that, for instance, based on the some of his writings, it is possible to understand this doctrine in terms of complete purity and separation from social issues. Yet in other writings the doctrine is to be understood in relational terms; the transformation of one's relationship with God and the neighbour. He then suggested that the core understanding of this doctrine is best expressed in the relational terms, where the person grows to fulfil God's command to love him and his neighbour.

Field (2015: 183), is of the same opinion with Lecleric (2011: 58), that in essence love is holiness which is Christian perfection and it happens when one gives his heart wholeheartedly to God in love which will result in transformation of his life. This is the new birth brought by faith in the power of the Holy Spirit. The love then fuels the actions to love others when one is assured that he is loved and accepted by God. Accordingly Wesley saw this as the sum total of religion, which should govern the lives of the believers and they will live their ethical moral lives fuelled by love to practice the three central values of justice, mercy and truth. She laments that these central values have been overlooked in many of John Wesley's writings.

4.4 Christian perfection is the culmination of the salvation process

The growth in the love of God and holiness results from the salvation process according to Outler (2004: 121), who explains that salvation is the unfolding process of the Christian life. The starting point is being sorry for one's sins, which would then be followed by repentance. The next response in faith leads to justification, which results in the new birth. The sanctification process then follows, which is the growth in holiness which is achieved through the nurturing in the small groups. The training in the small groups results in maturity of the believers and the resulting holiness is to be understood in two ways; first is the internal holiness which is the growth in the love of God; the life in piety. Second is the external holiness which then takes the shape of the love of God and neighbour. Leclerc (2011: 58), also notes that the stage of sanctification is when one continues to grow into the perfect love; which culminates in 'holy living'; being led by the Holy Spirit and trusting in Christ and growing in the love of God and neighbour. This was what Wesley identified to be the goal of every believer and it became the mark of every Methodist. Thus he took particular care to nurture people in small groups; class meetings and bands for their growth in holiness. These became hot spots for training in discipleship in the Methodist movement.

The people were organized into small accountability groups for purposes of nurturing to foster 'Christian holiness', according to Miles (2010: 213) she recognizes these small groups as the places of holistic growth which were designed to take care of both their spiritual and physical needs. There was and still is a three pronged general rule which guided the members and it was based on the practice of moral virtues. There areas are; first, the members are taught to avoid doing any harm to themselves by avoiding all sinful and harmful actions to their bodies, neighbours and the rest of creation. They are then encouraged to avoid harmful habits including taking intoxicating drinks, slavery, living in opulence, too much debt and slanderous language as it could harm them and many others. The second, was to do good, which was focused on enhancing the benevolent actions of looking after others, by giving them food, clothing, visiting the sick and those in prison and looking after the environment together with their own bodies; keeping them healthy by refraining from any harmful practices like the taking of liquor and following a clean lifestyle. Lastly, the third was following the ordinances of God.

This latter is the encouragement to partake in all the means of grace, these are programs aimed at enhancing the spiritual life which includes partaking in Holy Communion, worship, prayer and Bible reading. This was aimed at enhancing their lives in piety (Miles 2010: 213).

This rule is still practiced by many Methodists, including the MCSA and it is available in the (Methodist Church of Southern Africa 2014).⁶These small groupings also serve to foster fellowship among the members on the same journey of holiness. They are an integral part and key to the practice of social holiness according to Field (2015: 186) who explains that these groups facilitates mutual encounter with God, while at the same time the members are accountable to one another for their growth in spirituality. In particular, the members are nurtured in their pursuit for holiness which will be demonstrated outwardly in their key values of justice, mercy and truth, whereby holiness will move beyond an individual, pietistic, moralistic outlook to social holiness. He stresses the importance of seeing these values in their correct perspectives, not as a set of rules and principles, but as the force or stimulus that propels the members to the correct direction of spiritual formation.

The Methodists from the inception of the movement in the 18th century were prepared for their lives in discipleship which were grown through these processes. Wesley did not only teach them a doctrine but they were also nurtured into how to live the doctrine through these small groups. An extract from the works of Wesley gives an insight on how intense these engagements were. One of the practices was to enquire on all the members by the class leaders of the progress of the prosperity of the souls of the members and on his growth in the knowledge and love of God (Wesley 1872: 300).

This new life in grace, is the restoration of the image of God that was lost in the fall of creation. Runyon (1998: 169) attests to this when he notes that the salvation is to be understood as a process for the renewal and the restoration of the image of God to humanity. He explains further that in John Wesley's understanding, religion was God's plan for the restoration of creation through the salvation process to its original position to be his image.

⁶ These are presented with the preamble that they are grounded on the ones which were drawn by John and Charles Wesley in 1743 to promote the spirit of fellowship and the social relations among the members. They still follow the three principal groups of doing no harm, doing good and attending to all the ordinances of God.

This restored image brings with it the element of the responsibility for Christians to confront injustice and to work to restore those at the margins back to the centre. Leaning rather strongly on this assertion, Burke (2012: 6) argues that the theme of salvation is the anchor of John Wesley's theology, as he viewed the fallen nature of humanity which has brought sin and corruption into the world. He then notes further that it is through the grace and the love of God that humanity is able to respond to the invitation to the renewal. This transformation begins at a personal level, but it is not confined to the person but extends to others in the community leading to transformed societies, which will experience change as part of God's plan of salvation and the restoration of justice in the world. This is an important element and argument against salvation by works because the actions that address the social ills affecting our neighbours happen because of the love of God which has ushered in renewal of character.

4.5 The meaning of social holiness

Some of the conflicts that arose from the doctrine of Christian perfection were the practice of absolute and rigid holiness, "separatist holiness", which was the perception of holiness of his earlier thinking. According to Sangster (1950: 31), the mature Wesley was against this perception of holiness, as he pointed out that being holy did not require one to be separated to live in seclusion like living in the monasteries. John Wesley insisted that holiness has to be lived out by the believer in the world, to be practiced in the midst of all the problems, including economic, political and social, as they were experienced by Jesus Christ in the world. He then cited the following hymn which captured holiness according to the Wesley brothers which was called '*daring faith*'.

Not in the tombs we pine to dwell,

Not in the dark monastic cell,

By vows then grates confined,

Freely to all ourselves we give

Constrained by Jesus's love to live

The servants of mankind(Methodist Hymn book Edit. 1904 No. 599 in Sangster 1950: 31).

The intention was for the believers to live and extend the love of God to others which was interpreted as ‘social holiness’, indicating that it is a lived experience that can be witnessed by the rest of the world. Hence the Methodist people believe themselves as being sent out by God to spread the scripture way of holiness. Writing in the preface for Psalms and Hymns in 1738, Wesley (1872: 320) explained that one was not justified for his/her own righteousness but being accepted by Christ one has the obligation for building one another as he counteracted the notion of seclusion in the desert in order to be purified and made holy. His teachings based on both Christ and the writings of the apostles were for living in community, affirming one another in the presence of God, to grow together in their spiritual walk (Wesley (187: 320). This is the lived experience of the love of God, the inner holiness translating to the exterior in the benevolent actions to the next person.

Based on his writings Wesley (1872: 321) put emphasis on community building through social holiness and he modelled his teachings on the example of the first church in the book of Acts which was closely knit and joined together, as it was led by the apostles and it grew both spiritually and in numbers. He then considered solitary individualist religion in the same tone as “holy adulterers” and he expressed this as:

The gospel of Christ knows no religion, but social; no holiness but social holiness. Faith working by love is the length and breadth and height of Christian perfection. This commandment have we from Christ, that he who loves God, loves his brother also; and that we manifest our love ‘by doing good’ unto all men; especially to them that are of the household of faith.

According to Field (2015: 182), the above statement is the only one which was made by Wesley in direct reference to social holiness and he then recognized three issues which were addressed by Wesley in this statement as he spoke against the practice of individualist inward holiness that was practiced by some of the followers of the mystic spirituality. The first issue was the recognition that the Christian faith was based on the justification by faith which is achieved by the Christ event and it was not based on any individual achievement. The second was the importance of participation as he believed that growth in holiness is achieved with others in the Christian community. The third and last was on the notion of solitude as a path to holiness and Wesley strongly disputed that approach on the grounds that it did not involve any outward works yet Biblically faith with no works was considered as dead.

Field (2015: 182) also alludes to Wesley's assertion that if no works are included in any practice of religion then it becomes a 'superstructure' which is constructed around the worshippers as they concentrate only on contemplation as a means of worship with no evidence of outward works. It was for that reason then that he pronounced there was no holiness except for social holiness.

An expansion of this statement is found in an updated publication of the works of Wesley (2013). In this work he John Wesley is quoted to have explained social holiness as connected to Christian perfection as faith working by love, which comes as a gift from God that the one who loves God will also love his brother as well, as a way of showing the love from God. This love is not only shown in words but also in deeds, which he called the zealous good works.

The driving force behind the practice of social holiness is the love of God which makes one to be restless with the desire to spend and be spent in doing good works for his brothers so that he/she will use every available opportunity in this endeavour. In this understanding Field (2015: 182), then explains that according to Wesley social holiness is the manifestation of the love of God in actions of doing good works for others and it exists in relationships and not in the context of solitude. The important point is that social holiness is not the relationship between people and the social structures but relationship between people in the community. It is described as the solid display of the holiness of heart in the relationships with other people and these are displayed in genuine acts that promote their well-being. He elaborates that these are genuine acts which were done out of love to meet both the spiritual and physical needs of the people, were known as works of mercy and were done by the members of the Methodist movement in their bid to spread the scriptural way of salvation. Field (2015: 183) expands to explain that in the many writings by John Wesley these works were inclusive, dealing with social welfare issues, charity, pastoral duties as well as evangelical as they visited those in prison, the sick and suffering as well as taking the gospel to the sinners and encouraging the discouraged along the way. In their actions they were described as being the eyes to the blind, the feet of the lame, being husbands to the widows and fathers to the orphans. That way the gospel was presented in a holistic manner to the poor communities, and thereby addressed issues on both the side of the victims and of the perpetrators.

4.6 Works of mercy as means of grace

The manifestation of the inner work of grace outwardly is a gift that comes through the work of God in the life of the believer through the Holy Spirit, such that Field (2015: 184), argues that John Wesley, in his sermon ‘on zeal’, perceived the works of mercy as also a means of grace. In this sermon he explained that in the believer’s heart there is the throne on which the love of God sits abundantly and reigns without any competition from sin and other counter attractions. Next to the throne there is an image of the existence of what he called ‘holy tempers’ which were described as the temperament of endurance, meekness, gentleness and perseverance. These he explained were part of the attributes of the mind of Christ and they will give birth to the works of mercy in the exterior which are displayed in social holiness. In a way the works of mercy become the means through which God brings transformation to the world through the transformed individual as his expression of holiness. According to Wesley, this was a perfect picture of stewardship that becomes God’s representative and is accountable to God for his actions who bestows him with the gifts and talents in the first place. In this relationship the believer gives all his mental capacities, resources, influence, education all to be used in the holistic mission of God.

The believer becomes the path or the vehicle to transport the grace of God to the earth and this in a way is the reclamation of the stewardship duty which was given by God to humanity at creation. This is in relation to Genesis 2: 15, where it is explained that God placed the man in the garden he had created to look after it and keep it. According to (Burke 2012: 6 & Runyon 1998: 169), salvation is the restoration of the former relationship between God and humanity. They both put the argument that the new creation is raised to seek to restore the kingdom of God. The new believer becomes the conduit to display the grace of God through the works of mercy which are the means of Grace and then the world will experience the love of God.

The role of the means of grace on transformation of lives for moral living is emphasized by Miles (2010:208), who acknowledges the connection between moral lives with holiness and happiness. She explains that the means of grace enhance the practice of internal holiness; the works of piety and the external holiness which are works of mercy by the believer to his neighbour. The means of grace becomes the routes or channels through which God offers us his grace through the practice of these works.

This life in holiness directly affects the morality of the believer as new virtues begin to shape his life as part of the process of Christian perfection. The implication of this is that morality and the Christian life becomes inseparable as it becomes imperative for the follower of Jesus Christ to seek to practice virtues of Christlikeness. According to her, this journey to holiness becomes the restoration of the relationship with God, a fulfilment of God's righteousness (Miles 2010: 208).

In essence this means that happiness for the Christian will be hinged to the right moral which is based on loving God and the neighbour. This is a very important observation especially because the common practice among Christians in this contemporary era is to concentrate on the works of piety that is the personal spiritual nourishment and then give alms or food parcels as our works of mercy. It is also important that these works do not earn salvation for anyone but they are the means of grace which serve in channelling the love of God to others, especially to the poor, as John Wesley took a firm stand with them and taught the Methodists to work diligently towards the alleviation of their plight; hence the small groups also served as collection points for money to help the poor.

The works of mercy as channels of God's love becomes God's hands, feet, eyes, ears; his presence to situations which demean the well – being of his creation as Jesus asserted that he came for all people to be able to live life to the fullest. That is why according to Field (2015: 186) believers are found walking with the poor in their lives of social holiness. They come close to the outcasts, the people at the margins of society on both economic and social grounds. Included here are prisoners, the sick and the ones from the lower classes in society. Alluding to the sermon on the 'wedding garment', he explains that Wesley also called for the members to imitate the way Christ walked as he expressed the love of God in tangible means to the poor and the faceless way he interacted with in his life. This is because according to Field (2015: 188) being holy for John Wesley followers meant to visit the filthy places where the poor lived, to share in their experiences and thereby reduce the distance in the perceptions of each other. Wesley believed that God cares for the poor and has made them to be objects of his grace. In this way social holiness enables the members to engage in social issues in direct solidarity with the people who are excluded and marginalized by the structures of society.

These actions elevate the understanding and practice of social holiness from personal level to the community and society structures. In these cases holiness is then expressed as bringing the presence of God as the stimulus for actions of advocacy, calling for the transformation to the cruelty of structural injustice and the untruths of society. Field (2015: 188) affirms this as the prophetic voice, similar to the Biblical prophets like Isaiah who called for holiness in terms of justice and truth in the land.

The duo of Knight & Powe (2006: 31) observe also that in social holiness John Wesley was not advocating for a change in the political agenda in England, but that he sought for the transformation of much more than personal lives, but of communities and societies, to be transformed to the image of Christ. He believed that the role of the Christian community was to lead this transformation process, by inviting others to begin this journey of restoration, by being filled with the love of Christ. They argue that through the practice of social holiness in the community there will be radical transformation by the love of Christ, as Christians will live focused on inviting others to Christ by their words, deeds and signs. This will not be a once-off process but ongoing, which would result in deepening of the love of God and neighbour.

On the question of the perception of dealing with the poor from a distance which is raised by Chambers (1995: 179) who urges that many of the policies made for the poor are made by the rich in the advantage of offices and conferences where the poor are excluded and their voices are omitted. In the practise of social holiness John Wesley sends his members to visit the poor where they lived and thereby removing that distance. In that case the humanity of the poor are recognized and restored in social holiness by the grace of God. The question for the contemporary members of the MCSA is whether it is possible to regain this practice, especially in the context of the urban areas where many members live as the middle class. This may be a challenge in the contemporary era because of the reality of urban and rural churches with vast differences in capacity and resources.

The MCSA stands on the heritage and roots of these Methodist doctrines and teachings part of which is social holiness which was taught and demonstrated by John Wesley. This is the foundation that he laid for the members of the Methodist movement, beseeching them to be formed in their hearts and to develop so that they became a formidable force of God together as they instructed, exhorted, supported and uplifted one another in their bid to build a community of God.

4.7 The Methodists were raised to spread scriptural holiness in their lives of Social Holiness

The practice of social holiness brought change to England in the 18th Century through the actions of ordinary poor people whose hearts were filled with the love of God and driven by the desire to walk in a Christ like way. That is why the people perceived themselves as being on a mission to spread what they understood to be scriptural holiness in the land by the way they conducted themselves. In this endeavour the early Methodists were described by Sinfield (1945: 35) as small clusters who possessed healthy spiritualities which were permeated by the presence of God, even though they lived during a time of appalling moral standards in England. These early Methodists who brought transformation were characterized as being strong, courageous, bold and steadfast and they were willing to sacrifice for their cause, in spite of the many hardships and persecutions they faced (Sinfield 1945: 35).

Though this research paper will not delve much to the social landscape of the 18th Century England, a glimpse is given by Attwell (1989: 111) who put forth an argument on the practice of Christianity by the Church of England, that it contributed to the social ills of community as there was minimal pastoral care afforded to the people, because politics had infiltrated the church, with some of the clergy occupying civic positions. He also notes the existence of pluralism in the church, which resulted in inequalities affecting both the clergyman and the poor people. He then recognizes that this caused the church to experience what he called “spiritual stagnation” and it became incapable to address the social ills. He argues that Methodism arose out of necessity as a religious revival movement to address this religious starvation, especially to the poor, as it welcomed all who desired for change and salvation of their souls.

4.8 Social holiness as a tool for liberation

The value of social holiness is embedded in the manifestation of the grace of God to confront unjust situations of society which was recognized by Field (2015: 188), who explains that believers assume their rightful position of being the prophetic voice that call for the transformation of the cruel structural injustice and untruth in society. According to Ernest, (1928: 229), the value of John Wesley's teaching was mainly that it enabled Christianity to be practiced in its true values representing the kingdom of the God of love and humanity; the perfect love that translated into social service in the community. He is also convinced that this outlook was central to many of John Wesley's writings, which mainly touched on the human and social conditions which affected the well-being of society. It was for that reason that Wesley wrote on many of the pertinent subjects of his time which affected the well-being of the people, including population increase, changes of rural districts, the causes of unemployment, the land distribution question, taxes, agriculture, money and many others (Ernest 1928: 229).

According to Marquardt (1992: 30) expanding on these reforms explain John Wesley advocated for better education of the people especially the poor, whose vulnerability was made worse by the fact that many lacked formal schooling and vocational training, making them liable to exploitation by the rich. The societies became centres of "education", as the people who were previously illiterate were taught how to read and provided with reading materials in the Methodist societies, thereby reducing the high illiteracy rate. This work extended to other aspects of vulnerability in the society because for instance while caring for the orphans, they advocated against child labour and exploitation of workers which increased the poverty, as many endured inhuman working conditions. Locating poverty in its chief cause, unemployment, Wesley did not believe that poverty was the fate of the people from God or divine punishment. Instead, he saw poverty as the result of discrimination and isolation of the poor and hence he saw the need for the social reforms. He also recognized the harmful effects of charity done out of social obligation, as the root causes of poverty were not addressed as the rich maintained a distance from the poor and they did not have first-hand experience of their situations. That is why Wesley visited the poor and even shared in their meals for first-hand experience of their situation.

John Wesley's engagement for the liberation of the poor was so profound and made such an impact that Storey (2004: 42) notes that he engaged with the forces that held the poor in bondage especially with campaigns against the production of alcohol with such strong effect that the sales of liquor dropped because of people being convicted by religion. In this context the gospel was understood in terms of social holiness where one is grounded in the love of God and the practice of the gospel extends to the liberation of the poor and the restoration of their dignity.

(Miles 2010: 215) recognize other works done by Wesley and the Methodists to organize systems of social reforms which addressed the root causes of the social ills including clinics which provided affordable medicine for the poor and advocating for reform in the conditions of prison as they visited the prisoners. Wesley's lobbying extended to international issues as well. He spoke against the effect of slavery, as he sought for justice and mercy for the afflicted and the effects against the laws of humanity. By these actions, holiness experienced by the individual led to the transformation of whole societies as Wesley believed that salvation was not a private affair; it included all aspects of life, including the socio-economic dimension, in their practice of stewardship (Miles 2010: 215).

It was the restoration of dignity to the many poor people of England, referred as the humanizing of society by Ernest (1928: 241), which became the most important contribution of Methodism to the social order. This is also recognized by Marquardt (1992: 32), who elaborates further on the effects of the reforms on the ordinary poor people and remarked that when their eyes were opened through the education programs especially and through their faith, they became aware of their life situations, so they were able to talk to one another. These societies provided them with a sense of belonging, because they teamed together and collectively pooled resources to assist one another. This allowed for fellowship and belonging to the previously poor people and they shared in the solidarity. That collective action gave them confidence and courage to be fully human again. He explains further that the people were restored back to society and they were accepted as individuals who could contribute valuably in the society. Field (2015: 193) also asserts that the class meetings and Methodist societies were what he called: "counter cultural communities", representing the kingdom of God where the godly values of justice, mercy and truth were evident.

Within the context of 18th century England, the practice of social holiness translated into development of society as it enhanced transformation in the life of the people by empowering them to take part in their own development and by the actions when the socio-economic structures were questioned for their effect on the lives of the people(Field 2015: 193).

4.9 Conclusions of the chapter

The main finding of this chapter is the fact that the driving force behind the transformative doctrine of social holiness is the love of God which is extended to the neighbour through the practice of Christian perfection, which is central to all Methodists. This love of God [Christian perfection] is the goal of the salvation process, which is nurtured through small groups training, which are aimed at training disciples whose lives will be devoted as stewards towards being conduits to transfer the love of God to society through their outwards works of mercy.

These are the means of grace which flow out to the community in the lives displaying social holiness which in turn becomes the prophetic voice standing for truth, justice and mercy against the unjust socio-political structures of oppression which promote poverty, among many other things. This action by the disciples through social holiness will be the restoration of the just kingdom of God, as the prophets of the Old Testament called for.

Social holiness is the holistic approach of taking the gospel to the community by the disciples, which results in social transformation through the pastoral actions of attending to the social ills. It is liberating in nature in advocacy against the unjust structures. This was evidenced in the actions of Wesley and the Methodists which served to restore dignity to the poor people as they came closer to experience their filthiness and poverty and set up several reforms to address their situation. The agency of the transformed disciples is exposed in this chapter that the love of God which produces internal holiness translates outward to the neighbour and the entire community, as true religion was not perceived as a personal purist affair but it was for building transformed communities. For the Methodist holiness is a virtue leading to moral characters who set to spread scriptural holiness in the community.

CHAPTER FIVE

INVESTIGATING THE PRACTICE OF SOCIAL HOLINESS IN THE MCSA

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter of this research paper presents the transformative practice of social holiness which is grounded in the Wesleyan doctrine of Christian perfection. This doctrine describes the process of salvation with a goal towards perfection and the understanding of being perfect, not in a purist individual sense but in growth in the love of God and neighbour. This practice is nurtured in small groups for the formation of disciples, who then bring transformation in society through their acts of mercy, which display kingdom of God values. The life in holiness will be evidenced in the character of the people which displays the virtues of justice, mercy and truth, which leads to transformation in society.

Therefore, this chapter will be investigating the present impact of social holiness in the lives of the members of the MCSA using the philosophical framework of MacIntyre (1985), in his work on virtue ethics. The doctrine of Christian perfection in its practical aspect of social holiness will be taken as the “practice” and the works of several scholars will be used as a link to the MCSA. In this study the practice of social holiness in the MCSA will be investigated in its contribution to the formation of transformative discipleship which is intrinsic to the Methodist tradition and has led to social transformation in the past. This will be done as a way of seeking to find out how the present practice of social holiness in the MCSA contributes to development and empowerment of the members as part of the fight against poverty.

There is available scholarship on the use of the theory of practice according to MacIntyre (1985), to investigate the practice of virtue ethics in several fields. For instance, it was used by Moore (2002: 6), in the business sector. When used in business, this theory was helpful to identify standards of excellence; internal goods which contributed to the sustenance of the business through the promotion of the work ethics and morality of the business community compared to the external goods where one will only be concerned with the amount of profit, fame, power and general success of the business (Moore 2002: 7).

5.2 Understanding theory of ‘practice’

The philosophical understanding of the concept of practice was developed by Alasdair MacIntyre in his books *‘After Virtue: a study in moral theology’* in 1985 and 2007. The theory of practice, according to MacIntyre (1985: 185), emanated from a position of the lack of a central precept for the understanding of a virtue and he cited at least three scholars who take different positions of the understanding of goodness or what is to be considered as good virtue. Among those he cited was Aristotle, whose position on virtue is on the achievement of ‘human good or satisfaction *telios*’ [both natural and supernatural], the aim for a good life; to him this will be success or goodness of life. On the other hand, according to Homer, virtue is that which enables a person to be able to discharge his social role effectively. Lastly, for Franklin, a virtue has value in its quality to enable one to achieve both earthly and heavenly success.

In his search for commonality, MacIntyre (1985: 187) identifies three central tenets from the available scholarship which are: the practice, human life and moral tradition as related to the function of the virtue. He explains that using these factors the understanding of a virtue is then best located on the practice of that virtue within its ‘moral tradition’. According to this explanation one cannot fully understand the meaning of any virtue apart from its practice of the moral tradition. Elucidating on the element of tradition, MacIntyre (2007: 187) points out that at the core of the practice will be the history of the tradition. He alludes to the accounts by Homer who recognizes that virtues were important and required to sustain social roles and the exhibition of excellence in specific areas of certain social practices.

Following this discussion he came up with two key parts in the definition of a virtue. The first he states as:

A virtue is an acquired human quality, the possession and exercise of which tends to enable us to achieve those goods which are internal to practices and the lack of which effectively prevents us from achieving any such goods.

He then explains that for this definition to work the key values of ‘justice, courage and honesty’ are essential for the attainment of goods internal in any practice. It is also important to realize that the desire is the achievement of goods internal to the practice (MacIntyre 1985: 187).

Based on these understandings of the meaning of a virtue by MacIntyre, T. D'Andrea (2009: 434), notes that according to this definition character traits are virtues because their possession and exercise will help the possessor to achieve the goods internal to a social practice. He further said that one engages in a practice as part of self-knowledge and growth as a sense of belonging and loyalty to the history and tradition of the practice in question. According to Reid (1998: 6) also on the work of MacIntyre, he suggests that the main goal of a virtue was to provide human beings with the reason for acting morally; hence they engage in the practices. It is in the actions through the internal goods that standards of excellence in moral living are achieved.

Secondly, (MacIntyre, 1985: 187) defined practice as:

Any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realized in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of, that form of activity, with the result that human powers to achieve excellence, and human conceptions of the ends and goods internal are systematically extended.

These two definitions show that a relationship exists between them as the virtue is ascribed to a certain practice and on the other hand the practice will not produce the internal goods without the exercise of the virtues. In practice there are “goods internal” which come from the efforts of ‘competition’ in trying to achieve the standards of excellence. These goods are definitive of that practice since the practice is ‘socially established’ and well known. The goods internal denote excellence and growth in the practice and are more desirable.

What also comes out of the definitions is the fact that human communities and households are sustained by certain practices, according to MacIntyre (2007: 188), and they come from a wide range of fields: “arts, sciences, games, politics.” Alluding to Aristotle, these are what makes and sustains family life, but he admitted that it is not easy to identify correctly what constitutes a practice. As a way of explanation on what constitutes a practice, MacIntyre (1985: 187) gave an example that throwing the ball in a game of football is not practice but the football game is a practice. Planting the crop is not practice whereas farming is practice. Bricklaying is not, yet architecture is a practice and he further explains that the range of practices is wide to many fields that are essential for the sustenance of family life.

Sinnicks (2014: 231), alluding to the works of MacIntyre (2007: 193), points out that practices were not simple technical operations performed for mere enjoyment but they must carry an element of complexity to be able to extend to human capabilities, to be avenues for moral education and this was one of their very significant features.

In this study the quest for holiness in Christian perfection which translates to social holiness will be the 'practice' and this will be applicable to the case of the MCSA, which has taken an official position to be a church sent out by God to be in mission by living and practicing the scripture way of holiness through the proclamation of the evangelical message. This church also affirms its stand of holistic mission, which is directed to both alleviation of poverty and social transformation by attending to the socio-economic structures which cause oppression and marginalization (Methodist Church of Southern Africa 2014: 94).

This is the character of the Methodist which is aimed at loving God and neighbour and this brings happiness and flourishing in life, as Lecleric (2011: 54) explains that this is moral living that comes out of a virtuous life of holiness, according to the Wesleyan Holiness Movement. She further cites John Wesley's belief that the goal of every human being was to love God and others. This notion of holiness is very close to the assertion by MacIntyre, according to Sinnicks (2014: 231), that the virtues allow people to enjoy flourishing lives, as they are developed through the practices, and they enable the participants to attain perfection because the practices are the schools for the virtues. Practices contribute to both the good of the agents who participate and the community at large i.e. the wider common good. This is because they promote the acquisition of the virtues. This may be the case for the practice of holiness for the Methodists because it has both personal and social implications. As Storey (2004: 29) points out, for the Wesleyan Christians there is one whole gospel which is expressed through the character in both personal and social ways. This was modelled John Wesley's actions in the 18th Century when he worked tirelessly to bring the values of the kingdom to the English landscape through his advocacy against slavery and against corruption in the legal system, among the many issues which were demeaning the rights of the people. The practice of holiness as a virtue leads to transformation in the lives of the ordinary people through the means of grace; the works of mercy.

Sinfield (1945: 35) succinctly captures this notion of social holiness as being so central in the Methodist movement when he explains that Wesley did not measure the success of his organization by increase in membership, or by the amount of money they possessed as a church, but the success of Methodism was measured by their ability to make the world a better place. This was because he believed to be holy was to make the world better by being involved with the ministry with the poor and working on behalf of those who are hurting.

5.3 Goods internal to practice

According to MacIntyre (2007: 194), goods internal will be achieved only through participating in the practice and these have known standards of excellence. Reid (1998: 5), cites MacIntyre in noting that when people take part in the practices in a diligent and sustained way they are able to develop the virtues they need for ethical living. Internal goods are contrasted with external goods and examples given for this category include “power, prestige and money”. Sinnicks (2014: 231), elaborating on the external goods, points out that they are also necessary and can be used in a virtuous manner but they cannot contribute to the acquisition of virtues. This is a critical difference between the two, which is why internal goods are valuable for the sake of acquisition of virtues. External goods can also be attained in other activities besides the practice in question and there is usually an element of competition for resources and ownership involved. To engage in any practice, the objective is the internal goods which yield standards of excellence in line with the practice and this is what brings the uttermost satisfaction to the practitioners

According to T. D. D'Andrea (2006: 269) the motivation is to acquire internal goods, the virtues which build the communities linking the traditions to their historical significance. This calls for self-discipline and patience, hence (MacIntyre (2007: 194) explains that when one partakes in a practice he enters into a relationship with both the contemporary practitioners, as well as the predecessors. He points out the need to trust the judgment of others, in listening to their advice and judgment. This is important for maintaining the established standards of that practice. In the case of social holiness in the Methodist tradition, the aspect of nurturing and training disciples in the class meetings and other small groupings is described by Storey (2004: 21) as a “master

stroke of organization”, which contributed immensely to the success of the Methodism movement.

These small groups serve the function of growing and training the members in the practice of holiness under the leadership of class leaders who are more experienced in the standards of excellence. The standard of excellence that is sought with the practice of social holiness is to make the world a better place, where there will be justice, mercy and truth. In the same analogy according to MacIntyre (1985: 188), the members of the Methodist church seek standards of excellence in their practice of social holiness and the internal goods so realized may be the growth in spirituality, the ability to perform social analysis, to be involved in the works of mercy as a means of grace, to live happy and moral lives; their overall qualities of discipleship in the community of God. These disciples deal with the different aspects of building the kingdom of God by extending the love of God to others; they themselves become more devout in their own journeys. That is how Methodism spread, as individual members of the community spread the love of God in word and deed in the society.

These goods internal will then influence the lives of the believers in their quest for excellence in the practice of social holiness as a character of holiness. The case of the introduction of Methodism by the soldiers in Cape Town is one illustration of this point, as cited by Forster (2008: 80) that a soldier preacher George Middlemiss started a fellowship group with the settlers which grew into a church, even though he was not a minister. He did this because he had been a member of the Methodist Church in England and when he was stationed to the colonies in the Cape he had the drive to spread the mission of the love of God to all people as it had become his calling as a disciple of Christ; spreading scriptural holiness.

Another illustration of the effect of transformation on the believer is cited by Kumalo (2006: 1), who laments the fact that the Methodist mission story in Southern Africa is ascribed more to white missionaries, yet there were other local people who were very instrumental in bringing social transformation to their communities. In his article he draws attention to at least five local people who were very instrumental in their areas by starting churches and schools on their own initiative, after coming into contact with the Methodist missionaries and being converted. Among these five, Samuel Mathabathe was a native preacher from the Northern Transvaal in 1869, who began to work within his community and founded the first Methodist Church there.

Kumalo (2006: 4), also mentions Robert Mashaba who founded the Methodist Church in Mozambique, and Daniel Msimang who founded Methodism in Swaziland. He describes their work to have been heroic in establishing striving mission communities and building schools in the areas they worked. These illustrations serve to describe the effect of internal goods on strong spiritualities and formed disciples who always strive for standards of excellence in the practice of social holiness where they made a difference in the lives of the people in their communities, even outside the auspices of a formal church gathering.

MacIntyre (1985: 189-190) also explains that the goods internal so achieved are specific and they can only be attained through communal participation in that practice, so that each person who wants to be involved has to be careful and take stock of his own inadequacies, which will be judged against the standards of the practice which become the authority for performance. He also points out that each practice will have its own histories and traditions which contribute to these standards. These standards safeguard the integrity of the practice from bias due to subjective participation and emotionalism. One who engages in the practice has to subject his own outlook in terms of his attitudes, choices, preferences and tastes to these standards. He explains that participation has to be grounded on faithfulness to the virtues of honesty, justice and courage.

5.4 Goods External located in Institutions

According to MacIntyre (1985: 190), on the other hand there are other goods external which are realized in a practice over and above the good internal. This is a category of goods he explains which is mainly concerned with “fame, prestige, power, profit, statuses” and others. He acknowledges that goods external are also desirable and they are not to be discarded as they are also products of the practice. He recognizes them for their peculiarity in that they are associated closely as the property and achievement of the owner and not as possessed by the community and as a result external goods always attract the spirit of competition. Ownership of external goods means that there is less to share with someone as there is the sense of possession and accumulation (MacIntyre 1985: 190).

The goods external tend to relate more to institutions, as MacIntyre (1985: 194) explains that usually the institutions are more concerned with the goods external, as they contribute to their image and this is because institutions are involved in acquiring money and other material goods. He points out further that institutions are structured in terms of power and status, and they distribute money and power. However, the institution's characteristics of practice are defined in terms of its practice because the humans who run the institutions need to develop their virtues in order to achieve their standards of excellence. It is in this relationship where he explains that even though the practice and the institution exist for each other, the role of the virtues of justice, courage and truthfulness is very important, otherwise it is possible for practice to be corrupted by the institution.

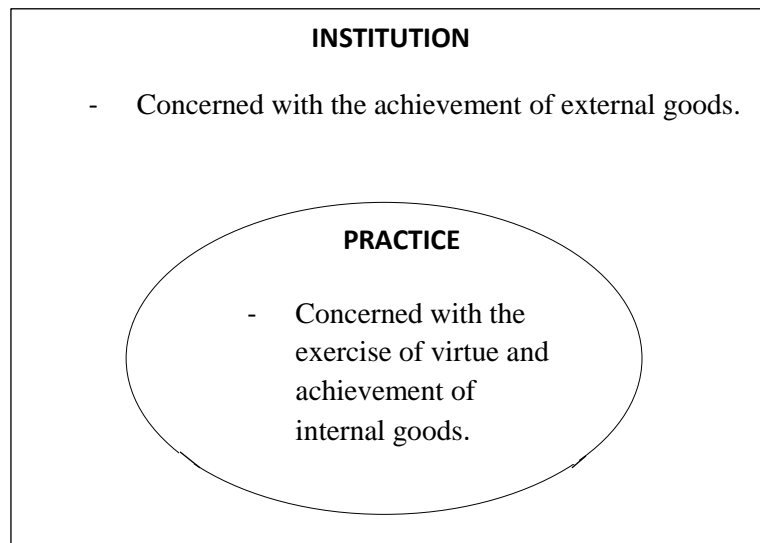


Figure 1: showing the relationship between institution and practice, as illustrated by (Moore 2002: 3).

This diagram depicts the interrelatedness of practice and institutions in the way that practice cannot exist on its own outside the institution MacIntyre (1985: 194). Further to this it is also

interesting to note that the goods internal from the practice contribute to the authentic existence of the institutions to achieve its objectives, making the practice to be its “heart beat”.

In this relationship the institution and the practice exist intertwined and yet at the same time they are concerned with different products which are equally important; in other words they exist for each other. According to Sinnicks (2014: 235), citing the works of McIntyre, he notes that institutions are important for the sustenance of communities which are centred on the flourishing of virtues. This is what he referees to as the “politics”. He further elucidates the importance of humility and honesty in managing structures of the institutions for the achieving of standards of excellence of the goods internal to the practice.

In the subject of this study, the MCSA is the institution where the practice of social holiness happens. In its present form this church exists in a certain hierarchical ecclesial structure which consists of the various functions responsible for the governance so that as an institution it will function to achieve its obligations of mission. The structures are meant to enhance the practice of social holiness, which is spreading scriptural holiness and transforming lives in the society to make the world a better place, as Synder (2003: 16) notes. In this case, social holiness becomes the cutting edge, the point where “the rubber hits the road in mission” as the driving force for the transformative discipleship movement.

Expanding on the three key virtues MacIntyre (1985: 192), explains that the virtues of justice, courage and truth are central to the practice. Justice relates to how people treat each other with humanity and respect in the quest for the attainment of the “standards of excellence”. It takes courage for one to stand for the truth, as he is driven by care and concern for the well-being of others. The same applies to truthfulness which involves performance to the traditions and standards of that practice, taking account of the human condition. The centre of the practice lies in the integrity of the virtues. The practice has to follow just methods which are centred on uprightness, even though the standards of the virtues will vary from one community to the next.

Making a case between the state of south Africa as an institution and the dehumanization of the people through unjust treatment, Vermeulen (2006: 159) observes that in the contemporary language of globalization, development and success in life is described in economic terms. His concern is that humanity has been reduced to commodities according to the marketplace in the

language of consumerism when decisions that affect their well-being are made and this is the language of the institutions which are concerned with making profit and being successful.

On that note Vermeulen (2006: 159) reminds the Methodist people in the MCSA of their heritage, where Wesley was able to challenge the government of England on the policies that were adversely affecting the poor. He asserts that, in the same tradition, the Methodists of the present age may also be able to influence the public policies in South Africa on behalf of the poor people in their bid to spread 'social holiness', which is located in both the heart and their lives, which will result in social transformation. Referring in particular, to the inequality between the rich and poor in South Africa, due to the unequal distribution of resources and income, he suggested that there was need for the MCSA to stand up in judgment against such practices as part of the spread of scriptural holiness by the Methodist people.

On the other hand, it is sad to note that the issue of inequality has become one of the areas of the goods external in the contemporary period, where there are many Methodists who live in luxury, while others suffer deep poverty in the same community and society. While it is not the aim of this study to suggest that Methodists should live lives of paupers, it is a concern that the accumulation of wealth by the members is an issue affecting the practice of social holiness in the MCSA and this is based on personal observation and experience.

Unfortunately this situation of inequality in wealth was also recognized by John Wesley according to Jennings (1990: 157), who explains that before his death Wesley acknowledged the failure of his teachings of the evangelical economics where he had taught the principles of working hard to save the money for the redistribution to the poor. He realized that the improved economic status had negative effects on the Methodists as they were not so willing to give to the poor as he had advised. This had also been observed earlier by Steve deGruchy (1989), who then explained that Wesley's social activism resulted in both intended and unintended outcomes in that those people who were involved in the empowerment programs became rich themselves and practiced what he had taught them to avoid, which was living in opulence. In essence, the implication for the practice of social holiness is one has to be vigilant in the quest for the standards of excellence as it is possible to be side trapped into the goods external in the love of money, fame and prestige.

5.5 The MCSA as institution and its practice of social holiness

In a bid to rebuild the transforming discipleship movement together in the MCSA, the Presiding Bishop, Rev Z Siwa, in his address to conference in 2013, introduced a new theme to the Methodist people, which was calling for what he called: “together a transforming discipleship movement.” He explained that the theme was born to address issues of growth in discipleship which was apparently lacking in the church and to support this call he cited the observation made earlier in the conference in 2008, that the MCSA had become over-churched and under disciplined. In this address he called the MCSA to be more courageous and intentional to the quest to be formed to be true disciples as he also reminded the church that the Methodist movement is not only deeply rooted in discipleship but it is also a “discipleship-making movement”(Siwa 2014: 6).

On analysing this important message to the Methodist people using the analogy of the institution and practice above, we get the insight that the presiding Bishop recognizes the growth of the MCSA into a big institution, with the many structures and all the powerful positions in the hierarchy, but he critically identifies a lack in the growth in discipleship. This concerned Siwa (2014: 6) as the chief pastor of the MCSA. This is because discipleship is central to Methodism, according to Atkins (2009: 9) when she addressed the British Methodist Church. She reminded them that Methodism involves the actions of people who actively yearn and seek every day in their lives to be better disciples of Jesus Christ by offering him to others. These are the disciples who practice social holiness as a way of life, being disciples in the mission of God after being trained in the processes designed for nurturing and growing them.

This statement and call by the leader of the MCSA gives an insight that growth in the MCSA is taking a skewed shape against its own expected tradition of a deepening spirituality which is growth in both internal and external holiness for the members. This was part of the call by this leader that the components of discipleship are “acts of devotion, compassion and social transformation”, which were seen to be lacking in the members. He also said that the life of discipleship has to be lived on earth and not in heaven, as John Wesley taught his followers.

Even though in the statement Siwa (2014: 6) did not allude to the reasons for this status quo, he nevertheless cautioned and reminded the Methodists of the danger of becoming a dead sect, which was one of the fears that was postulated by John Wesley cited in the following statement;

I am not afraid that the Methodist people should ever cease to exist either in Europe or in America. But I am afraid lest they should only exist as a dead sect, having the form of religion without the power. And this undoubtedly will be the case unless they hold fast the doctrine, spirit and discipline with which they first set out(Wesley in Siwa, 2014).

The essence of this statement is the fear that what was expressed by John Wesley in the 18th Century may become a reality in the context of the contemporary MCSA, which maybe be on the verge of losing its true identity in its practice the key Methodist traditions.

5.6 A case of disconnection between the institution of the MCSA and its ‘practice’ of social holiness

Engaging with the relationship between institution and practice according to MacIntyre (1985: 194), philosophical outlook based on this statement, one may speculate that the MCSA might be facing a problem with the consolidation between the Institution aimed at goods external, which will involve the issues of money, power structures and the practice of social holiness, which is aimed at standards of excellence in goods internal, which directly impacts the spirituality of the members and discipleship formation. This is by no means implying a split between the institution and its practice but as MacIntyre (1985: 194) suggests, this is where the role of the virtues in the life of the community become critical as they influence the moral values in the institutions.

The problem of consolidation between the MCSA as an institution and its practice of social holiness is also observed by one of the prominent Methodist scholars and minister in the church Storey (2004: 51), who argues that even though the MCSA was well placed in terms of its vision calling for the healing of Africa for the healing of nations which is powerful and good, a paradigm shift still needs to happen for the church to be able to begin to address the problems that exist in Africa.

Storey (2004: 51) substantiates his argument by recalling an implementation exercise for the “Journey to the New Land” programme in the Central District of the MCSA, where ordinary members of the church were invited to respond to the question which sought to find out their deepest longing which had not been effectively satisfied by their church. As a response he reported that a high percentage of the people, especially the ones who were affected by the social ills that kept them in poverty and oppression, indicated that they needed to be assisted to “know God in a personal way”. Accordingly, Storey (2004: 51) deduced that the reply was an indication that the church had grown in structures as an institution but in the process it had unfortunately lost the ability to make people connect more to God and help them to practice their faith. He is of the same opinion as the presiding Bishop in 2013 that the aspect of forming disciples or Christian formation is lacking in the MCSA, as opposed to growth in quantity. He suggests that the formation of disciples best happens at the grassroots level, the local congregations, which he perceives as the unit best placed by God to precipitate change.

The MCSA may be digressing in encouraging its members to the truthful practice of the virtues of social holiness as a practice in particular with touching base with the poor at the grassroots level and this maybe translating as injustice at that level. These assertions are indicative of a problem that is hindering the achievement of what MacIntyre (1985:197) called “excellence in a practice” for the MCSA. This church serves as a place of worship for many South Africans, but in its practice it is not able to faithfully and honestly enable all the members to reach those standards of excellence according to its expected traditions.

This is a very visible church in terms of the various uniforms and the moving music, which is based on the traditions of Charles Wesley. Forster (2008: 19) observes that the MCSA is one of the largest South African mainline churches according to the 2001 national census, where it was found that more than 50% of all the Christians in South Africa were Methodists. With these numbers, he concluded that the people may have been having a preference for a pragmatic gospel approach in the practice of social holiness by the Methodists. However, Forster (2008: 19) also recognized that might be speculative, as there was now an exodus of many African people from the mainline churches to the new African Initiated Churches, who seem to be addressing both their physical and spiritual needs, especially in healing and the prosperity gospel which seem to address their poverty.

The reasons for the movement of people to the many mushrooming ministries is not conclusive at this stage without proper investigation, suffice to say they are looking for something more than what the mainline churches are able to offer. Forster (2008: 19) may have been propelled by the above concerns when he made an appeal to the MCSA to put serious efforts towards the improvement of its practice of mission in terms of interpretation and appropriation of the gospel message in the Wesleyan tradition. He suggests that this be done in a manner that will be relevant and appealing to the local people, failing which many will continue to seek healing and transformation from the other churches. This in a way is questioning the authenticity of the practice in terms of the virtues of honesty and truth to the tradition, implying that some aspects of the practice are not meeting the needs of the people.

Recognizing the deficiency in the practice of social holiness in the MCSA earlier on, Storey (2004: 45) then suggests as a solution to this problem, for the church to reclaim its roots of the practice of holiness. He explains that this can be done by practice of a combination of three aspects by the church members: firstly, piety described as the search for inner peace with God. Secondly, the practice of charity which involved looking after the poor people as an act of obedience and thirdly, seeking justice in recognition that poverty is born from the social structures. This is a call for the people to seek the ways of being faithful to the traditions of Methodism for a holistic gospel message and a focused practice of social holiness.

There seems to be a widening distance between the decision making structures in the MCSA and the realities which are faced by the people at the grassroots in the societies. Light (2008: 147) another minister in the MCSA, In his article he laments that the Methodist church has lost its cutting edge, the badge which was so prominent to bring transformation to society, as he describes it as the:

Church that was able to scratch where the community was itching and was known for delivering its promises in real terms.

Light (2008: 147), then recognize a ‘disconnection’ between the institution of the church and the reality of the people in that the church had lost the spirit of the Methodist movement when it grew into an institution. He explains that the Methodist movement in the past was very effective as it was concerned about the needs of the people together with their interests and well-being.

He then speculates that the problem might be attributed to the widening gap between the church institutions decision-making structures and its proximity to the people at grassroots level. He then boldly suggests that the MCSA has to wake up to the realization that their practice of Methodism has stumbled to the extent that even worship services have degenerated to become religious services which are disconnected from the reality experienced by the people. The implication of this statement may be that the church is becoming inward-looking and is becoming oblivious to realities which are faced by the people among which is the poverty which is suffered the people of South Africa.

This issue of the MCSA losing its effectiveness in the practice of social holiness prompted Forster, (2008: 99) to pose several deeply probing questions to the Methodist people, challenging them to do serious introspection. First, he calls on the Methodists to check whether the local societies were still effective in promoting the values of the kingdom of God in the communities. Second, he wonders whether the structures and policies of the Methodist church promoted mission or they had become its “shackles”. Thirdly, whether the Methodist church had lost touch with social holiness and slipped into the trap of personal piety. Fourthly, he asks whether the local congregations were aware of the most pressing needs of society and doing anything about HIV and AIDS, the escalating hunger, the rampant abuse and many other issues, reminding the people that God was aware of the suffering people. The fifth question probes whether the MCSA existed as one church or was divided into three sections.

These questions are very important, as they touch the very heart and reason for the existence of the MCSA in Southern Africa and they relate directly to the main question of this study, in particular the third question which interrogates the present practice of social holiness in the MCSA on whether it is still faithfully practiced.

These are not the only voices calling for the reactivation of the practice of social holiness in the MCSA. Storey (2004: 35), a minister, activist and Methodist scholar in the Methodist church, observes that the doctrine of Christian perfection is neglected by the contemporary Methodist people in South Africa. He speculates that the reluctance to embrace the doctrine is due to its implications for change in character and behaviour which must accompany its adoption.

Another scholar and minister in the MCSA, Richardson (2006: 147), also lamented the fact that the doctrine of Christian perfection has taken a back seat in the life of the present-day Methodists, because it no longer featured prominently in the sermons, liturgy and gatherings of the church. He was bold enough to delve into the question of the identity of the church and wondered how the MCSA can claim to be Methodist in any valid sense while neglecting the doctrine of Christian perfection. Alluding to the irony of the situation, Richardson (2006) wondered about the fact that even the name Methodist is linked to the practice of social holiness which began with the Wesley brothers at Oxford and he cautioned the MCSA against this anomaly of side-lining the doctrine.

On the same note, Richardson (2006: 148) speculated that there might be some members of the Methodist church who might still be stuck to the common objections to Christian perfection on the belief that it encourages salvation by works, which may cause “religious elitism and snobbery” by the ones who may believe themselves to have attained perfection. There are also those who strongly believe that it is not possible to attain perfection in this life. The other strand of objections narrated by Richardson (2006: 149), were based on the applicability of Christian perfection to the contemporary context, which is far removed from that of England during the time of John Wesley. He observed that the people had become much more sophisticated and the understanding of sin become more enlightened with more theological understanding. He also alluded to the fact that there were some people who would not accept this doctrine based on the negative contribution of the Methodist missionaries during the colonial error.

In this group there are scholars, including (Majeke, 1986), who hold very strong views against the doctrines of early Methodist missionaries. Another one is Thompson (1977), who argued that this doctrine which was central to Methodism promoted capitalism in England in the 18th Century, as people were encouraged to work for personal enhancement and it added to the working class.

Nevertheless, Richardson (2006: 157) was of the view that Christian perfection is still relevant to the African context and in particular for the transformation of the character of the individual in the practice of social holiness. He also suggested that it is love which can prompt individuals to practice the common virtue of Ubuntu, which is key for the community in Southern Africa. He

then cited the works of Archbishop Tutu, who described Ubuntu as a way of life to be: “generous, hospitable, friendly, caring and compassionate.”

According to Richardson (2006: 157), this was the character virtue which can contribute to the life of Christianity in the post-apartheid South Africa. He saw the linkage between Christian perfection and Ubuntu, and its relevance to the practice of the church as a community, where “individualism” is abhorred because the MCSA understands itself as a community raised and sent by Christ. He then suggested that this community will be more effective as a united front in the battle against the social ills which include HIV and AIDS, the rampant poverty and rising unemployment, if the practice of social holiness will be reviewed Richardson (2006: 157).

5.7 Practice and traditions

The MCSA is rooted in the doctrines and traditions of Methodism which forms part of its identity. MacIntyre (1985: 185) also explains that there were some human activities which have been tried and tested in any practice and these are the traditions which are passed from one generation to the next for the sustenance of that practice. This relationship of the practice to tradition is important because of its unifying nature where the human life is recognized and its contribution to the community, according to the history. It also recognizes the contribution of man to the good of that community.

MacIntyre (1985: 189-190) explains that the goods internal so achieved are specific and they can only be attained through communal participation in that practice, so that each person who wants to be involved has to be careful and take stock of his own inadequacies, which will be judged against the standards of the practice which become the authority for performance. He also points out that each practice will have its own histories and traditions which contribute to these standards. These standards safeguard the integrity of the practice from bias due to subjective participation and emotionalism.

One who engages in the practice has to subject his own outlook in terms of his attitudes, choices, preferences and tastes to these standards. He explains that participation has to be grounded on faithfulness to the virtues of honesty, justice and courage. This aspect of the philosophy of practice being dependent on set traditions and standards for new participants gives it an

impression of being 'rigid'. This is one of the criticisms that practices need to evolve to meet contemporary contexts which may not be judged by the same standards. MacIntyre (1985: 190) agrees to this assertion and points this out as the weakness of practice.

This implies that standards may be subject to certain criticisms by an incoming practitioner, but MacIntyre (1985: 190) maintains that they become the standards of practice to maintain authoritativeness because of their historical significance.

The linkage of any practice to its traditions and practices weakens the applicability of social holiness to a certain extent, especially in terms of the differences of contexts between the time of John Wesley and the contemporary situation in South Africa. This is observed by (Grassow, 1998: 194), that even though Wesley and the Methodists were concerned about the causes of poverty and issues of injustice and they attended to them, Wesley was influenced by his own political beliefs and they did not have the advantage of the advance in hermeneutical tools of this century to do more comprehensive analysis. So he encourages the Methodist people to engage in social analysis in the contemporary situation.

This observation may be a factor in the assimilation of the practice of social holiness in the present context which is far removed from the era of Wesley. Nevertheless, it has already been established in this study that the practice of social holiness in the MCSA is well grounded in the Methodist traditions, taking a centre stage in the doctrine of Christian perfection. It forms the life of the members as they live out the kingdom values of the kingdom and what becomes pertinent and forms the main task of this study is the investigation on whether the MCSA is grounding its practice of social holiness on the virtues of honesty, justice and courage, as it works out its mission in the life of the members.

The questions on the reliability of the doctrine of Christian perfection and the practice of social holiness in South Africa as a tradition also becomes problematic historically when one looks at the Methodist church which was entrusted with the responsibility of spreading scriptural holiness yet was guilty of structural injustice in their treatment of the native people during the colonial era. Forster (2008: 83) attests to the fact that the missionaries outlook to mission was influenced by imperialism and colonial ideologies, such that even their actions which were aimed at development and social transformation were western and did not take into consideration the local

cultures. This view of cultural alienation was also shared by Balia (1991: 63), a Methodist scholar, who takes an extreme view of the effect of the missionary activities on the local people as he traced the development of the Methodist mission in South Africa.

Alluding to the evangelical activities by black people as well as the hardships they faced in carrying out mission, he described the missionaries aims to conquer both the mind and the heart.

This makes the positive work by the Methodist church in history to be clouded by the atrocities of colonization, as there are many other scholars who hold a negative view that Methodism did not positively contribute to the transformation of people's lives. Some of these works include (Jackson, 2008: 38), who is of the view that the missionaries did not contribute to the upliftment of the lives of the people because they overlooked their culture. Another writer, Phillips (2007: 69), gives a rather explicit view that the missionaries allegiance was to Great Britain. They then became the propagandists of the English culture in the colonized areas in a bid to convert the heathens to the civilized culture, to the extent that medical treatment and education of the native people were some of the key methods used in this campaign.

Irrespective of these counter views, Forster (2008: 83) maintains that it is still a well-documented fact that the Methodist church played a significant role in fighting against the atrocities of the apartheid era, against the laws of segregation in South Africa that separated races according to ethnicity black, white, coloured and Indians. The other atrocities of the system included the denial of the black people to vote, the creation of separate estates called homelands where black people were placed and their movements restricted as they had to obtain permission to visit other areas. Their land was given to the white people to farm, while they were confined to the homelands. The effects are still evident today with millions of land claims pending in government offices, while a majority of the people live as landless people in their own country. They were further oppressed through inferior education and poor health care systems.

According to Forster (2008: 7), the MCSA adopted many methods of resistance to the apartheid system, including protests and statements, in the practical lived experience of social holiness. He recognizes this as an interaction between the orthodoxy [beliefs] and orthopraxis [practice] approaches, which was the lives of the members in holiness which fulfilled their obligation to God's will for social justice in the world. One of these actions was called 'Obedience 81', which

was an initiative by the MCSA in the form of marches as part of the protest against the state-owned oppression, violence and abuse of human rights.

Even though the tradition on the practice of social holiness is good, courage is needed to stay faithful. MacIntyre (1985: 192) explains that the virtue of courage will involve giving oneself for the sake of others for the attainment of goods internal to any practice. With this historical background on the practice of social holiness in the MCSA, which is a post-missionary church, one may be inclined to attribute the skewed relationship between the practice of social holiness and the life of the members in the present context to a certain extent to this history of inequality. In fact, this is one of the critical questions that was previously posed by Forster (2008: 99) to the MCSA, on whether the church was united or divided into three, because of the existence of black, white and some united congregations which do not face the same challenges, especially in reference to economic issues.

The reality of the situation in the MCSA is postulated by Storey (2014: 80), who maintains that the traditions of the sociological and political aspects of the Methodist movement are key to the present identity of the MCSA. He then identifies the main thrust of that tradition as being the stance to be on the side of the poor, as John Wesley taught and practiced. He explains further that this was his practice of spirituality which emanated from piety to charity, culminating in justice which was social holiness, where the love of God was expressed outwardly in the love of the neighbour.

Standing on this tradition, Storey (2014: 83, 86), then suggests that there is an identity crisis in the MCSA, which is attributed to doctrinal, racial and cultural factors. He observes that some of the white clergy seem to have shifted their theology in preaching, as they were now preaching a conservative evangelical private salvation, instead of the holistic Wesleyan doctrine which leads to both personal and social transformation, which was so distinct to the Methodist church. This theological outlook disengages the church from social issues and makes many congregations to be inward looking, as they concentrate on their own issues.

Storey (2014: 86) also alludes critically to question the role and function of the uniformed organizations in the present era as to whether they are still effective in mission or they are still clinging to a history which has not evolved to meet the needs of the contemporary contexts. The

other issue connected to identity he notes is the practice of the clergy in the black section of the church, many he speculates to have begun to define ministry as a pastoral set of conducting funerals, administering sacraments while ignoring the rest of the social, political and spiritual ills that adversely affect South African society. He makes an urgent appeal for new ways of doing ministry in the MCSA which will restore the identity of the church.

These misgivings about the dichotomy between the institutional structure and the practice of social holiness is one of the major challenges which impact negatively on the mission of the church. This research paper takes a very firm view that the Wesleyan roots of the MCSA are important to inform its present practice. This is according to (Bailie, 2009: 41), who notes that the Methodist church is rooted in the Wesleyan tradition, even if the contemporary mission practice was not having the same impact as the original mission movement. He is of the opinion that if Methodists are not shaped by the Wesleyan heritage there will be no nothing else to shape the denomination.

5.8 Criticisms of the philosophy of practice

The main criticism of this theory of practice according to (MacIntyre, 1985: 187) lies in the identification of what constitutes a practice. Much of the criticism come from scholars from education sector, these include the work of Dunne (2003: 239). In his article '*Arguing for teaching as a practice: a reply to Alasdair MacIntyre*', he disputes the claim that teaching is not a practice, as there are no internal goods achieved because the learners are prepared for some other activity beyond teaching. Dunne (2003) urges that this does not do justice to teaching, especially where good teachers are concerned who will do a good job in the teaching/learning environment.

Another scholar Hager (2011: 545, 561), in the paper '*Refurbishing MacIntyre's account of practice*', summarises the scope of the problem based on three points. Firstly, he notes it may be a mishap for (MacIntyre, 1985: 187) to define practices mainly using analogies of games because this leaves out many productive activities which contribute to community building. Hager (2011: 561), argues that even other practices like farming and architecture are not only valuable for the internal goods of the practitioners [excellence of virtue], they also contribute to broader social ends like food for the community, beauty of the landscape and many others. Another problem is

the association of institutions with external goods, namely money, power and status. Hager (2011: 548) asserts that these are not morally wrong all the time as they for the good of the society. The second scope of the problem according to Hager (2011: 549) lies in the unclear criteria by MacIntyre as to which members of the community are engaged in the practice. In the examples given as practice, for instance farming, only the farmer seems to be important, yet there are many people involved, including packers, drivers and many others who contribute to the practice as a community. The last scope of the problem identified by Hager (2011: 548), was that some practices given by MacIntyre such as construction were not specialized single practices but were diverse with many practices involved and this presents a problem on the type of both internal and external goods.

These concerns may also be important for this study. It would be naïve to assume a neat fit of social holiness for the definition of a practice according to MacIntyre. The position is that practice with the aim of internal goods is essential for the development of moral characters who are contributing to community development. That is the main aim of holiness according to the Wesleyan understanding, where it culminates in loving God and the others and participation to make the kingdom of God a reality. This is a practice by a particular group with defined expected standards of excellence and the practitioners are delineated.

5.9 Conclusions of the chapter

The philosophical outlook of practice according to (MacIntyre, 1985) is a tool used in many fields to determine the quality of performance in terms of the standards of excellence to achieve goods internal, which are the desire of any practice. The practice is intrinsic within the institution which relies on goods external for its profits, fame and structures, yet it is the practice which is essential for its existence and community building. For any practice to be authentic, it needs to be true to the virtues of justice, courage and truth in its tradition and practice. It is also concluded that practices are very important because they are not performed merely for their enjoyment but the help to extend human capabilities and are schools for moral education.

Using this philosophical approach as suggested by MacIntyre (1985) and based on the work of several Methodist scholars and the call by the Presiding Bishop in Southern Africa, is concluded that the MCSA is deficient in its practice of social holiness in the contemporary era of the

situation of poverty caused by structural injustice in South Africa due to unemployment, poor education and many other deprivations are suffered by the poor. The loss of social holiness is mainly evidenced by the deficiency in the production of transformative disciples who would be effective in taking the mission forward.

This situation is contrary to the desired goods internal which will be the nurturing of deeply spiritual disciples who will be instrumental in spreading the gospel of Christ to bring transformation in society through their spread of scriptural holiness. This chapter also showed that the growth of the MCSA as an institution is evidenced in the goods external in terms of the numbers, structures, organizations and the opulence of the members of the church. Unfortunately, this is at the expense of the growth in discipleship. Hence Conference called for the formation of disciples at grassroots level. It was found that there is a failure to connect to the realities that the people face because of the deficiency in the nurturing of discipleship and community building, even though the structures are still in place. This has led to paralysis and ineffectiveness' in the mission of the church, which was identified to be social in nature.

The MCSA is also recognized to be a post-missionary church which might be liable to suffer some of the adverse effects from that period. Even though a disconnect is located from the members at ground level, the practice of social holiness by the members of the church is required to promote mission which will result in social transformation as the members will go out to spread the love of God, which is their life of holiness.

There is a serious identity crisis in the MCSA in its present context, as it is not true to its tradition of spreading scriptural holiness and not standing up for justice of seeking to make the members disciples through the existing set structures which were designed for that purpose. This crisis severely affects the poor who are looking up to one of the largest denominations, the Methodist church, with a good history of taking the side of the poor as the prophetic voice from God. There are also some questions which probe deeply into the practice of social holiness which are connected to this issue of practice in the present era. The structures for nurturing discipleship are in existence yet they are not adequately utilized, hence the MCSA is losing its cutting edge, which was once its brand.

CHAPTER SIX

ENHANCING THE PRACTICE OF SOCIAL HOLINESS AS AN AGENCY FOR HUMAN EMPOWERMENT AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE MCSA

6.1 Introduction

This chapter will answer the question as to how the MCSA may respond to the question of the situation of inadequacy in the formation of disciples which has resulted in the decline of the practice of social holiness. Osmer (2008: 88) suggests the need to ask this interrogating question for a situation which needs action. This question investigates how the practice of social holiness can be enhanced in the MCSA to its former status as a key agency for transformation as happened in the Methodist movement of the 18th century. This will mainly be done through the acceleration of the disciples formation processes within the present structures of the church, because this is the aspect has been found lacking according to several Methodist theologians(see Forster:2008, Ketshabile: 2006, Nyobole: 2006, Richardson: 2006, Siwa: 2014 and (Storey, 2006). The explorations will be made by means of consolidating the arguments from the previous chapters together with the findings on the practice of social holiness based on the philosophy of MacIntyre (1985). Insights from some scholars will also be used to draw conclusions on how the practice of social holiness can be used as an agency to enhance development and empowerment in the MCSA in its reconstruction agenda aimed at poverty alleviation.

The social science approach in this chapter will be based on the work of S deGruchy (2005), in his paper, '*A Christian engagement with the sustainable livelihoods framework*'. This framework will be used to locate the reactivation of the practice of social holiness for the local people in the churches at grassroots level, as they are the ones mostly affected by the existential phenomenon of poverty. In his paper, S deGruchy (2005: 57) explained the importance of the communities at grassroots level in the mission of God, as they are the ones who are adversely affected by the social ills. He explained further that Christians are invited by God to participate with him in mission to make the world a better place and to transform communities and societies, eventually

making the world to be a better place closer to God's vision of wholeness; shalom. This was perceived in terms of John 10:10, which states that life in abundance is found in Christ.

S deGruchy (2005: 57) recognized God calling the church to participate with him in mission to make a better place for the many people who suffer from a range of social ills and he highlighted some of these as follows:

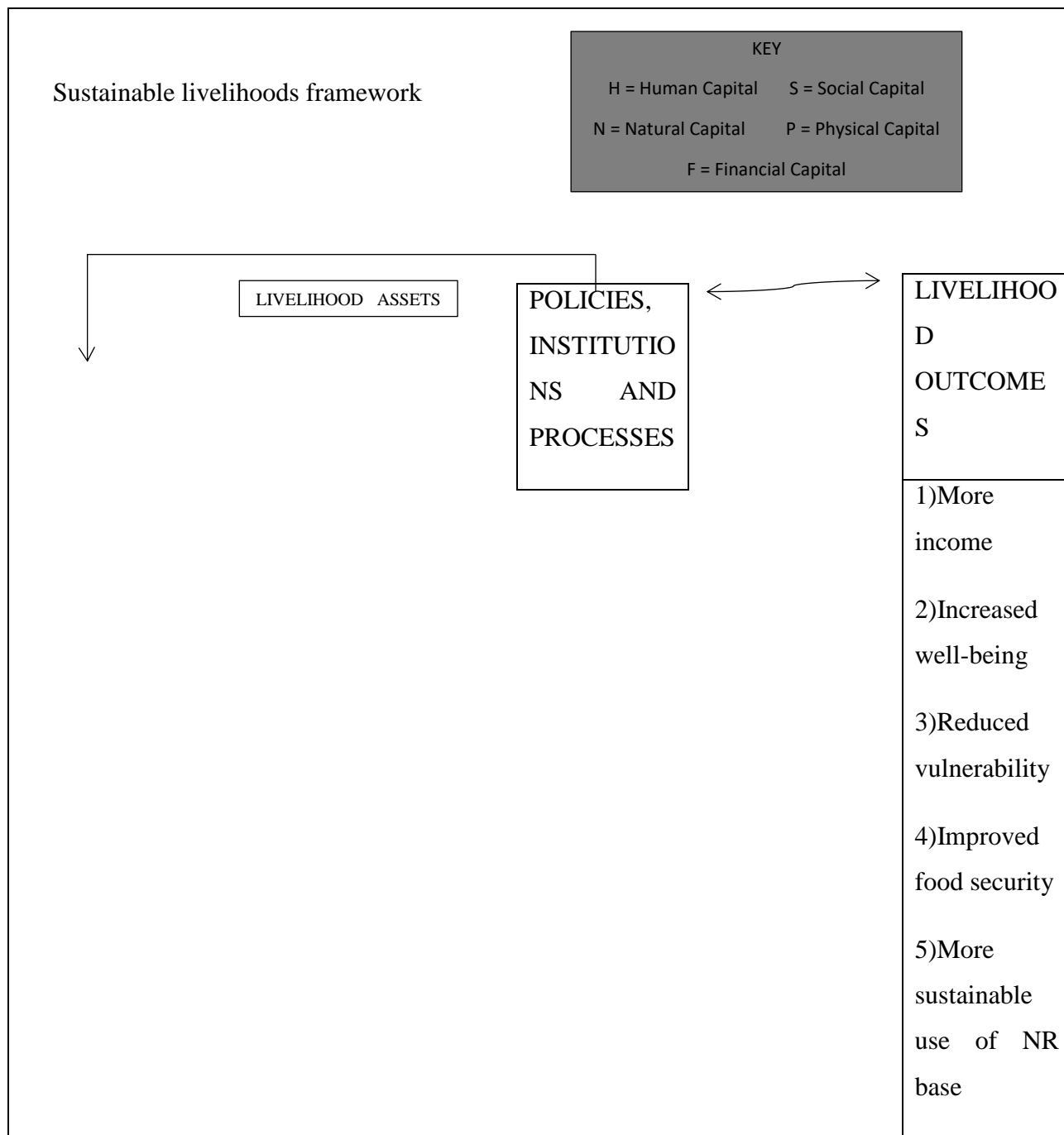
Struggles with poverty, homelessness, sickness, violence, racism, domestic abuse, and lack of education, health care and sanitation, exclusion from decision making, pollution, deforestation, ugliness, powerlessness, hopelessness and self- denigration.

The assertion is that the church cannot behave as if all is normal when the people of God are denied life in fullness as it was promised by God and the church takes part in mission because it is sent out by God to make the world a better place.

6.2 Sustainable Livelihoods Framework [SLF]

This framework connects well with the practice of social holiness in Methodism, which is also concerned with human agency, when the disciples perform the works of mercy to others, channelling the grace of God. The practice of social holiness recognizes that the people's quest for excellence is their zeal to serve Jesus Christ as Christians. This is located in their inner spiritualities and the desire to spread the love of God to the community as part of their mission to the world. Alluding to the works of mercy according to Wesley (1872: 322), he described the people as a formidable force of God which is sent out to the world. As part of their mission they are engaged in encouraging, supporting and uplifting one another as they strive for perfection, taking every available opportunity to do good works for people in the community. John Wesley recognized the potential of agency in the members of the church as he did not seek to do things for them, but rather empowered them to work for themselves and the community, when the gospel permeates their lifestyles and affected the way they lived.

A brief description of the sustainable livelihoods framework (SLF):



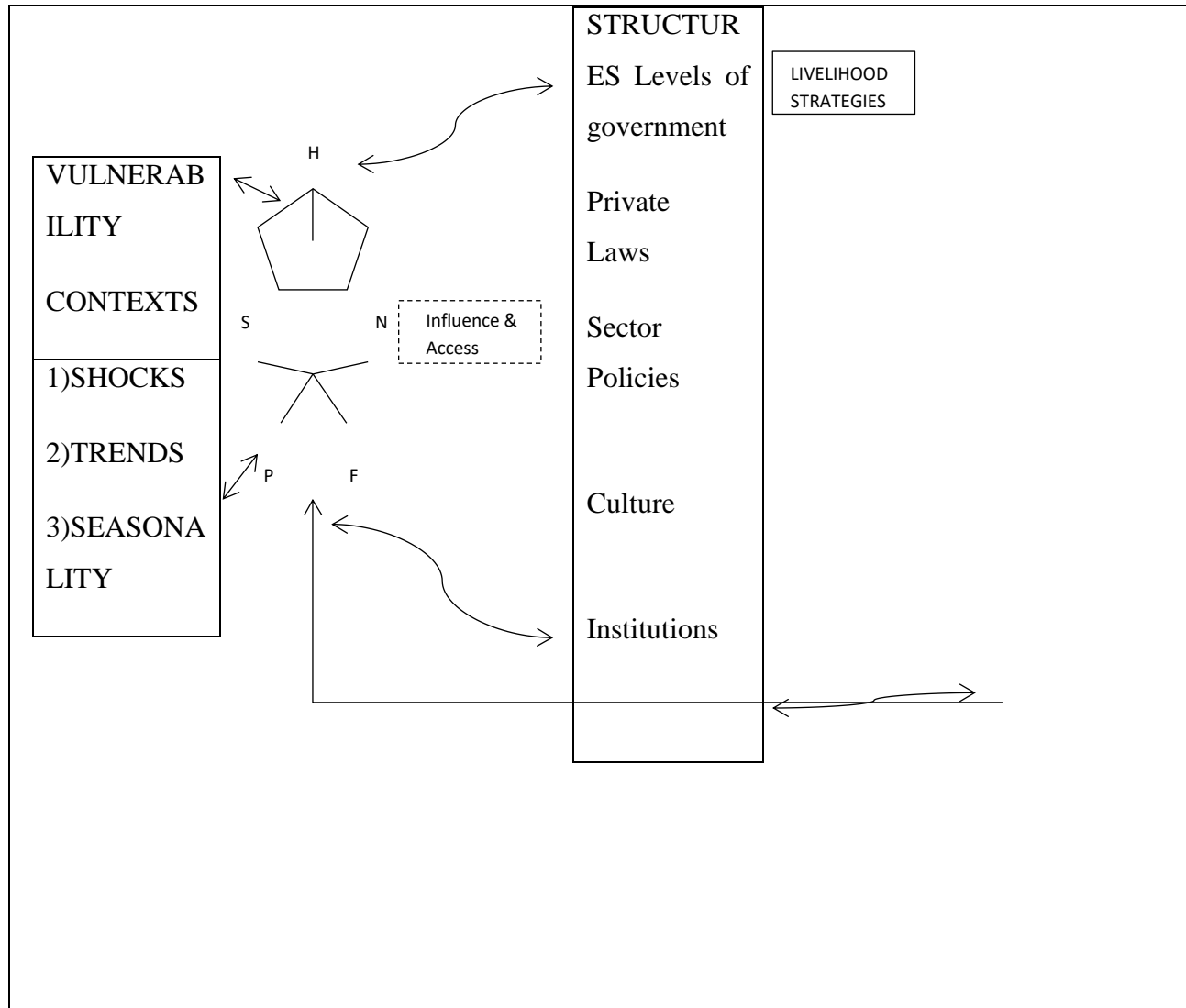


Figure 2: Illustration of the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (adapted from DFID, 2001)

The central concept of this framework lies in the recognition that all people, including the poor, are engaged in some activities for survival: their livelihoods.

This framework is important especially for people who live in rural areas, who are affected by poverty and depend mainly on environmental resources for survival. This group is inclusive of the members of the MCSA who are also affected by poverty and other social ills. According to

this framework it is important to recognize that the people are engaged in livelihoods which have been tried and tested for their survival using their available portfolio of assets.

Also supporting the SLF approach, Brocklesby & Fisher (2003: 187) explains that the first part of the framework recognize the fact that many people live amidst many contexts of vulnerabilities by being exposed daily to various situations which affect their lives, with different trends, shocks and seasonality due changes in society and environment. S deGruchy (2005: 60) explained that these shocks are the events which come unexpectedly, which may include sudden illnesses, drought and death. The trends are the events which occur in a set pattern, but one cannot do anything to counteract them. Common trends that affect the people include population growth, poor service delivery and technological advancements. The seasonality is the seasonal shifts or events that would happen in the community to bring change in the lives of the people. For instance the surge of employment opportunities during the production period, scarcity of jobs during the dry season and many others. These vulnerability contexts affect the livelihood according to Brocklesby & Fisher (2003: 186), who explain that a livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks and also be able to maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets while not undermining the natural resource base. This explanation serves to qualify the authentic livelihood among the many that exist in the communities by its ability to cope with the vulnerability context.

According to S deGruchy (2005: 60), the second part of the framework is the recognition of the available assets which are used by the local people in their livelihoods. In their totality they form a portfolio of livelihood assets. In his description he recognized five forms of capital. Human capital is the available skills, labour, knowledge and health status. Natural capital is the natural endowment to the community for the sustenance of livelihoods. Financial capital is usually in short supply in poverty situations – money that may be available as ownership in investments, held in assets, credits etc. Physical capital are the types of infrastructure available that can assist in communication and production, which may include roads, housing etc.

Social capital is the available established networks and relationships which are trusted in the community which keep people connected.

S deGruchy (2005: 61), further explained that the third part of the framework is formed by the policies, institutions and processes. This is the recognition of the available societal structures which affect the attainment of the livelihoods and their importance in that they can support or derail the livelihoods. Policies contained in governance are aimed at the achievement of certain goals. Institutions are bodies and agencies including cultural and religious, which influence livelihoods, the things are done in that society. Processes are the issues which involve the institutions, culture and the policies, how they affect the poor, and their participation. The structures which exist will include the governments and the private sector involved with development. According to Brocklesby & Fisher (2003: 187), these institutions are the main contributory factor towards the access to services which, in turn, make the people more vulnerable and they explained that there should be clear linkages between what happens at the micro-level, the level of the people where the livelihoods takes place and the upper levels [meso or macro] where the policies takes place.

The fourth aspect of the SLF described by S deGruchy (2005: 62) is the Livelihood Strategies which are recognized in the communities. The members use these strategies utilizing the available assets. These are tried and tested strategies that are used by the members of the communities to execute their livelihoods. These may be their primitive ways of survival in the different seasons which are used to cope with some of the stressful situations and this may involve some competition for the limited resources. S deGruchy (2005: 62) alluded to the work of Butler & Greenstein in 1999:57, who explained that the sustainable livelihood approach put emphasis on the choices, opportunities and flexibility and by so doing enhanced the people's capacity to survive and adapt to the shocks and stresses to the vulnerability contexts.

S deGruchy (2005: 62) Recognized that the SLF provides an improvement to perceptions about the poor, as they are usually labelled as "farmers, foresters or fisher folk and the urban dwellers as labourers". Due to this perception all conventional development efforts are aimed at the improvement of these categories with the aim of upgrading them to lead better lives.

With the SLF approach the reasons for the people's choices for livelihoods are considered to be valid and important, so that any support is aimed at accelerating and promoting these livelihoods to be more efficient. All efforts at improvement are aimed at enhancing the available assets, which form the building blocks for the livelihoods. S deGruchy (2005: 62) acknowledged that

even though competition for livelihood strategies may exist, these strategies are more inclusive, treat people equally, are more sustainable and add more value to people's lives.

The fifth part of the framework are the livelihood outcomes according to S deGruchy (2005: 63). These are the aspirations of the people involved to sustain themselves through their involvement in the livelihood activities. These will not be set by anybody or donor outside the context of the people but they are determined by the desires of the people to be able to cope and recover from the vulnerability contexts.

The desirable livelihood outcomes that were suggested by (United Nations Development Report (1999), as cited by (S deGruchy (2005: 63), are mainly centred on the ability of the people to be able to cope with and recover from shocks and stresses such as drought, civil war and policy failure, through adaptive and coping strategies. These livelihoods have to be economically effective, with the usage of minimal inputs to generate the desired given amount of outputs. They have to be ecologically sound, ensuring that they do not irreversibly degrade natural resources within a given ecosystem. Lastly, they have to be socially equitable, in such a way that the promotion of livelihood opportunities for one group would not foreclose options for other groups, either now or in the future. These outcomes are very important, as they aim at uplifting the life of the people at grassroots to uplift the well-being of the poor as (S deGruchy (2005: 63) pointed out that the SLF promotes strategies which are important for the enhancement of the livelihoods of the people for the improvement of their incomes and food security among the desired effects. The other important benefit will be the achievement of a more sustainable base of natural resources.

6.3 Theological concerns of the sustainable livelihood framework

According to S deGruchy (2005: 69), there were some theological concerns on using the SLF. The first and main one is based on the lack of the role of religion in the framework. He lamented this fact, especially for the African scene where culture and religion are central to the life of the people.

The second concern is the inability of the SLF to connect present situations with their history and a good illustration of this point is the present inequality in South Africa which may be partly

traced to the apartheid era. The third concern is the failure of the model to recognize the role of protests and resistance action by the communities against the governing structures as part of livelihood strategies. He suggested that the space for these actions can be located between the pentagon of the assets and the institutional structures and policies. The fourth concern is on the model's failure to appreciate the possibility of conflict between people in the community and even in the household. The assumed perception of the framework is that people are all working with the same purpose to maximize their livelihoods. I agree with him on this deficiency, especially on the natural capital where there are usually conflicts over land ownership. The framework assumes that all the people are working towards common goals with no conflicts.

The fifth concern is based on the perceptions that the framework is too complicated to be used by poor people and may be liable to misuse by people from outside to impose on the poor. Irrespective of this misgiving, he was convinced that the framework was suitable, especially in poverty situations. I also agree with him on the point that the framework is a useful tool that can be used by Christian churches as per the suggestion of this research for rural community work, especially because by giving recognition to the people their humanity and dignity is restored, as they are recognized to have the potential to solve their own problems.

6.4 The revitalization and affirmation of the human agency for development in the MCSA

The Sustainable Livelihood Framework affirms the agency of the local people including the poor who are already involved in livelihoods to be able to survive in their various contexts. In this study the vulnerability context of the people in South Africa is traced mainly to the effects of relative poverty which affect the most vulnerable sectors of the population who are located in the rural areas. Vulnerability is also traced to shocks which come from unprecedented events such as unpredictable weather patterns which has led to the severe drought which has recently affected many people, especially in terms of water and food availability. Poverty is also evidenced in the inequality that exists between the rich and poor and it is attributed to an inheritance from apartheid and the creation of the black middle class of richer people.

This study also identified several deprivations which trap the poor in poverty, including inefficient service delivery, poor education systems, inadequate health systems and many other

hardships due to the high levels of unemployment. This study also concludes that the poverty is located in socio-political structures and deprivations that contribute to the powerlessness which trap many people in poverty situations, especially in the rural areas. The existential poverty affects people both in the society and in the church. The church as the body in mission has embarked on several programmes to deal with this phenomenon. One of these strategies is the restructuring agenda of the MCSA, though it appears to be facing challenges, especially in economic empowerment and development mission pillar. This poses a challenge to the MCSA in that for the people to survive these contexts there is a need for revitalization of their livelihoods, beginning with the human agency, so that they are empowered to deal with the difficult situations which greatly influence their choices and limit their opportunities.

Linking with the main findings of the previous chapter, using the understanding of the practice of social holiness according to MacIntyre (1985), it was found in this study that social holiness in the MCSA was still relevant as one of the key traditional practices, especially as a practical way of life in the gospel of Christ for the transformative disciples. This is deduced from both from the Presiding Bishop's address to conference in 2013 and in all the ongoing calls for transformation in the MCSA. In the investigation of social holiness as practice it was found that there was a disconnect between the institution and the practice at ground level as somehow in the present arrangement there were fewer disciples who were formed, yet the church was growing in membership. This is the situation in spite of the availability of the disciple making structures available in the many societies and organizations. Implementing MacIntyre (1985) in his perception of the practice of social holiness in the MCSA, there is low performance of the expected standards of excellence, which is the spiritual growth of the members to transformative disciples, who are to be the agents of transformation. It was found in this research paper that there is digression in the truthfulness and courageous practice of social holiness in the MCSA.

These disciples are the local agents for carrying out mission at grassroots level, to bring transformation and healing to the land, as stated in the mission statement. This is well stated in the strategy for Development and Empowerment by the MCSA's mission unit, which is aimed at enabling and equipping all the people at grassroots level in the local churches, societies and circuits to participate in the development of their communities (Methodist Church of Southern Africa 2013).

The implication then is that all actions have to begin with the people at local level to empower them as disciples. The first part of the framework is the human agency ability to deal with the vulnerability contexts in the execution of the livelihoods. The suggestion in this research is empowerment of the human agency through the revival of the discipleship making processes. The revitalization of the transformative disciples in MSCA may have to begin with vigorous efforts to revive discipleship training and nurturing within the set structures that exist in the Methodist church; in the societies, class meetings and the various church organizations. The three central aspects that are identified by Ketshabile (2006: 104) to be vital for the life of the Methodist members were spirituality, fellowship and social engagement. These aspects are gained from the attendance of class meetings. This contributes to the practice of social holiness, where inner holiness will translate to outside holiness in the life of the transformed disciple.

Apart from the spiritual formation the class meetings also serve for fellowship and community building according to Nyobole (2006: 139) who acknowledge the role of class meetings as spheres for transformation in three aspects. Firstly, at the individual member level, transformation happens during the weekly accountability meetings which serve to grow them in their love of Christ which is fuelled by the Holy Spirit. He identifies three spheres of growth which are gained by the individual from the class meetings which are: “obedience, good desire and knowledge”. The second aspect is social transformation, which is achieved when people from variable backgrounds of social classes meet as members of the same class, from both affluent and poor backgrounds, the literate and illiterate, working and unemployed. When they come to the meeting, the social barriers are broken and they become brothers and sisters, as they are bound together for a common purpose. He then describes the class meetings as the centres where citizenship is enhanced and agents for social transformation are trained. The third aspect is in church transformation, where the class meeting train transformed members who grow into disciples who are more committed to take the gospel to the world. These are disciples who lead in transformation initiatives in the society and they became the cutting edge of Methodism.

Transformation happens in the class meetings because there is training and accountability for the spirituality of the members. This will also enhance cohesion, the togetherness for a common purpose.

The revival of these nurturing in the small groups according to the Methodist tradition will be a major effort towards the preparation of the transformed human agency, the members of the church with the character of a Methodist. This is applicable to the Sustainable Livelihood Framework which recognizes the existence of the livelihood asset portfolio, especially human capital, the people being members of the church in the various classes and the organizations. The MCSA has important social capital with set standards of networking through its traditions, where decisions are taken first at the grassroots level in the societies, moving to the circuits, then synods until the highest level, the conference. Important networking in the MCSA also happens within the many uniformed organizations that exist as part of the mission focus. The members of the church develop trust and cohesion in the various class meetings and organizations for girls, women and men, as they stay connected.

Another social portfolio in the MCSA which may play a crucial role in the nurturing of discipleship are the many groupings under the banners of the various organizations. According to the book of constitutions published by the (methodist Church of Southern Africa), the following church organizations are recognized: Local preachers association, Methodist men's league, Methodist youth unit, Ministry of music association, Order of evangelism, Women's association, Women's auxiliary, Women's Manyano, Young men's guild and Young women's Manyano. There are specific objectives in the constitutions of these various organizations which vary, but their general aim is the nurturing and growth of disciples who serve as the MCSA outreach to the community for social transformation.

It is noted, however, that at the level of societies there is a struggle among these organizations to meet their objectives because of many reasons, among which may be the poverty and ineffective structures at local level. The aim of this research paper is the enhancement of disciple formation through these available structures in the MCSA through education and nurturing.

6.5 Restoration of the humanity of the poor

This study recognizes the existence of deprivations which trap the people in poverty as part of the existing vulnerability contexts. According to Christian (2011: 131), cited earlier in this study, there are power pockets in god complexes, the powers of domination which make the people powerless to break out of poverty by affecting their thinking patterns to accept the

situation of poverty as normal and that they need to depend on the powerful for their survival. These powers of domination were recognized by Freire (1970: 43, 44) as dehumanization, when people are made less human by being treated as objects who are kept in that situation by the more powerful so that they will not perceive the reality of their situation of being oppressed. He then suggested that the first step has to be aimed at the humanization of the people. He called this the people's vocation. He noted the need for dialogue in the form of praxis which involves both action and reflection with the poor people. Freire (1970: 43, 44), having realized the power of dialogue with the poor, he suggested that the anti-dialogical actions which are perpetuated by the rich serve to deny the people their right to thoroughly examine the situations and communicate with one other about their fate. The suggested reflection process serves to bring in the insights from the poor as well as their rituals and symbols so that they can become part of the development processes.

In the MCSA the processes of dialogue have to be initiated at local society level where the people will have the opportunity to engage with the issues that dehumanize them and trap them in poverty. This becomes the struggle for liberation which has to be done in an honest transparent manner and the people become part of the process to make them human. This must be done against the backdrop of the post-missionary church, where there was inequality based on the very same issue of the local people not being given the recognition that they deserve, especially in the understanding of mission in their own culture.

Freire (1970: 60) also suggested that the type of education in this aspect of communication that will lead to liberation must not be the banking type approach where the people are taken as empty vessels to be filled. Instead, the people are recognized to have some assets as well which they use in their livelihoods. He then suggested the problem solving education approach where the teacher engages the learners in the dialogue. This is opposite to the situation in the 'god – complexes' which was recognized by Christian (2011: 132), who observes that the oppressors make use of the banking education approach to influence the attitude of the people negatively.

The action of dialogue serves to bring back the dignity of the poor people as they are recognized for their worth in the contributions they are able to bring into improving their well-being, instead of being taken as objects of pity that need charity.

Dialoguing with the people at MCSA at this time years after the 2004 mission congress is critical to find out how the people perceive the church's mission agenda and its impact in their lives. This way the church members will have a direct participation in the process. According to Sen (1999: 153), the value of the poor in being their own agency lies in the inclusiveness directly in all the actions. When they are allowed to also participate and be able to contribute their values and priorities in the economic, political and social life of the community, which then is owned by all members. This is the recognition of the poor as real people with aspirations and feelings which are considered as crucial in the making of the decisions which affect their lives. Korten (1990: 5), mentioned earlier on in this research project, also recognizes the linkage between the poor being their own agents in a way of personal choice and not compelled to take part. He describes the development process as a shift from equating development with growth to a transformation outlook, which will be inclusive of all people in a just manner which recognizes their value and the sustainable use of natural resources.

This process of dialoguing with the poor should also include and recognize the agency of women who are a very important sector of community and they have always played a crucial role in development, yet their contribution is ignored most times according to Sen (1999: 153). He also call for a shift in focus from always looking at the pain and suffering of women as the main issue about women but to focus on their role as agents of development. There is a need to recognize that they are important for development and they contribute to the life of many members of the family, including men and children.

This is because of better nutrition and hygienic conditions among many other benefits which become available when the livelihoods of the women are enhanced and this will promote the general well-being of the household. These observations are important in particular for the MCSA being one of the churches with the majority of the members being woman and their agency needs to be recognized.

6.6 Nurturing and formation of disciples

The education process also has to involve training to discipleship based on the Wesley's original formula for nurturing discipleship, which was aimed at both spiritual and character formation in the Wesleyan tradition. According to Maddox (2003: 15), a renowned Wesleyan theologian and writer, in his paper "*Wesley's Prescription for Making Disciples of Jesus Christ: Insights for the 21st Century Church*", he presents to the Methodist people a program for training disciples which is based on insights on a citation from the writings of John Wesley (1872), who suggested that there were three reasons why there are so few real Christians (the real Christians in this context were the transformative disciples). The first reason he cited was the lack of understanding of the Christian doctrines. Secondly he observed the lack of appropriate Christian discipline in the members and lastly he observed that the Christians lack in the practice of self-denial in their lives.

Based on these observations, Maddox in this paper suggests that there is a need to cultivate "Christ- likenesses in the minds of the members as a way of discipleship formation". He then says that training activities have to begin with the teaching of the doctrine of salvation which is central to all the others in order to address the deficiency in the understanding of doctrine. These activities should be aimed at shaping beliefs, affections and character. Maddox also reminds the Methodists that Wesley was a practical theologian who translated theology into the hymns and songs, liturgies and prayers and catechetical orations as a way of instilling the precepts of the doctrine.

Adopting the same strategy for the MCSA there is need to upgrade and reinterpret the old liturgies and prayers into contemporary languages with the central theme based on salvation. Some of the societies have been observed to have abandoned the old hymn and prayer books for contemporary versions of music. While that is good for the youth in the contemporary era, there is the danger of losing some of the doctrines and teachings that are presented as the hymns and prayers.

These may be one of the methods which may be adopted for the teachings of the doctrines in the MCSA in the efforts for discipleship formation.

These exercises of discipleship formation will form the basic step towards the empowerment of the people through the various classes and organizations. Supporting the need for discipleship formation was Watson (1991: 70), who emphasize that discipleship is not an automatic process but it comes from practicing and learning to live according to the teachings of Jesus Christ and he has done extensive work with the revision and presented the modern version of class meetings to take a modern vision of what he called covenant discipleship groups. His writings are a valuable, resource which can be used in these trainings.

As part of the empowerment of the agency in the MCSA, Storey (2004: 18) appeals for what he termed as a “new movement of Methodists” which will be shaped by the Wesleyan roots and a dream for a new future. This new movement will involve primarily the overhaul of the teaching strategies in the church so that they will be shaped by the key concepts of Wesleyan tradition which are based on the acts of devotion, worship, compassion and justice. He further explains that this new movement will be more inclusive, cutting across all the existing racial and power divisions. He identifies the task of empowerment for all people across racial lines in this new movement so that the people are assisted into the formation of faithful discipleship as part of their growth to holiness.

As part of the task of the new movement Storey (2004: 18) also calls for the need for the MSCA to make an introspection into their economic status as a church and consider redistribution of resources. He made an appeal especially to the most affluent congregations to share with the poor ones, as he observed that a new class of Methodists had emerged, those who live very affluent lifestyles, yet there are those who are very poor. This call for the reclamation of the Wesleyan roots and the dream of the new movement addresses the findings of this research paper based on the work of MacIntyre (1985), with the findings that in the MCSA there was a lack of integrity in the practice of social holiness. This lack raised questions as the growth of the institution compromised the genuine formation of disciples. All the efforts of revitalization and empowerment of the human agency for the MCSA recognize the Methodist church as a social institution with the various structures and set processes for the enhancement of the members so that they can take part in their own development.

This new movement may formed by transformed disciples who need to take a stand to act and call for a God-transformed society. That may be the crucial function of social holiness, the

understanding and actions that attest to holiness which is not confined to the individualistic and purist, but which empowers the mission of God as the individuals spread the love of God to others.

The empowerment of the human agency through the training for the formation of transformative discipleship training in the MCSA may be the key to break the impasse between the growth of the MCSA as an institution and its practice of social holiness which was found wanting when using the philosophy of MacIntyre (1985) to assess the practice of social holiness in the MCSA. It will also address the call by the presiding Bishop of the MCSA of 2013, for the formation of transforming discipleship. This will be the church in action, as S. Kumalo (2003: 106) explains that the local community of faith, the baptized members of the congregation, are the agents in the mission of God, as the meaning of the church is not to be confined to the buildings and the denomination. He recognizes them as the important agency that spread the good news to the whole world where the poor and the oppressed are found. In this aspect he explained that the church plays a critical role as the precursor for development in any society.

6.7 Policies, Institutions and Processes

The SLF recognizes the existence of policies, institutions and processes that affect the people in the pursuit of their livelihoods. In the SLF frameworks any outside sponsorship to the community must be aimed at enhancing the existing livelihoods and any other new projects will be initiated and carried out by the members through their own effort.

According to Mubangizi (2007: 449), the current struggles by the government of South Africa to deliver services to the people are influenced by the neo-liberal and market-oriented policies they adopted. She views this approach as problematic because it does not provide for adequate participation by the people and it does not empower the people. She acknowledges that poverty alleviation was part of the current policies of the South African government for development and she then cited the two strategies; the RDP and GEAR, mentioned earlier in this research paper. In her main argument where she compares the two above approaches, she is of the view that the RDP was preferable to GEAR because it involved the people at all stages.

This is because it followed a “people-centred development” approach which is based on the 1989 Manila Declaration on People’s Participation and Sustainable Development.⁷ However, she points out that the government felt that RDP policy had to be abandoned as there was a need to concentrate on improving the economy. As Mubangizi (2007: 451) notes further, people’s participation is central to authentic development. She cites the work of many scholars who also recognize the importance of public participation in the development agenda for the transformation of people’s lives. She then alludes to the preamble of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa where the participation of the people is of paramount importance. That is the commitment of the government to create an open society which is based on the will of the people. The importance of these assertions lies in the impact of the government’s development programs on the reality on the ground, as Mubangizi (2007) also questioned if the government’s choice of efficiency and value for money rather than people’s participation for poverty alleviation and general community development had been of any tangible benefit at all to the people.

This question is important for this research which has identified the existential reality of the escalating rates of poverty which are affecting the majority of the population in South Africa. This question also affects the approach to development that has to be taken by the MCSA which is in line with the sustainable livelihoods framework which recognizes that it is the policies and processes by the institutions and governing bodies which will enhance or worsen the effects of the vulnerability contexts on the lives of the people. This is because people have to be at the centre of all development policies and this is part of freedom. Sen (1999: 148) notes that in governing policies political freedom and human rights of liberation took precedence over the approach of development through economic advancement and he gave three reasons for his stance. Firstly, political freedom is importance for the living human being who is striving for freedom; secondly, freedom enables the person to have a voice and demand what he needs; thirdly, freedom is instrumental to form the mind so that one is able to tell clearly what he needs without fear.

⁷ This was a declaration which was made by the participants of an inter- Regional Consultation on people’s participation on development which was signed at Manila in the Philippines in June 1989. This declaration proposes a people-centred approach to development as opposed to the conventional means which were observed to be demeaning to the people, promoted social inequality and did not promote social cohesion in communities. This was development which was based on social grants and assistance where the whole process was in the hands of the foreigner instead of being driven by the recipients; the members of the community.

The implication is that in a situation of political freedom the people are able to take a part in the development processes and economic advancement will happen.

This statement in the case of South Africa brings the recognition that there is still more work to be done after the attainment of independence in 1994, for the complete liberation of the people, so that they can participate in development. It must be recognized that in the fight against poverty much more needs to happen over and above the government policies.

In the MCSA the development strategy is expressed in term of human and economic development in its overall mission for transformation and healing in the post-democratic society in South Africa. In this research the analysis of the causes of the existing poverty were located in its socio-political structures by several scholars (see Forster 2008: 412, Narayan et al. 2000: 251, Boff & Boff 1987, Vika 2008: 27, Christian 2011: 53) and many others. In this case the MCSA has to devise strategies to approach development which will encompass the liberation and freedom of the people from these structures.

The work of Benjamini (2015: 10) is helpful for this aspect as he notes that the MCSA still has a lot of work in many areas including the reconciliation between different classes and ethnic groups, reconstruction of communities, development issues to alleviate poverty , crime and corruption and violence against women and children. He notes that even though the traditions of the church are strong, there is a need to deconstruct some of the historical practices to break the dichotomy between policies and their realization.

6.8 Livelihood Strategies: the approach to the implementation of the pillar to development and economic empowerment

The approach to development to be adopted by the MCSA must be able to address the above-mentioned concerns, mainly based on the lack of people's participation in the planning and implementation of the development strategies. The agency of social holiness is key, mainly on the empowerment of transformative disciples who are willing to spread scriptural holiness, to bring transformation to the societies where they live. This will enhance the implementation of the mission strategy on development and economic empowerment by the MCSA. The South African policies for development, mainly based on the GEAR policy, exclude the people from participation in the processes as they are focused primarily on economic growth. Thus the church has to take an active role, using the SLF approach to development, which will enhance the present livelihoods of the people, especially in dealing with the policies, institutions and processes.

Insights in this section will be based on the work of Korten (1990: 114), in a bid to influence especially the structures and policies which inhibit people from exercising their livelihoods to overcome the vulnerability contexts which keep them in poverty. According to Korten (1990: 114), the approach to development through what is popularly known as the four generational framework as a way of seeking institutional change processes. In this approach Korten (1990: 122) put his focus on the actions of NGOs, who have a particular focus to make a difference in the lives of the people through concentrating on the problems that affect them.

This study will suggest that the approach to development through the third and fourth generations is a way to address government policies and process that trap people in deprivation, aggravating poverty. The argument is that the first two generations will be ineffective to revitalize the MCSA pillar on development and human empowerment.

According to Korten (1990: 115), the first generation concentrates mainly on relief and welfare programs for immediate relief from emergency situations which may come under the title of "humanitarian aid". He explains that these actions can be traced historically to relief given to victims of war by the many Non-Governmental Organizations, including efforts by churches and missionaries.

This will only be dealing with the symptoms of poverty. It creates a dependency syndrome as it will not empower the people to take part in their development but only serve to continue to trap them to look for hand-outs. The second generation according to Korten, (1990: 118) are the efforts that concentrate only on local development on a small scale which are called community development and they are the efforts to address certain needs in an attempt to attain self-sustainability. This is commonly done through outside sponsorship and the work usually happens in groups through an agent, under the assumption that the people are not capable of helping themselves because of a lack of resources/facilities and education. He further explains that the NGO in the second generation approach is the one responsible for mobilizing the community and the efforts on education and development are directed towards the development of the human resources, who are assumed to be deficient in skills and ability. This approach to development usually becomes problematic, mainly because the donor agencies come with their own agenda, which is imposed on the people. These approaches are not capable of changing powerful structures which render the poor powerless. In most cases second generation approaches only last the duration of the funding as they are not sustainable.

The stance of this project is to approach the enhancement of development in the MCSA through the third generation, which was described by Korten (1990: 120) as a means to achieve systems of sustainable development because they go beyond the immediate relief of situations and individual communities to seek to address identified policies and call for institutional changes at both the local and international landscapes. He further explains that the third generation came into being to address the deficiencies of the first and the second generations in their inability to result in long-term rewards and their dependency on outside interventions which benefit only a few individuals, not the whole community. Further to this point is that approaching development through this generation is when the NGO negotiates with national governing bodies for policies that will give the local people more access to and control over available resources.

These are the policies and institutions that will support the local people's participation in the development policies by removing the obstacles that limit them. In the language of the SLF, these are the policies and structures which enhance the success of the livelihoods of the people.

The assumption in this approach is that the people are very capable of making their lives better but are held back by structures that limit the availability of resources and the existence of corrupt systems that exploit them.

Change and development will happen when the people are capacitated, when they are empowered to be able to negotiate better conditions for themselves and the NGO enhances these processes as a catalyst. In the case of the MCSA which has positioned itself for reconstruction in the post-democracy era, armed with an all-encompassing liberating agenda for mission. The implication of this approach is that the members of the church have to take it upon themselves to address the policies of government which are not enhancing development in the country, beginning in the church itself. This will be part of their works of mercy, the means of grace, as Field (2015: 188) observed that on social holiness the people became disciples and stewards of God who would not be content to live in a world where structural injustice was practiced. These disciples became God's representatives by standing on the side of the ones who are treated with cruelty and excluded from participation. This is important because the practice of social holiness upholds justice, mercy and truth. According to Storey (2014: 80), this was the critical identity of the Methodist church, to stand with the people, especially the poor, and to address the structures and policies which deny them life. He suggested that this needs to be reclaimed for the restoration of the identity of the church.

There is also a need to address the policies and systems within the MCSA which cause the disconnection which was recognized by (Light 2008, Benjamini 2015 and Storey 2006: 18), mentioned in the earlier sections of this research, that the policies made at the decision making level of the MCSA seem not to reach the grassroots to address the reality of the issues of poverty faced by the people. This may be part of the problem according to the findings of the practice of social holiness using the philosophical outlook by MacIntyre (1985), where it was found that the growth of the MCSA to be one of the largest religious institutions did not correspond with growth in discipleship, hence the ongoing conference call for the formation of transformative discipleship.

This affirms the need for action according to Korten (1990), through the third generation approach to examine critically the church policies and structures which affect these policies. These may include issues of communication, language and proximity of the leaders to the people

because it may also be true, as Kumalo (2006) asserts, that the journey of the New Land program was not a success because the people at grassroots did not understand it. These processes will also enable the church to address the question on structures that Forster (2008), asks on whether the MCSA had dealt with the structures which were inherited from the apartheid era which promoted inequality. However, (Korten (1990: 123) identifies the main misgiving with the third generation approach as its deficiency located chiefly on the scale of operation. This being the fact that its sustainability lies in the ability to duplicate the efforts many times in the various sectors of society as one attempts to address those particular policies on a global scale. He suggests that the third generation theory does not capture the whole picture, as it does not address the global issues which affect the effective development. Thus, he recommends the fourth generation approach which involved “people’s movements” which is line with what Storey (2004: 18) advocated for.

According to Korten (1990: 127), the goal of the fourth generation approach is to invest energy towards critical mass movements of people in an independent and decentralized way, as part of the initiative towards the attainment of a social vision. This will be located at a global level and the role of the NGO is mainly in the management of networking towards the achievement of the set goals towards common visions of people-centred development, which is the alternative to the existing scenario. The information is disseminated using many media channels available from local social networks, the social media and many others.

The MCSA point of intervention to assume the third and fourth approaches to development, especially the fourth generation, is relevant and critical. This was observed by Swart (2006), a senior director and researcher at the University of Stellenbosch, that the church’s initiative becomes more effective in the fourth generation intervention, especially in collaboration with other ecumenical bodies, and he cited the example of the World Council of Churches. Explaining his position, Swart (2006: 60) points out that the church can be very effective in playing the role of the NGO in the fourth generation approach, in recognition of the fact that it is already involved in efforts for social and economic upliftment of the lives of the people and there are available resources and organizations which may be channelled to this effort.

He explains that churches fit into the requirements for the fourth generation action because of their voluntary nature, being faith-based and the moral obligations of their members. He also

alludes to the importance of the people in the society who cannot be easily ignored by the church as it is called to manifest the kingdom of God in the world.

The critical function of the church for spiritual and moral development in the nurturing of the people's spiritualities would play a key role in raising their awareness towards caring for one another and attending to the issues of structural injustice. However, Swart (2006: 192) notes further that for the church to effectively participate in the third and fourth generation development outlook, there was need for its transformation into new ways of perception, to adopt new skills and different engagement in praxis. This is necessitated by the history of the church having been engaged in charity work and the project-oriented approach. He affirms the position of the church, its identification with the poor and the oppressed, together with its location with the population at the grassroots as the ideal proponent for the advancement of development at the fourth generation level, as suggested by Korten (1990).

This is the suggested plan of action for the MCSA as it pronounces to practice social holiness with the aim to spread scriptural holiness in the land with a well-stated development agenda in that it has to be in the forefront, first in generation 3 to address the policies and institutions which deny the people the full potential of their livelihoods. These are the socio-economic structures that create the identified inequality, the deprivations located in poor health and educational systems, the god-complexes which trap the people in powerlessness which are perpetuated by the powerful and rich of society. Then in generation 4 which calls for a new movement of transformed disciples who will be faithful to the Wesleyan heritage by take up action in advocacy and speak on behalf of the poor, becoming the prophetic voice in the society. This was suggested by Storey (2006), mentioned earlier in this section of the research project. This is the voice that will speak and reveal the values of the kingdom of God, which stands for justice, equality and general well-being of all people. By these actions the MCSA would be demonstrating to the world the values of the kingdom of God being the alternative community.

The critical mass movements of people calling out for change is not limited to the MCSA, as there are other people who are calling for the church[ecumenical] to take action for the liberation of the poor and those living on the margins in South Africa. Bentley (2013: 265) poses a critical question in the new South Africa when he wonders whether the voice of the church has been silenced by the "new socio-political structures" in the new democracy in South Africa. He poses

this question as part of the search for the direction of the prophetic voice of the church, which seems to be facing challenges in finding a new focus after the demise of apartheid, which was an obvious target.

Having recognized that the church still had a role of social reconstruction, Bentley (2013: 265) then alludes to a presentation of Wiseman Nkuhlu to the South African Council of Churches in 1995, who noted the suitability of the church to the social reconstruction agenda because of its location in the vicinity of the people at grassroots level. He identifies roles of the church, to include the facilitating of reconciliation and healing between communities who were previously divided and fighting crime and corruption.

These are some of the issues which need to be addressed in South Africa which are leading to the escalating poverty levels. These will be the actions of the church which will constitute the prophetic voice, as was suggested by several scholars (see Bentley 2013, S. Kumalo 2003, Koopman 2009, Bentley 2012, Forster 2012 and J deGruchy1979) to be the voice to the government to look out for the upliftment of the dignity of humanity and to hold the government accountable in its delivery of basic services and addressing the social issues which will promote equality for all people. This would constitute the much needed alternative voice of consciousness and perception which is necessary for the reconstruction of society.

The challenge of ecumenism in the current context was recognized by both (Bentley 2013: 270; Maluleke 2005: 117), who note with concern the fragmented state of the church as an ecumenical body. This fragmentation is believed to be contributing to the problems of the failure of the church to find its new prophetic role in the new South Africa. The challenge is the location of the prophetic voice in the ecumenical bodies which are facing their own struggles of function and identity, yet they could play very critical roles in lobbying, lament and advocacy for the poor. On the overall contribution of ecumenical bodies to development, LeBruyns (2006: 582-584) recognizes them as very important players who contributed immensely to the emancipation of the people in the past as they formed a formidable force against the life-denying practices, ideologies and some legislation which stripped the well-being of the people and dehumanized them. He suggests that they still have a role to play in development, particularly in advocacy for a better life for the people, especially in view of their strong networks.

The MCSA as part of ecumenical bodies has to put effort towards the revitalization of ecumenism, even though it exists with its own traditions and strategies. This was also suggested by Benjamini (2015) who noted that there was need to be more involved ecumenically in the MCSA for the success of its mission agenda.

LeBruyns (2006: 583) also warns against being caught in what he called the “denominational myopia”, which may be the short-sightedness to believe that development will come easily because of certain set strategies, structures and numbers which may be implemented by a particular denomination. An effective people’s movement, which is the fourth generation outlook according to Korten (1990: 128), happens best at the level of ecumenism.

6.9 Livelihood strategies and outcomes

According to the MCSA, the pillar for economic empowerment and development is the specified way to deal with the phenomenon of poverty, both in the church and society, as explained earlier in this research paper. It is the aim of this study to find ways of enhancing the realization of this mission strategy through the agency of social holiness in a bid to alleviate poverty in South Africa. In line with the SLF framework to find suitable livelihood strategies that will enhance development, it would be helpful to assume a definition of development according to Korten (1990: 25). This definition of development encompasses all the processes which are adopted by the members of society to mobilize their institutional and personal capacities, together with management of their resources with the overall aim to improving their quality of life, in line with their aspirations. In assuming this approach to development the MCSA members would be involved in their own development, using their own capital bank and the initiative will emanate from the grassroots the societies. This will be an improvement of the present agenda which is available in a form of statements with no suggested plan of action.

According to Speckman (2007: 26-27), authentic development happens when the people/human factor is enhanced in the “people-centred development approach” and he recognizes that this approach resulted in holistic development. Central to his work were insights into community development from the ‘*Tenth International Conference of Social Work 1985*’, where development is described in terms of people organizing their efforts, resources and participation in a move to self-reliance. Speckman (2007: 26, 27) recognize the human efforts which are put in

for economic advancement. He then argues against the conventional donor approaches to development in that they promoted dependency on the donors, because the donors often practiced what he called the “trickle down” approach when they release the funding in small amounts in order to keep the members of the community in their clutches. In any case, as he explains that the projects tend to benefit the donors more than the recipients.

The people centred development approach is the strategy which could bring holistic development in the MCSA and make the societies to be centres of transformation, as suggested in the vision and the mission statement of the church.

It was Korten, (1990: 218) who recognized the value of this approach to development hence he suggests the PCD for community development because it is people-based and sustainable. He recognizes that this approach is preferable because it carries social, economic and political connotations as it aims more on community growth. In this system the local people have control over their own resources and have a say on how they may be used in a sustainable manner. In this model there is more political involvement at the grassroots level, as the local governments participate together with the members of the communities.

Explaining further Korten, (1990: 219) acknowledges that the PCD allows the people to engage in livelihoods of their choice and it also promotes / sustains their culture and value as it is held strong by its emphasis on political and economic democracy as the cornerstone. This system also allows for the restoration of humanity and their reconnection to nature, as they own the land as their important resource thereby promoting the community values of self-help and respect. This will happen because in this approach the people live together, sharing their problems, and cohesion is realised. In this approach the people rely on one another for assistance as there is little financial help from outside, thus they do not consider themselves as dependent on charity from outside.

The members of the MCSA in their various societies and organizations who have been involved in the revitalization and nurturing into the above transformative discipleship processes will then engage in development within their livelihoods. Korten (1990: 218, 221) then alludes to the three basic principles of the PCD as centred on three values. First is the recognition that “sovereignty belongs to the people”, in their being the main factors for their development and having the basic

right to it. They have a right to freedom and development and the role of the government is to help them achieve this status. The second value is that the people have a right to control the use of their resources used for their development and the community.

The members of the community also have a right to be given the correct information to enable them to make informed decisions and the government is accountable to them and has to protect those rights.

The third and last value pertains to outside help in terms of sponsorship, in that if outside help comes into the community, its contribution is measured in the ability to enhance the PCD agenda and the donors cannot impose their own ideas.

The suggestion of this research paper is that the MCSA has to promote PCD in the various communities which will be sustainable and will give a wide range of livelihood outcomes which would be specific to their contexts as part of the development agenda. The SLF recognizes the existence of livelihood strategies in any community; these are the ways by which the people use their assets portfolio in a sustainable way to survive. A case in hand of this suggestion is the work of Allwood (2012), working in the Eastern Cape, who advocates for a series of rural service centres to be set up to enhance the productivity of the local people. He concentrated on the agricultural sector, because he observed that the people in that context have abandoned their livelihood of producing crops and livestock to feed themselves and as a result many were surviving on government grants. He suggests that these centres will help to provide technical support, connect people with information and assist with the value chain, up to marketing.

Allwood (2012), promotes the use of locally available raw materials which will be user-friendly and contribute to the conservation of natural resources. This can be one example of livelihood strategies where the people are involved and it is aimed at their level, where they are assisted to improve production using their natural capital. This is in line with the work of Korten (1990) because this endeavour as not aimed at generation one and two only, as it also involves extensive networking and support from all government sectors, lobbying for support for the necessary infrastructure and better educational and health systems.

The desired outcomes for all these processes [from the empowerment and nurturing of disciples as part of the enhancement of social holiness in the MCSA, to the implementation of people-

centred development strategies] will be the attainment of the vision for the agenda for development and empowerment.

This pillar aims to achieve the restoration of dignity to the previously deprived people through empowerment and development. This empowerment will be spiritually-based, emanating from the liberating power of the gospel, as the people move and address the structures of injustice which keep them in poverty.

Hereby empowerment will spread from the church to the community, bringing the much-desired transformation, which has always been synonymous with the Methodist movement. The backdrop to the poverty experienced by many people in South African society is the powerlessness to do something about it, which makes people rely on charity and government grants for survival. Over and above the actions of mass movement against the structures and policies as part of the prophetic voice of the church, there is the critical issue of empowerment. According to Speckman (2007: 227), powerlessness exists due to the imputed ignorance of the victim that he/she is incapable of doing something about the situation. Yet on the other hand he recognized empowerment as the activity of bestowing power to something or some individual. In the case in hand, there is latent power in the people which needs to be activated through the processes, especially through nurturing and education, so that the people can live their lives of social holiness, being guided by the values of the kingdom of God. Through these empowerment initiatives the people will be able to regain boldness and take part in their own emancipation from poverty as they stand up and claim their right to live lives of dignity. They will then regain their humanity and be able to take care of each other in the spirit of Ubuntu in the new holiness movement. When these actions forms the centre and life of the church, the cutting edge of the Methodist movement will be regained and its identity will be restored.

CHAPTER SEVEN

7.1 Conclusion of the study

The main objective of this study was to investigate the present practice of social holiness in the MCSA as a way of life for the members as they live out their calling to spread scriptural holiness in the world. The focus of the study was the situation of poverty in the Republic of South Africa which is severely compromising the lives of the majority of the people, including the members of the Church. The approach of this study was to investigate the practice of social holiness in the MCSA by using the concept of virtue ethics based on the philosophical thinking of MacIntyre (1985). His argument is that the value of a virtue is in its practice within its set traditions. MacIntyre (1985) perceives the aim of any practice as the attainment of internal goods which are the standards of excellence which are critical for community-building and to uphold the values of integrity, justice and honesty.

In main trust of this study is the quest for Christian perfection by the members of the MCSA, which is the growth in the love of God and neighbour, according to the teachings of John Wesley, who believed that the Methodists were raised for this purpose (Wesley in Williams 1988: 238). This doctrine translates practically to lives practising social holiness which culminates in the formation of transformative disciples in the Methodist church. In this study social holiness assumed the form of a 'practice' according to the MacIntyre (1985) analogy.

Using available literature, an exploration was conducted on how the MCSA was nurturing and upholding the practice of social holiness in the life of the members. The main argument of this study is that, since social holiness impacts on the spiritual and moral character of the members and that if they are honest to this tradition they will become faithful disciples whose works of piety will manifest in works of mercy to their neighbours who suffer from social ills. Through these works of mercy the believers become channels of God's grace and become the prophetic voice representing the values of the kingdom of God. It is envisaged in this study that ideally the

practice of social holiness should enhance the realisation of the mission pillar on development and economic empowerment through the actions of the disciples, the members of the Methodist church.

7.1.1 Research findings and conclusions

The second chapter of this study, in exploring the phenomenon of poverty in South Africa, concluded that when one assumes a multi-dimensional approach to the understanding poverty it is revealed that many people in South Africa, including members of the MCSA, suffer from poverty because they are denied opportunities to take part in their development. This affects mainly those people who live in the rural areas, in particular the former homelands during the apartheid era. It was found in this chapter that many people in South Africa suffer from many dimensions of deprivation and vulnerability contexts which are interconnected and serve to keep them poor. These vulnerability contexts include an ineffective education system which does not adequately empower many people with necessary skills suitable for the available jobs and this adds to the high unemployment rate in South Africa. The poor people who live in isolated rural areas with poor infrastructure suffer the most, especially with poor education facilities compared to their counterparts in town and this compounds the situation of inequality.

This chapter problematized the determination of poverty according to the conventional methods of using income and expenditure indices because it reduces the poor people to the masses who are to be objects of pity. This is a problem because this method fails to recognize that the poor have their livelihoods by which they overcome the vulnerability contexts and, in any case, their voice is left out when these figures are determined.

It was also found that the powerlessness in the poor people results from socio-historical structures which work through god-complexes by making the poor believe they were created to be in that status, as they are fed with false information. Religion has also been identified as potentially contributing to the powerlessness of the people through exploitation which is making them believe that they will live better lives in heaven – a notion of “pie in the sky” theology - which is contrary to the Biblical teachings of wholeness of life and well-being. This is what leads to the dehumanisation of the people and it distorts the image of God in creation.

It was concluded also in this chapter that many people suffer from relative poverty because of the unequal distribution of income in South Africa. This unequal distribution of wealth is also recognised by scholars in the Methodist church who traced its origin mainly to the existence of oppressive governing structures which breed high levels of corruption.

This study revealed that the main source and perpetuator of this inequality lies in the approach to development by the South African government. This is the neo-liberal free market approach, which is aimed at growing the economy, which has been found to have failed to help the poor because the trickle down of wealth failed to happen and instead a new class of black elites is being created. The existential reality of poverty in South Africa was exposed in this chapter as the new *kairos* facing the church and there is an urgent need for action for the restoration of God's way to economic development.

The third chapter found that the MCSA is a church with a mission agenda which is expressed in terms of healing and transformation and it is aimed at the realization of the vision for the holistic healing of Africa from its social ills. The understanding of mission by the MCSA is holistic, seeking for justice and liberation, as it is aimed at addressing the poverty which is affecting the people, especially due to unequal wealth distribution, poor education, unemployment and many other factors. This is in the form of a vision, mission statement and ongoing calls for transformation. The chapter also exposed that the MCSA agenda for development and empowerment agenda is rooted in its heritage of the Wesleyan tradition and it resonates to development in terms of liberation, transformation, and freedom.

The third chapter also found that new trends in mission are emerging where there is a shift from the ecclesial missiology to the nurturing of individual spiritual discipleship in which the emphasis is put on the agency of ordinary people to be at the forefront of mission. The chapter also identified that the pastor/spiritual leader is a very important element in the process of mission, especially in the empowerment and training of the disciples. This chapter also came to the conclusion that the goodness of the mission pillar on economic empowerment and development has thus since 2004, far not translated into significant changes to the lives of the many poor people in South Africa, especially in dealing with inequality in wealth distribution which is mainly created by the approaches to development by the government of South Africa.

The situation of poverty in the society still poses a challenge to the MCSA to find ways to enhance the practical implementation of this mission imperative.

The conclusion of the fourth chapter is that the driving force behind the transformative doctrine of social holiness is the love of God. The internal holiness which translates to outward actions is extended to the neighbour in the quest for Christian perfection, which is central doctrine for all Methodists. This love of God is the goal of the salvation process and it is nurtured through small group training which empower the people of God for their lives as disciples of Jesus Christ. These are the disciples whose lives will be devoted as stewards towards being the conduits of transferring the love of God to society through their outward works of mercy. These are the means of grace which flow out to the community, being the prophetic voice standing for truth, justice and mercy against the unjust socio-political structures of oppression which promote poverty, among many other negative things.

Standing on its heritage, discipleship is very important as the human agency to drive mission, because holiness is not for personal benefit but for the transformation of the society. The actions by the disciples through social holiness will be the restoration of the just kingdom of God, as the prophets of the Old Testament called for. Social holiness agency becomes the holistic approach of taking the gospel to the community by the disciples, which results in social transformation through the pastoral actions of attending to the social ills and its nature of liberation in advocacy against the unjust structures. This was evidenced in the actions of John Wesley and the early Methodists, which served in the restoration of dignity to the poor people as they came closer to experience their filthiness and poverty and set up several reforms to address their situations.

The fifth chapter findings are based on the philosophical outlook of practice according to (MacIntyre, 1985), this is a tool which is used in many fields to determine the quality of performance in terms of the standards of excellence to achieve goods internally which are the desire of any practice. The practice will be found intrinsically within the institution which relies on goods external for its profits, fame and structures, yet it is the practice which is essential for its existence and community building. It was found in this chapter that for any practice to be authentic it needs to be true to the virtues of justice, courage and truth in its traditions and

practices. Using this philosophical approach as suggested by (MacIntyre, 1985) and based on the work of several Methodist scholars including the call to conference in 2013 by the presiding bishop in Southern Africa, it was concluded that the MCSA is deficient in its practice of social holiness in the contemporary era of the situation of poverty.

The evidence of this deficiency in the practice of social holiness is traced to the lack of transformative disciples who would be effective in taking the mission forward by being instrumental in spreading the gospel of Christ to bring transformation in society through their spread of scriptural holiness. Deficiency is also observed in that the growth of the MCSA as an institution as evidenced in the goods external in terms of the numbers, structures, organizations and the opulence of the members of the church. Unfortunately, this is happening at the expense of the growth in discipleship; hence the call from the 2013 conference by the presiding Bishop for the formation of disciples at grassroots level. It was found that there is a failure to connect to the realities that the people face, because of the deficiency in the nurturing of discipleship and community building, even though the structures are still in place and this has led to paralysis and ineffectiveness in the mission of the church.

7.1.2 Suggested Way forward actions following the findings in this research

The sixth chapter of the paper consolidated all its findings to come out with a way forward for how social holiness can be enhanced as agency for the reactivation of human empowerment and development in the MCSA. It came up with the following recommendations:

First, it is recommended that social holiness be enhanced in the MCSA through training and nurturing of transformative discipleship using the available structures: the class meetings, Bible studies, revised liturgies, hymns, sermons and other avenues available. This training may also extend to the various organizations of the church, so that they are able to meet their mission objectives. The objective of the training is empowerment and to enhance the practice of social holiness, where disciples spread the love of God to others in works of mercy and this begins with personal transformation which extends to the church and the rest of society as people go out to share the good news of the gospel practically. Spiritual enhancement have to be encouraged with the reemphasis of the teaching about the precepts of the salvation process and how it affects the character which seeks to grow in the love of God.

The second recommendation is aimed at the restoration of the dignity of the poor through dialogue. When the transformed disciples are formed at grassroots level they will be able to dialogue amongst themselves about their vulnerability contexts and together find solutions.

This dialogue is very important because the mission strategies will then be better understood, as they will be translated into the local languages and brought down to the level of the local congregations. Many from the rural areas have limited education and even have problems understanding the church documents (including the Methodist Book of Order, which is written in English). When people understand, they make better disciples for spreading scriptural holiness. Coupled with this recommendation is the critical role played by the minister in the mission for education which has to begin in the local congregations. Efforts need to be put by the church in motivation and constant upgrading of the leadership skills of the ministers in a bid to horn the cutting age of the agency for mission. This will bring freedom for many members of the MCSA and it will bring liberation and transformation.

The third recommendation is the call for the new movement as it was suggested by Storey, (2004:18), that there was a need for the reclamation of the Methodist movement identity which opted to stand with the poor in their practice of social holiness. Actions have to begin with the redistribution of resources owned by the MCSA as an institution and individual members for redistribution and sharing with the many who are poor. This can only happen with enhanced transformative disciples who are on their path to spread scriptural holiness. The new movement will bring back the prophetic voice to the people.

They will then form the mass movement which was suggested by Korten (1990: 123), that effective development happens when the people question the structures and policies which deny the poor opportunities and choices and deprive them of their rights. These socio-historical structures exist both in the MCSA and government policies which deny the people participation and promote unequal distribution of wealth. Poverty, being the new kairos in South Africa, cannot be allowed to continue unabated and when the people rise up it brings freedom and the cutting edge of the Methodist people. These movements have to be inclusive of the women and youth members who form the majority of the membership in the MCSA.

The fourth recommendation is the recognition of the livelihoods for all communities together with the available capital (financial, human, social and otherwise), which needs to be enhanced as a way for the people-centred development approach where all the people participate on an equal basis.

Whatever assistance is given, it must be aimed at enhancing the people's livelihoods, because that will facilitate sustainable development. The project approach to development is to be discouraged as it is top down and does not empower the people to take part in their own development. Economic empowerment will happen when the people have been motivated in their own livelihoods and they are able to recognize their own potential to be key players in making a difference. The focus is to empower the individuals in recognition that they are human and they are capable of taking part in their own decisions. All decisions pertaining their empowerment have come from them. This is what the pillar on human empowerment and development is all about because it is concerned about the plight of the poor and is aimed at making their homes centres of transformation. And surely that is recognition of their humanity.

7.2 Further research areas

The immediate area of research would be a social analysis by the MCSA to gather the actual facts on the impact of the mission agenda and the constraints to its implementation. This exercise is long overdue since the mission congress in 2004, the MCSA have never taken the initiative to find out the impact of these strategies no wonder its own members look to the government for assistance in fighting the scourge of poverty. The other area of research would be the role of women in the mission of the church since they form the majority of the membership, yet the scholarship by Methodist women is very scarce.

Even though one of the recommendations of this research project is the mobilisation of mass movement through the organisations of the church to take the lead in calling the government for people centred approaches to government, it is not enough. More research needs to happen, especially on how to change of mind-set of dependency on grants and hand-outs from the government for survival, and also on how to do public theology because the dependency syndrome is entrenched in the minds – people believe still that the government has the best strategies even when they continuously do not work. This work will have to involve expertise

from various fields, including sociologists, psychologists and theologians. Change must also involve training of the agents - the pastors and ministers - to put them in a position to provide leadership in public theology and advocacy programs.

There is further research also needed on the suggested approach in this research paper on people-centred development through the sustainable livelihood framework. The immediate research is the social analysis in the different circuits to identify the various vulnerability contexts and the available asset portfolios.

There is need for further research on how the available church land can be used in a sustainable manner as part of the mission pillar on human empowerment and development in the MCSA. This is important because part of the implementation plan for the mission imperative on development and empowerment include the use of church land in a profitable and sustainable manner. This is one available asset in many of the districts which have not been utilised such that there are many hectares which have been lost because they have not been properly registered with the church or they have been lying idle and have been encroached by squatters. Land is one of the very important assets belonging to the MCSA which have not been properly exploited to date especially in the rural areas where unfortunately the poverty is more prevalent. Further to this extensive consultations need to happen in the various circuits on the livelihoods available and the possible ways of enhancing them to avoid the top down approach.

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