A QUEST FOR A LIBERATORY LEARNING ETHOS

A CASE STUDY OF THE WOMEN'S ASSOCIATIONS IN THE UNITED CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

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201507131

Submitted in Fulfilment of the Academic Requirements for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in the Subject of
THEOLOGY AND DEVELOPMENT
at the

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL
(Pietermaritzburg Campus)

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MARCH 2011

DECLARATION

As required by University regulations, I hereby state unambiguously that this work has not been presented at any other University or any other institution of higher learning other than the University of KwaZulu-Natal, (Pietermaritzburg Campus) and that unless specifically indicated to the contrary within the text it is my original work.

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March 17, 2011

As candidate supervisor I hereby approve this thesis for submission

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March 17, 2011

CERTIFICATION

We the undersigned declare that we have abided by the School of Religion and Theology, University of KwaZulu-Natal's policy on language editing. We also declare that earlier forms of the dissertation have been retained should they be required.

GARY STUART DAVID LEONARD

March 17, 2011

CHERYL NATALIE DIBEELA

March 17, 2011

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the many women who have become part of my life.

Among these women are those who have passed away perhaps without experiencing the liberation of true humanity that I refer to in this study. These are the women that have inspired this work: 'Mummy' Kathleen Norkie, Mmamashelwa Barei, 'MmaMoiseraele' Pinkie Dibeela, 'Aunt Maggy' Madge Ganger, 'MmaSekwati' Gabosekelwe Sekwati, Daisy and Setshego. May the souls of the faithful departed through the mercy of God rest in peace.

And

To the women whom I hope and trust will still have an opportunity to experience this liberatory ethos within their lives. They are too many to mention: my mother, Rose Prince; my sister, Kaylene Booth; my sisters-in-law Motswariemang Kesiilwe, Tshegofatso Dibeela, Lesego Dibeela, Goitseone Moatshe and Arenda Prince; my aunts and cousins, as well as the very many friends and women in and outside the church that have shaped my life.

And

To the next generation of women, particularly my daughter Lorato Dibeela, my nieces and all their peers, that they might endeavour to know and appreciate authentic living amidst the overwhelming challenges faced by women.

"*I came that they may have life and have it abundantly*."
(John 10:10)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I owe a huge gratitude to several people who have contributed to the completion of this study.

My grateful thanks go firstly to the late Prof. Steve De Gruchy, my previous supervisor who always believed in me and encouraged me to become the expert of my subject. May his soul through the mercy of God rest in peace.

I also owe much appreciation to Prof. Sarojini Nadar who guided me through the final stages of this study. Her devotion as supervisor, her wisdom and warm-hearted personality are the attributes that kept me going. She assisted me over this short period of time with skills to comfortably yet confidently put my thoughts to paper. She is an inspiration to me. A word of thanks also to the Rev. Gary S D Leonard for language editing my work, as well as providing the layout and desktop publishing.

A word of thanks must also extend to the staff, friends, and colleagues of the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa who have been most helpful throughout the period of my study.

The greatest motivators have been my parents Rose and Freddie Prince and my children Tumi and Lorato Dibeela. Prince, my husband has been my primary source of sustenance, not only through this most challenging time, but for the twenty-one years of our marriage. Their unconditional love and support has carried me through this study.

ABSTRACT

This study was sparked by a concern about the impact of economic and social injustices and ecological destruction on the livelihoods of communities in Southern Africa. While the churches' responses to these injustices have been palliative and benevolent, the study argues that the church has not done enough to critically engage the oppressive systems which maintain these injustices. One of the key questions that this study seeks to answer is: What is needed in order to develop a culture of 'critical engagement' given that the church has opportunities, means and infrastructure to enable a critical and liberatory ethos, for the community at large?

In order to answer this question, a case study with the Women's Associations of the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa (UCCSA) was pursued. This case study allowed for an intensive investigation of the Women's Associations in the church through which pertinent questions were asked of how and why things happen in the way that they do. The research question therefore was "In the light of the enormous challenges faced by women in church and society in the twenty-first century in Southern Africa, do the Women's Associations in the UCCSA offer a liberatory learning ethos to enable individual and communal empowerment for its members?"

The study first establishes principles of a liberatory learning ethos that could be empowering to women. These principles for a liberatory learning ethos are drawn from two theoretical frameworks, namely, Village learning and African Women's theologies. Thereafter, the study describes the current challenges faced by women in Southern Africa so as to explain why a liberatory learning ethos is a necessity in the Women's Associations of the UCCSA. A survey of the prevalent learning ethos is undertaken in order to demonstrate some of the limitations the Women's Associations and the UCCSA experience in responding to the challenges faced by women. The study concludes with an exploration to establish the extent to which African

culture and theological resources developed in Southern Africa can assist to construct a liberatory learning ethos for the Women's Associations of the UCCSA. Such an ethos ought to enable individual and communal empowerment for its members.

Key Terms: *African and Black Theology; African Traditional Culture; African Women's Theology; Apartheid Education; Batswana; Bible; Biblical hermeneutics; Botho; Council for World Mission; Feminist Theology; Jesus Movement; Kairos Theology; Liberatory Learning Ethos; Missionary Education; Mukti Barton; Paulo Freire; Southern Africa; Steve Biko; Tswana Learning; United Congregational Church of Southern Africa; Village learning; World Alliance of Reformed Churches; Women's Associations; World Council of Churches.*

GLOSSARY[1]

ABM	American Board Mission
AIC	African Indigenous Church
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AACC	All Africa Conference of Churches
BC	Black Consciousness
BCC[1]	Bantu Congregational Church
BCC[2]	Botswana Council of Churches
BCM	Black Consciousness Movement
BWF	Black Women's Federation
CUC	Church Unity Commission
CUSA	Congregational Union of South Africa
CWBM	Christian Woman's Board Missions
CWM	Council for World Mission
CWMM	Community of Women and Men in Mission
EATWOT	Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians
FRELIMO	Frente de Libertação de Moçambique
IMB	Isililo/Manyano/Bomme
LMS	London Missionary Society
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
NGK	Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk
NPK	Netritto Proshikkhon Kendro
PACT	Programme to Affirm, Challenge and Transform

REC	Reformed Ecumenical Council
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SASO	South African Student's Organisations
SWAPO	South West African People's Organisation
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats
UCCSA	United Congregational Church of Southern Africa
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
URC	United Reformed Church
VOC	Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie
WA	Women's Association
WAD	Women's Affairs Department
WARC	World Alliance of Reformed Churches
WCC	World Council of Churches
WCRC	World Communion of Reformed Churches
WIDSAA	Women in Development Southern Africa Awareness
WNGOC	Women's Non-Governmental Organisations Coalition
WWC	Women's Work Committee
WWDP	Women's World Day of Prayer
YWCA	Young Women's Christian Association

[1] This present study utilises the standard set of abbreviations for use in Biblical Studies essays as approved by the Society of Biblical Literature. These conventions can be accessed at: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/~eslinger/genrels/SBLStandAbbrevs.html/>

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1. Background and Motivation

Setshego was a mother of two children and three grandchildren. She stumbled into the church one day as I was preaching a sermon on the theme of the "bent woman" in Luke 13:10-17. This was shockingly ironic because the small body of Setshego could have easily been described as that of 'the bent woman.' Her body was emaciated and dirty from neglect. She said that she needed money to buy food. Many congregants saw her plea as a ploy to support a drunken habit. She was rejected by many including her family and blamed for having lived a delinquent lifestyle for which only she was to blame. Later on, I discovered that she was HIV positive and was struggling to make a living. Setshego's home was one small room where she, her children and grandchildren slept, had their meals and bathed. When Setshego died I was there and she said she was now going to a place where, there will be shelter, enough food, clothing and no shortage of anything. Her final words were 'God has prepared a place for me'. Her mother said that she deserved all of what she got, and left the room. Setshego died that night.

The story of Setshego reflects not an isolated story, but the experiences of many women in Botswana and in Southern Africa in particular. For some years, I have spent time exercising a ministry among the most disadvantaged section of the community in Botswana. These community members were disadvantaged for a number of reasons, not least of all because of unemployment. In the case of the children, many were orphaned due to HIV&AIDS. This resulted in fewer opportunities for those who had no breadwinner in the home. They were either dependent on social services, which were scarce, or were without such necessary documentation as birth certificates in order to access grant government programmes. As a result, many became dependent on those family members who were better off.

The situation in which some had privileges more than others was the result of an economic system which favoured the rich and affluent.[1] Encounters with such people as Setshego had a huge impact on my perceptions of faith.

After Setshego's visit to the church, I regularly visited her to ensure that she had what she needed. On the eve of her death, Setshego asked me to take care of her children as she thought that her own affairs would be taken care of after death. The days following her death, we as the church and the family, performed all the regular rituals to show our last respects to Setshego.

This incident shattered my romanticised understanding of the Christian faith and awakened new insights within me. Setshego's struggle made me realise that it is not enough for church institutions to try and provide palliative responses to situations of injustice. I struggled within myself with the many questions regarding Setshego and others like her who lived in abject poverty. Some of the main questions which kept troubling my mind included: "What value is this place which is to be prepared in the after-life if Setshego had no fulfilment in her life here upon earth?" After all, she had no food, little clothing and hardly a place she could call home. "How could Setshego

[1] An example of this kind of analysis of the economic system is given by Rogate Mshana, an Economist in the World Council of Churches. Mshana presents an unambiguous view of how Global Capitalism as an economic structure has a negative impact on the social and political causes of oppression within our societies. He explains that capitalism as a structure operates within what is termed surplus value. (Mshana 2007:2). African women such as Setshego are victims of this global system that makes women and children expendable.

experience such severe poverty in one of *the* richest countries in Southern Africa?" "Of what value is the church's reading of scripture if it is not able to make a difference in the lives of those who make up the disadvantaged and oppressed sections of our society, such as women like Setshego?" These questions are not unrelated to my own identity as a Black South African woman with mixed ancestry.[2]

As with many South Africans of my background, we know where we hail from in our white ancestry and are able to name it with much ease; yet, we often have no real knowledge about our Black lineage. This is because we were brought up under a repressive political system that made us think that 'whiteness' is more important than our 'Blackness.' Such colonial brainwashing caused many Black people of mixed ancestry to intentionally delete their Black heritage and behave as if it never existed. The system denigrated us and imposed a definition on us, which is the term 'coloured'.[3] What is sad is that many people have adopted this prescribed definition without question. In fact, many seem overly protective and even proud of being named 'coloured.' This mystery about our exact parentage has resulted in a very blurred identity for many, which makes it difficult for some to fit into a new democratic South Africa. As for me, through marriage, I have become immersed in the Tswana culture. This experience has enabled me to re-connect with shared values of an oral community with which I was brought up. It has made me proud to be Black and African.

I am an ordained minister of the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa (UCCSA). This is a Christian church denomination which is steeped in the Western history of the missionary tradition. I have been a part of the Women's Association (WA) as a member, for as long as I have been an ordained minister. To become a member of the WA in the UCCSA, one has to undergo a "robing" ceremony. This 'robing' ceremony involves the consecration of a uniform that is then handed to

[2] My own blackness is defined well by Mangena (2008:253) when she explains that being black points to the history of invasion and subjugation by those who were white through Colonisation and Apartheid. I have been part of that history of oppression and so have my parents and grandparents.

[3] Oshadi Mangena speaks about how the philosophy of Black Consciousness regarded black people of mixed parentage. "The philosophy recognised that the daughters and sons born of the sexual union between conqueror and conquered were described and defined in ways that denigrated their dignity as human beings. Ideology and legislation often prevented them from experiencing family life-living together with both biological parents coming from different cultural backgrounds" (Mangena, 2008:253). This is a reality that my own father experienced as a child.

women. It is recognition that women are part of a special community of solidarity within the church. As a member of the WA and as an ordained minister of the church for some fifteen years, I have observed the impact of economic and social injustices and ecological destruction on the livelihoods of communities, especially women, such as Setshego. I have been uneasy with the church's response to people like Setshego. These responses have ranged from dismissal: "she wants to drink," to self-righteousness: "it's her fault," to palliative: "let's give her two Pula." While all of the above responses are steeped in people's goodwill, none of them show a critical interaction with the oppressive systems which keep so many like Setshego in the destitution in which they find themselves. What I am interested in here is what is needed in order to develop a culture of 'critical engagement' in the church. Given that the church has opportunities, means and infrastructure to enable critical discussions to develop, why has this not happened? This is not to deny that there are opportunities where critical thinking is being developed, but these, in my experience, are few and far between, especially when the church has such opportunities through its various bodies to enable transformative learning.

One such body is the Women's Association. What impact then are the WAs having on the challenges that women experience in their daily lives? As someone who has studied feminist theology and Community Education, I am interested to discover how the WAs can utilise the tools of feminist theology and Community Education as a means of intervention to enable liberation in the lives of women. Furthermore, as one who has experienced domination and prejudice through systems and structures, I have a passion to see the transformation of others. It is the encounters I have had with those oppressed persons living on the margins of society that have driven me to ask questions about the efficacy of the church WAs to empower individuals and communities so that their lives could be transformed for the better.

The most important concern has been whether transformation for justice is realised within the lives of its members and if opportunities have been created within the church for such formation to take place. This worry is born out of the fact that women have remained an oppressed group and yet have remained passive about improving their own situation. It seems that many have internalised oppression to the point where they can, like Setshego, only hope for liberation in the life here-after.

The question of how enabling the WA is for its members comes out of a general apprehension of my own experiences within various organisations and committees in the church. This disquiet has been in the areas of leadership and representation, the training for ministry and policy formulation. In particular, my worry has been about women's marginal status in both the church and society and our faith response to this situation. Yet, it is not only the women who experience marginalisation in the church. For example, the youth face many life issues such as peer pressure, teenage pregnancy and substance abuse. They seem always struggle to make the right choices and are pressurised at every juncture. Another important question for me, both as an ordained minister and mother, is how the church or faith assists young people to cope within a society that is disintegrating morally and which has competing beliefs. This, I believe is the case with many other groups of people in the church as well. For example, children, people living with disability, and those of different sexual orientation all find difficulty in finding sustenance from their Christian faith; all are faced with different struggles that impact their faith.

Another experience that opened my eyes to the potential of the WAs in the shaping of the destiny of women was my involvement in the Women's Non-Governmental Organisations Coalition (WNGOC) in Botswana. This Coalition consists of a network of non-governmental organisations and non-profit women's organisations that were:

> Concerned with the empowerment of women in public and private life through the promotion of their effective participation at all levels of society, socially, economically, politically, legally and culturally.[4]

The WNGOC exposed me to the disadvantages that women experience throughout Botswana society. Membership to the WNGOC also afforded me the opportunity to see the influence of the NGO movement in their local situations in the promotion of women's rights.

[4] Women's Non-Governmental Organisation Coalition, Newsletter, (2001), *Ke Nako* 16.

2. The Research Problem

Given that I have spent almost all my adult life serving in the UCCSA, both as a member and an ordained minister, and in the NGO movement, the present research project about the church WAs as viable instruments of liberation is approached with much passion. Denscombe (1998:31) explains that in a case-study approach, one focuses on a real-life circumstance instead of creating a hypothetical situation. This is because case studies usually explored within a given social setting are concerned with relationships and processes. In line with the Denscombe's perspective, instead of naming this a hypothesis, I want to shape in a similar way my research problem. The research problem therefore is that the WAs are continuing to operate with a traditional ethos of learning, which does not necessarily empower them to deal with their struggles. If however, the WAs are given the correct tools, a liberatory learning practice can be constructed to enable the empowerment of its members. My research question is therefore:

> In the light of the enormous challenges faced by women in church and society in the twenty-first century in Southern Africa, do the WAs in the UCCSA offer a liberatory learning ethos to enable individual and communal empowerment for their members?

In particular, three elements of my research question need to be briefly explained in order for this research project to become clearer.

Firstly, it is important to explain what is meant by ethos.

An ethos or philosophy[5] is described by Akinpela as the fundamental make-up or character of a particular discipline. For the present researcher, the primary discipline

[5] A wide range of articles have been written by educationalists in which they call for an African philosophy of education especially in the context of South Africa. The book, *African Voices in Education* (2000) edited by Higgs, *et al*. gives valuable insights from various writers. Julius Nyerere's philosophy of education was an education with socialist values. These values came from his experiences and opposition to the capitalist colonial society. Nyerere also names education and leadership as vital to his philosophy. He calls strongly for self-development as opposed to material development. "Development brings freedom, provided it is development of people" and again, "There is only one way in which you can cause people to undertake their own development. That is by education and leadership" (Nyerere 1974:123). Kenneth Koma, who advocates for an egalitarian

or concern is with the fundamental make-up or character of the learning ethos in the WAs of the UCCSA. According to Akinpela (1981:1-2), philosophy is used to characterise a person or a group of persons' attitude towards life. It is an expressed worldview on life. Such a worldview is the total sum of assumptions and beliefs inherited or acquired in life. Letseka informs us that all people have a philosophy that guides the way they live. This is informed by their perceptions of otherness and the decisions and choices they make in every area of their lives. According to Letseka (2000:179), such a philosophy becomes distinct as it is set against particular beliefs and values with which people identify. One can therefore refer to this ethos of learning as that framework of ideas and beliefs through which a member of the WA interacts with their world and shares that knowledge to others and to the community of which they are part.

In this research project, I will reflect upon, analyse and evaluate the extant framework of learning in the WAs and offer tools for a new liberatory ethos. Paul Spicker (2000:6) calls this an organisational ideology; such ideology being based on a set of values, opinions and beliefs which relate to the practical issues of work.

The focus of this present study is on the WAs of the UCCSA church of which I am a member. I was baptised as an infant, confirmed into full membership of the church as a teenager, and ordained as a minister during early adulthood. Throughout this time, I have been involved in the activities of the various organisations within the church. These included the Girls and Boys organisations, the Youth movement and the Women's Association. While through these experiences I came to appreciate the role of the church in the shaping of individuals and communities, I also became increasingly dissatisfied with the inability of the church to exploit its public places for liberatory learning and transformation. This brings into focus the second element of my research question, namely liberatory learning.

This research project intends to investigate how the WAs of the UCCSA utilises their opportunities for the personal formation of its members. In particular, the focus will

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society, has also considered the philosophy of education in the Botswana context. He holds the view that the ideal of education is what constitutes the philosophy. Koma goes on to say that "The nation should redefine its national principles and its philosophy of education so that these become consonant with and complementary to a radical political philosophy" (1976:29).

be upon whether there is a receptive culture of learning within the life of the WAs for deliberate, liberative and transformational formation which can enable critical faith living. My personal view of liberatory learning follows Paulo Freire's specific notion of problem-posing education. By liberatory learning, I mean people's ability to "develop their power to perceive critically the way they exist in the world in which they find themselves; they come to see the world not as a static reality but as a reality in process, in transformation" (Freire 1996:64). Freire (1996:64) further clarifies this notion by stating that the task of problem-posing education is to demythologise reality and not to accept unquestioningly the power systems and knowledge existent in society. Instead of creating opportunity for liberatory learning for people to think critically, what I have observed is that the church normally simply follows a traditional pattern of worship through which people accept the status quo and the knowledge being offered to them.

The other reason why my concentration in this study is confined to women is because as a woman I locate myself in the oppression of women within church and society. Women, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, as we have seen earlier in the story of Setshego, have to function in a society where patriarchal structures remain intact. For example, many women are single mothers and there are no effective ways of holding fathers responsible. Because of this, I also believe that women have the ability to bring about positive change to oppressive life situations if they are afforded the opportunity to do so. This means that we need a situation whereby women are given the opportunity to participate in their own emancipation.[6] This brings us to the third element of my research question, namely, to enable individual and communal

[6] Women's individual capacity has often been questioned since they often seem passive in bringing about liberation for themselves. Sicily Muruthi clarifies this dilemma that women find themselves in by exploring Nussbaum's contribution to the Human Capabilities approaches. Nussbaum acknowledges that any woman's competence to achieve is dependent upon both internal and external capabilities. Muruthi expounds on this view of Nussbaum by explaining that "women are vulnerable not just because they lack personal capacity, but because the socio-political, economic and legal structures do not support women to exercise their capabilities" (2003:252-254). Muruthi (2003:254) further explains there is a "dialectic between the internal and combined capabilities in that social opportunity does allow for greater development of internal capability." I agree that women's environment is a factor to their achievement or failure. I also know that women are the ones that should and could take responsibility for their own liberation and that nobody else can do it on their behalf. Just as explained by Muruthi in her reflection on Nussbaum's capabilities any enabling situation is often determined by one's external surroundings too. In some way, it will be impossible to divorce this study totally from the institution in which the women operate. Hopefully however, this study will assist the church to ask questions about its ultimate capability as a place of learning and whether this is used and how it is used.

empowerment. Drawing upon UNESCOs four pillars of education,[7] Catherine Odora Hoppers (2006, 6-7) describes the concept of empowerment in the context of Africa as that of:

> Laying the basis for African people to participate in mastering and directing the course of change and fulfilling the vision of learning to know, learning to do, learning to be, and learning to live together as equals with others(2006:6-7).

Hoppers provides further detail to this description of empowerment when she states that the process of learning is more than merely gaining knowledge. Instead, it is an approach and attitude to knowledge and the process of generating such knowledge. Empowerment as the process of learning to live together is not simply about exercising tolerance towards others, but the effort to understand others and to be understood. Empowerment as learning to be is to have the ability to fully accept one's own identity, cosmology and indigenous forms of knowledge within the wider community, especially amongst other identities. It is the capacity to fully accept one's Africanness as a heritage and a resource (Hoppers 2006:6-7). Helpfully, Hoppers captures this thinking completely and provides a most fitting insight to my own view on what empowerment means within this setting.

In focusing on the culture of learning, this research project will employ terms such as 'education' and 'learning'. In particular, I have chosen my working term to be 'learning' rather than 'education' since I regard education as a static, insular, linear and compartmentalised notion built on a Western worldview.[8] On the other hand, 'learning' is an experience through which information is accessible. This experience could be available to all people at all times, and not just an elite few. By utilising these two definitions, my reference to education and learning are differentiated in this

[7] UNESCO 1996 'Learning: the Treasure within. Report of UNECSO of the International Commission on Education for the 21st century' Available at: <http:/www.unesco.org/delors_e.pdf/> [Accessed November 22, 2010].

[8] Many who have considered the origins of colonial education as it was introduced in Southern Africa or the Global South accentuate various characteristics of the linear, compartmentalised nature of Western education referred to above. Examples include Vilakazi (2000:194-212); Hountondji (2000:39-46); Mgadla (1989); Freire (1996:54); Ludlow (1999:111-116). Mazibuko and Johnson-Hill (1997:269) put the terms education against schooling "Education can only be 'de-schooled' to become a liberating instrument" Freire (1996:52) does not question the term education but instead critiques the approach of this traditional education as one in which the teacher talks about reality as if it were motionless, static, compartmentalised and predictable.

work. I do have to acknowledge however, that due to my limited vocabulary, I have struggled to find terms that adequately express this notion of learning. In particular, it is of crucial importance to understand that this idea of learning is rooted in the African epistemology that encompasses all of life. This will be better understood when I discuss my theoretical framework. My intention throughout this process has been to demonstrate that WAs are potential sites or incubators through which cultural change can be brought about. The search for a new ethos not only brings about a change in mindset for the individual, but inevitably, it also leads to organisational change. While in this study I am not primarily concerned with a set approach to liberatory learning—which I believe should be eclectic and dynamic in achieving its set aims—the real challenge will be to explore an ethos of learning that will be liberatory for women at the grassroots level within the UCCSA.

This study is premised on my belief that the core message of the Bible is about liberation and transformation. Jesus particularly offers a culture of learning that could provide us with suggestions towards critical learning for liberation in the community of faith. This philosophy of Jesus' learning is grounded in an understanding of humanity through which he reinterpreted history, his knowledge and understanding of his context, the methodologies he employed in his interaction with people and the approaches he used, such as his use of parables and the values that he held which influenced his predisposition: that he was one being disadvantaged and marginalised by the system.

Having provided a background and motivation to the present research project as well as a statement and explication of the research problem, I will now set out my specific objectives and provide a chapter outline.

3. Research Objectives, Chapter Outline and Overall Intention of the Study

This research project, centering as it does on the social challenges facing UCCSA women in the church and the world at large, raises a number of sub-questions:

i. What principles of a liberatory learning ethos can be empowering towards women?

ii. Do the particular challenges faced by women in Southern Africa necessitate the development of a liberatory learning ethos in the WAs of the UCCSA?

iii. What is the prevalent learning ethos operational within the WAs of the UCCSA?

iv. How has the educational heritage of the WAs of the UCCSA impacted on their existent learning ethos?

v. To what extent can African culture and theological sources developed in Southern Africa assist in constructing a liberatory learning ethos for the WAs of the UCCSA that can enable both the individual and communal empowerment of its members?

As a result of these important issues, the present study will aim to achieve the following five objectives:

i. Establish principles for a liberatory learning ethos that can be empowering towards women;

ii. Describe the social, religious, economic and political challenges faced by women in Southern Africa in the twenty-first century and the deliberate strides that have been made towards addressing these challenges so as to demonstrate why a liberatory ethos is needed;

iii. Audit the existent learning ethos within which the WAs of the UCCSA operate, through an evaluation of the environment outside and inside of the WAs to determine whether it is a liberatory or enslaving learning ethos;

iv. Discuss the educational heritage of the WAs in the UCCSA and the impact such heritage has had on the current ethos of learning;

v. Explore the extent to which African culture and theological sources developed in Southern Africa can assist in constructing a liberatory learning ethos for the WAs of the UCCSA that can enable the individual and communal empowerment of its members.

To meet these set research objectives, the study is divided into the following chapters.

3.1. Chapter One

To demonstrate the importance of this study and to establish principles for a liberatory learning ethos I draw on my own background as an ordained minister of the UCCSA and as a woman in the Southern African context. My personal experiences and encounters with people both inside and outside of the church also add to the shaping of these principles. These experiences contributed to the reasons that motivated and prompted me to initiate this study. The literature consulted in this field includes similar studies which have also contributed towards setting principles for the learning ethos that I envisage. My own theoretical framework distinguishes the basis on which my beliefs for doing this investigation are done. Finally, this research methodology clarifies how I intend to achieve the principles that I have set out for this study.

3.2. Chapter Two

In total, chapters three, four and five relate the history of both the UCCSA and the WAs and the context in which they operate. This history records the background of the Missionary bodies out of which the UCCSA and the WAs were born. In particular, this chapter describes the challenges that women face both within the church and the wider society. This assists in illustrating the need for change and for developing a liberatory learning ethos in both the church and society.

3.3. Chapter Three

This chapter provides a dedicated survey of the environment in which the WAs of the UCCSA operates.

3.4. Chapter Four

This chapter provides an insight into internal environment that operates within the WAs of the UCCSA and which that leads to their institutional ethos. The chapter also provides information on those beliefs currently held in the UCCSA and the WAs. These will put into perspective the current ethos of learning existent within these institutions.

3.5. Chapter Five

Chapter five gives a comprehensive description of my assertion that the WAs lack a culture of liberatory learning ethos precisely because of their educational heritage. The chapter demonstrates this assertion through a detailed description and analysis of the two major educational influences on women's lives, namely, the racist policies of the previous Apartheid regime and Western missionary influences. In closing, the chapter will seek to demonstrate through a particular scenario the impact that these legacies have had on the functioning and belief systems held by the women today and their ethos of ethos.

3.6. Chapter Six

Chapter six explores the extent to which African culture and the various theological resources developed in Southern Africa can assist in crafting a liberatory learning ethos for the WAs of the UCCSA that can enable both the individual and communal empowerment of its members. In particular, a brief exploration with be provided of how culture, theologies of liberation, the Bible, and the Jesus movement can contribute towards a new liberatory learning ethos. This chapter confirms that it is possible for WAs of the UCCSA to create a new liberatory ethos.

3.7. Chapter Seven

This final chapter will seek by way of a brief summary to draw together the major threads of our investigation and make some recommendations for implementing the paradigmatic changes required within the WAs of the UCCSA, and thereby ensure the establishment of a liberatory learning environment.

3.8. Overall Intention of the Study

It is hoped that this study will challenge the structures, practices, and policies that the WAs have maintained throughout their existence. In particular, the wish is that it will challenge the effectiveness of their ministry and witness, especially in the face of the struggles women face daily both in the church and the wider society. Through this study, a picture is drawn of how the learning ethos of the WAs, if used effectively, can affect the contribution and capacity of disenfranchised women, to sharpen their role in socio-economic and political transformation. An introduction of a liberatory learning ethos can bring about a prophetic voice and vision for women on socio-economic, political and environmental issues, even if this might not come about immediately. My ultimate hope is that this study will demonstrate the importance of an African epistemological culture and the need for critical learning in the church, with specific application towards the WAs of the UCCSA.

4. Locating the Research: A Literature Review

In order to answer the research question, it is necessary to review the available literature on the subject under discussion. Such a review of existing materials would assist in developing a liberatory ethos that enables both individual and communal empowerment. It would also assist in identifying and weighing the value and effectiveness and of the different theories that have been proffered in the set task of promoting a liberatory learning ethos for African women.

My exploration of such studies will focus on women in the church and the WAs of the UCCSA. In this task, it is important to identify examples of liberatory learning models in community, learning paradigms in the church and finally how women in the

church and in particular WAs of the UCCSA can appropriate liberatory learning as a workable model. These are all discussed within the context of the Global South.

4.1. Women in the Church and Church Women's Associations

Numerous studies have been done on women in the church and Women's Associations in the church in Southern Africa.[9] These studies are either focused on women in leadership and ordination or instead provide a varied picture of the potential of women in the church as driving forces of change. One of the regular images utilised is that of a movement possessing a definitive culture of passivity. In such a trajectory, women are presented as being compliant to traditions both in church and society. Deborah Gaitskell tells us that Lillian Ngoyi of the African National Congress in the 1950s and later Thoko Mpumlwana of the National Crisis Education Committee in the 1980s complained about the Women's Associations as "those who wept over their burdens but did nothing apart from waiting for God to act" (1997:254).

Another view presented by Gaitskell is that of the Women's Associations as movements that are actively opposed to oppressive systems. She recalls the involvement of women in protests against the Apartheid System, such as the 1913 Women-lead anti-Passbook demonstrations in Bloemfontein, the 1922 Herschel Store Boycott, and the Natal Beer hall protests of the 1920s. Gaitskell illustrates this by citing the Xhosa poet; Nontsizi Mgqwetho who she believed recognised the common political cause of women within the solidarity of prayer (1997:254).

Another commonly held view on the role of the Women's Associations and church women in general is that they provide spaces of survival. This viewpoint is often followed by the conviction that such movements provide a budding opportunity, which if tapped, can lead to the liberation of women in the churches and the wider society. In spite of her views cited above, Mpumlwana, in spite has also acknowledged the fact that if you "unlock the potential that is in women then you develop church and society" (1991:385).

[9]See in particular Phiri (2002:119-137); Beya (2001:183-206); Haddad (2002:93-106); Nadar (2002:139-158)

Similar sentiments were expressed in 2003 through a joint consultation held under the auspices of the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians and the World Council of Churches Women's Programme entitled, "On being Church: African Women's Voices and Visions" (Phiri and Nadar 2005). Accordingly, churchwomen are identified as *the* model for the new vision of women in the Church of Africa. Not only do I find agreement with this perspective, but many of the concerns discussed at the consultation come through clearly throughout this study. In the introduction to the book Nadar summarised some of the conversations which centred around:

> …breaking the 'hermeneutical immobility' and the need for a more holistic engagement of scripture, the western-colonial heritage of the church and the role of the Church in mentoring women leaders and building capacity (Nadar 2005:22).

Furthermore, the 2003 consultation makes the important observation that education should "serve as a valuable tool to liberate the church from the destructive and unproductive practices that befall women" (Nadar 2005:20). However, there are some aspects in the summary presented by Nadar that are of concern to the present researcher. The action of churchwomen was seen as important *"to be used"* to bring about gender transformation within faith communities Nadar 2005:20. The phrase "to be used" leaves an uncomfortable feeling within which one can interpret as one party using the other for their selfish purposes, rather than the two parties exploring and learning together. Shared learning is a key characteristic strongly featured in Freire's problem-posing education.[10] This also makes one wonder whether churchwomen were represented at the consultation or whether it was a discourse pursued about them in their absence?[11] The consultation named theological education as the vehicle to

[10] Freire's comment in relation the Teacher and Student relationship is as follows: "The *raison d'etre* of libertarian education, on the other hand, lies in its drive towards reconciliation. Education must begin with the solution of the Teacher-Student contradiction, by reconciling the poles of the contradiction so that both are simultaneously teachers *and* students. This solution is not (nor can it be) found in the banking concept. On the contrary, banking education maintains and even stimulates the contradiction…which mirror oppressive society as a whole" (1996:53-54).

[11] I know that such a statement could be questioned since academics too could be church women. Kanyoro however explains the distance that has been created between women in the academia and women in the church when she laments "that the theological reflections of women in the ecumenical setting are poorer without these voices of rural African women. I yearned to bring their voices to the ecumenical theological tables of the world" (2002:5). Whilst we should be mindful that 'women in the academy' and 'churchwomen' could refer to the same subject, we also have to accept that in reality these are often disparate entities and that there is often a massive distance between the two. In fact the very study initiated by the WCC with the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians came about due to the concerns raised here.

achieve such change. At the 2003 consultation, Theological education for the empowerment and training of younger women, pastors' wives and the conscientization of women and men in the church seemed to be the answer to bringing about newness in the church. Nadar qualifies this by explaining that:

> The power of the new model lies in women's right to choose whether that means formal Church ministry, or the pursuance of a secular career (2005:21).

To have a model of leadership in the church where women have a right to choose is an important strategy. What however is not explicitly stated here is the need for a model of learning that goes beyond the formal. While it is important to make the choice for 'formal ministry and secular careers' I am convinced that conscientization in church and society requires much more. Indeed, experience seems to suggest that those who acquire 'formal education' are often co-opted into the system of elitism. In addition to formal education, a system must be put in place that offers a holistic learning model which involves communities and not simply individuals. Perhaps this strategy was hinted at when the consultation suggested in relation to women in Pentecostal Churches, that "indigenous and alternative forms of knowledge systems could be used in forging a liberating church" (Nadar 2005:21).

One of the difficulties presented with Nadar's review of the 2003 consultation is that it presents the church in Africa as a homogenous entity, except for certain parts that refer to the Pentecostal tradition. It would have been helpful to recognise that the church in Africa is at different places, depending on its ecclesial, social, economic, and political experience and location. Some churches have been ordaining and affirming the leadership of women for many years, while others still exclude women from these leadership roles. To have a discussion that does not seem to recognise the diversities of struggle in the church in Africa simply serves to obscure the many gains that African women have achieved over the years.

Musa Dube (2004) has also pursued discussion on women in the church with her focus on post-colonial feminist interpretation. Dube has developed an interesting discourse around the ability of women in the African Independent Churches (AICs) to read the Bible for liberating interdependence. One of the notable strengths that she

admires in the AICs is the predominantly female leadership of these particular churches (2000:41). The ability to impart an ethos of liberation and justice in the AICs is ascribed primarily to the work of the Holy Spirit. Dube admires the AICs for their emphasis and dependence on *moya,* since it is that leading of the Holy Spirit,

> …that chooses and empowers both women and men to be prophets, faith healers, church founders and leaders in the business of restoring and maintaining life (2000:187).

One can debate whether these AICs offer a distinctive type of transformational ethos for the liberation of women in comparison to other traditions in the system of patriarchy in which these churches exists. Dube's research findings clearly affirm that some church traditions see themselves at work in different ways in the struggle for equality and transformation.

Beverley Haddad has also explored a similar subject matter in her (2001) study on "Theologising Development: A Gendered Analysis of Poverty, Survival and Faith" with its focus on the '*iimanyano*' movement. Haddad makes the assertion that the movement of women in the church is an example:

> [of] a 'hidden site' of knowledge, which can no longer be ignored if the church is to become an effective agent of social transformation (2001:6).

I here agree with Haddad that women in the church movements, despite their painful experiences, devise ways of coping through the use of micro-development strategies. Haddad's research conclusions are however somewhat limited in that they do not recognise the potential of the *imanyano* beyond the idea of mere survival. Instead of exploring how women might use these micro-development strategies to survive economic injustices,[12] Haddad relates such strategies to the survival of WAs spirituality. As Brigalia Bam can assert concerning the women in the *Manyano*-type meetings:

> Women are excellent survivors with excellent survival strategies…but I think we must build on it until women live and not merely survive in the church and in society (2005:17).

[12] In my view, women often have to use this as a strategy of survival in the Women's Associations.

The trouble with Haddad's assertion that the WAs operate a survival theology is that it does not seem to appreciate the potential it has for transforming activity within these movements. Haddad contends that survival is the key theological resource for poor women. She explains that this theological resource is found in the *iimanyano's* impromptu prayers and preaching, their fundraising activities, and their wearing of uniforms. For Haddad, their uniforms and activities provide the women with "an out of world experience."[13] Hence, Haddad can claim:

> The uniform embodies supernatural powers that infuse the material world and become a resource for dealing with this reality (2001:17).

The view expressed by Haddad regarding the role of the WAs needs much more in-depth investigation and discussion otherwise the WAs beliefs around spiritual symbols such as the uniform could be misconstrued. Whereas it is true that the WAs have a particular emphasis on exterior symbols such as the uniform, the cross and extempore prayers, these must be understood within the broader African worldview and against other socio-political and theological legacies that have been adopted through Western missionaries (Gerloff 2003:123). It could be argued that these exterior symbols serve as systems of meaning that are resources of identity and solidarity in a world where women are marginalized. Hence, the spiritual efficacy of the uniform could be interpreted to mean that each woman who is robed identifies herself as a follower of Christ and as belonging to a sisterhood characterised by equality. By wearing the *iimanyano* uniform a woman's self-esteem is thus raised. This conclusion fits well with the fact that many of these women in their daily lives are domestic workers, cleaners, baby minders and other jobs that are considered as menial labour. It is thus possible to conclude that within this social location, the uniform not only provides solidarity with other women in their group, but more importantly, the sense of discrimination and injustice they share in the world of work disappears. The spirituality of the uniform thus represents their connectedness to Jesus their Saviour and Lord rather than the embodiment of supernatural powers.

[13] Roswith Gerloff (2003:123) also discusses the subject of uniform that Haddad looks at but within the Methodist Women's Manyano movement in Southern Africa. Gerloff believes that liberal westerners take this to mean as religious or holy language that makes women run away from their socio-political contexts. She however thinks that for black communities 'sin' is experienced as part of an enslaving system, and 'cleansing' is experienced as breaking free from such oppression. Therefore, the symbols of the clothing of the manyano's such as the blood of Jesus (in the red blouse) expresses life-giving and liberating power which could save all from destruction.

Through wearing the uniform, the women are in effect making a public witness to their faith in Christ similar to the testimony of Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women who told the disciples that Jesus had risen (Luke 24:10). Similar views are held by Haddad when she says that the WAs extempore prayers "link with the spiritual realm that enables them to see their lives from a different perspective" (Haddad 2001:19). Such arguments made by Haddad, cannot be discussed without an in-depth investigation of the historical background of such symbols, including prayers and other symbols within African spirituality.

In her (2008) essay entitled "Surviving the HIV/AIDS epidemic in South Africa: Women Living and Dying, Theologising and Being Theologised" Haddad uses the same understanding of the spiritual strategy of survival for women in the church as a way of dealing with the HI-virus. For Haddad, it is a key theological resource for poor women who believe that "God makes a way where there is no way" (2008:48). According to Haddad, the ability to survive:

> …embraces a dignity, a quality of life which is intricately intertwined with their understanding of God in their lives (2008:49).

Accordingly, these are seen as strategies of action and defiance against the daily struggle of women to stay alive amidst cultural, social and economic oppression (2008:48-49). This belief of women might well be true in that they do interpret their faith in this way but it is not consistent with a transformative agenda that feminist theologians argue is needed. Maluleke and Nadar capture the problem with survival theologies well when they state:

> What we have here are (White) males [and females] declaring that the (Black) women in whose destitution and oppression they are patently implicated and heavily invested, are in fact not that destitute and that they actually have survival tactics and liberating traditions and resources after all (2004:15).

Haddad's argument that the theology of survival is about employing methods of fighting to stay alive amidst death-dealing circumstances is sound. However, the danger with the survival theology posited by Haddad is that it does not challenge the status quo. If survival is an end in itself and does not lead to socio-political

transformation, then such a theology of survival is in effect life-denying. Bam also holds the view that the *Manyano* meetings are denominational circles of dignity and defiance (2005:13). Such theologies of survival have in most cases not led to transformation because they are often compliant to received traditions and the perpetual maintenance of the status quo rather than challenging its convictions. Patriarchy is so deeply rooted within structures, systems and mindsets that it would be naïve to assume that women's theologies operate either outside of, or are disconnected from the long history of oppressive traditions. This is reinforced by Haddad who states that the women she interacted with do not discuss the plight of women or HIV&AIDS within these *Manyano* settings (2008:50-53). Even though these women have their own spaces, these spaces, have from the beginning, become spaces of solidarity with other women of their group, rather than spaces for critical reflection upon their faith and how society impacts upon their lives. Haddad also seems to play off the importance of a theology of survival against a theology of liberation in which she believes the former is always regarded as being of less value by feminists (2008:48). Where there may be some truth in this statement,[14] blame should not be disproportionately apportioned to the WAs for this state of affairs, but instead on a number of other factors, including feminist theologies that have continued to be inaccessible to poor women.

From the analysis of Gaitskell (1997) and others,[15] scholarly perspectives held about church women and WAs are diverse. There are some[16] who hold that the membership of the WAs is generally inactive and passive, while still others[17] hold they have been agents for change. It is this diversity of opinion vis-à-vis the position of women in the church and the WAs, their traditionally compliant role and their potential for renewal that contributed to the undertaking of this research project. Another reason is that from amongst the scholarly body of work on the role of women in the church of

[14] WAs have often been overlooked by feminist theologians as organisations that could bring about change since WAs are often depicted as traditional, conservative and without potential for social transformation. As Lyn Holness (Holness cited in Gerloff 2003:118) has noted, "At first there seems little published on Manyano's perhaps because from its inception it has never constituted a milieu of interpretive reflection as such or had a transformative goal, other than to equip its members to deal with specific situations."
[15] See Bam (2005); Haddad (2001); Mpumlwana and Ngoyi (1997:254).
[16] Both Haddad (2001) and Mpumlwana and Ngoyi (1997:254) are of this opinion.
[17] This is particularly true of Haddad (2001; Phiri and Nadar (2005).

Southern Africa, little has been done on the potential of the WAs for critical learning. In particular, no study has been given to the WAs of the UCCSA.

In the section which follows, an examination will be provided of those examples of liberatory learning models being done within community.

4.2. Examples of Liberatory Learning Models in Community

With respect to the review of the literature, functional models of critical learning within communities are a further important area of study. This section will offer a brief exposure to alternative models of learning which have had a positive impact on communities. This is not intended as an in-depth study of liberatory pedagogies, but will merely provide evidence of how learning for liberation and justice has created opportunities for change and transformation in the lives of people. In the context of Southern Africa, the focus will be on those liberatory learning paradigms offered by Paulo Freire and Steve Biko.

4.2.1. Paulo Freire

The Brazilian educationalist, Paulo Freire developed a unique philosophy of learning. In this section, the term education will be referred to according to how Freire's perspective, rather than the understanding of learning proffered in this study. The emphasis of the Freirean model is on liberatory education. Freire grew up in a context of debilitating poverty and intense deprivation, which influenced his quest for justice, equality and social change. His particular strategy was to seek ways of how to empower poor people to be responsible for their own liberation, hence his notion of pedagogy of the oppressed.

Freire recognised from his own experiences of scarcity that:

> Provided with the proper tools… the individual can gradually perceive personal and social reality as well as the contradictions in it, become conscious of his or her own perception of that reality and deal critically with it (Shaull 1996:14).

While his work developed from a South American context in which bureaucracy and political oppression created a critical gap between the rich and the poor, his liberatory model has drawn many social justice activists in continental Africa and the wider Global South to adopt his philosophy. The social, political and economical reality that Freire was concerned with is a situation that many within Southern Africa can relate. It is to the appropriateness of Freire's work to the African context that Omega Bula connects with when she writes:

> Even though not all agreed with Freire's metaphors—and there are piles of critical reflections on his work—those like myself, who grew up struggling against colonialism, racism…find meaning and inspiration in this approach and understanding of education. It gave people like me the energy that fuelled our resistance to domination (Bula 2005:251).

It was his philosophy of education that made Freire an enemy of the Brazilian government and which led to him going into exile after a military coup in 1964. His twenty years of exile and visits to countries in the Global South led him to further develop his philosophy of education. His primary concern was with adult education ands adult literacy. Through literacy he challenged the situation of the disadvantaged position of minority groups and the injustices they experienced. He questioned people's conformity to the dominant system. He attributed this to the lack of critical knowledge. He believed that once a person is put through a liberatory educational experience, s/he will have a new awareness of the self and the society in which the person lives and deal with it critically (Shaull 1996:12).

There is a mass of scholarly literature that has built up around the Freirean ideology and practice. Those Freirean ideas which have been of particular influence will be discussed in the following sub-section.

4.2.1.1. Education is Never Neutral—It is Political

Henry Giroux introduces Freire's work in the preface of his (1985) *The Politics of Education: Culture, Power and Liberation.* He emphasises that Freire believes that domination should not be merely seen as a "simple imposition of arbitrary power" but rather "the logic of domination represents a combination of historical and

contemporary ideological and material practices" (1985:xii). Freire believes therefore that all education is political. The ideology of a particular political view is often pursued through the type of education, the curriculum and the teaching approach through which the teacher "stores the deposits entrusted to them" (Freire 1996:54. The apartheid and Western missionary models of education are clear examples of what Freire meant when he states that education is politics. This is so because it is borne out of people's social situations.[18] Colonial education was primarily shaped around the economics of the time. The aim of the education that Freire promotes is one that critically inspects the political situation in which people find themselves so that it might bring about freedom. He advocates for a political action on the side of the oppressed that must be pedagogical action; this is action with the oppressed (Freire 1996:4).

4.2.1.2. Conscientization

A term inseparable to Freirean thought is that of conscientization. One can draw several aspects in his process of conscientization:

The first is that people involved in the process will behave and see the world in the way in which they have been socialised, either from a position of power and privilege or from the perspective of one that has suffered oppression (Freire 1996:37).

Another important facet of Freire's process of conscientization is the need to develop an ability to analytically decipher contexts and to be able to relate that situation to one's life. This will stir up awareness in people to recognise in every situation how the lives of all people fit into the social, political and economical structures of society and the larger global world. As Freire states:

> The more we get to know the socio-historical reality of the issues in our themes, in their dialectical relation with opposing issues, the more impossible it will be for us to remain neutral (1985:113).

[18] See in particular Hope and Timmel (1999:8). Hope and Timmel maintain that such an educational approach would speak to people's emotions, to that which excites, angers, or indeed, frightens them.

This will inevitably result in the individual asking questions in order to break down pre-conceived beliefs and behaviours that have been generated over time. This is a significant area of concern for the two areas of inherited educational systems and the ability for the WAs to recognise the unhelpfulness of some of the influences and customs in their lives.

Finally, the process ought to make the individual realise that one has the ability to create and recreate the society and the world of which they are part. People are responsible for the state of the world and therefore have the ability to undo that which has been done. This is a valuable area to take note of as members of the WA's often feel that there is nothing that they can do to bring change their situations. Giroux (1985: xxv) goes on to remind us that Freire's work informs not only about who we are, but also points us to the human potential within.

4.2.1.3. Critical Dialogue

Another core term in Freirean language is that of critical dialogue. Critical dialogue is referred to by Freire as a 'problem-posing' approach of education. Freire places this concept in opposition to that which he labels the "banking" concept of education (1996:54). The concept of "banking education" opposes every intention that critical dialogue stands for. The learner's role is passive; no critical thinking is encouraged except to memorise information already given. Freire names the impact of this approach on people as domesticating which he equates with oppression (1996:33).[19]

This problem-posing pedagogy promoted by Freire puts certain methods in place that encourage both the facilitator of the process and the learner to be active participants. These methods of engagement should by definition be participatory, contextual, reflective, democratic, and dialogic. This brings into question the traditional understanding of the relationship between the teacher and the student (Freire 1996:54). All participants must become partners in the process of dialogue. The intention of such engagement is to encourage an educational system that is

[19] Freire's "banking education" approach matches the indoctrination and instructive approaches that will be discussed in chapter five.

empowering and liberating to both to the teacher and the student, who Freire names as "co-investigators" (1996:62).

Freire uses generative themes or images in what he calls his process of critical dialogue de-codification (1985:91), since it de-codifies the learners' social, political, economical conditions.[20] Freire described the various stages of how these generative themes and images were used to familiarise people of their everyday life. Such a process assisted in their conscientization as it made them aware of their reality and the causes of their problems in their community. This is the reason why Freire advocated for adult literacy.

Freire's vision for an informed and liberated society can be traced to the liberation theologies of Latin America of the 1970s. According to Giroux (1985:xvii), Freire "situates his faith and sense of hope in God of history and of the oppressed whose teachings make it possible." The strong Christian roots in this approach are easily recognisable. Indeed, there are many similarities between the ethos of the Jesus movement and the core beliefs around Freirean schema of learning for liberation. With an understanding of these learning approaches one can recognise why their learning interaction with the community became contentious for the authorities in the different historical contexts in which Jesus and Freire lived.

4.2.2. Steve Biko

One person that cannot be ignored within this discussion is the late South African political leader Steven Bantu Biko. Similar to Freire, the importance of Biko's contribution in developing a culture of consciousness, especially in South and Southern Africa, cannot be discounted.

Biko was born in 1946, in the Eastern Cape of South Africa and was a direct product of the system of apartheid which was legislatively introduced in the decade which followed the ascendency to power of the National Party in 1948. Biko's involvement in the politics of South Africa developed out of his experiences in the tertiary

[20] Hebblethwaite (1993:170) describes these generative themes as picture cards that Freire used in his teaching.

education student movement. During the late 1960s, a need was identified to establish a Black students' organisation that could address their distinctive needs and represent their issues. Although the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS), was supposed to be non-racial, it did not address Black student concerns because it was primarily controlled by white decisions and agendas in an organisation dominated by a white leadership. It was out of such discussions that the South African Students Organisation (SASO) was formed in December 1968, the first national organisation for Black students. Biko was the first president elected to lead SASO (Biko 1986:1-7).

At the heart of Biko's conviction was that of real Black participation in a society where Blacks were dehumanised to the position where they were empty "obliging shells, shadows, completely defeated, slaves" (Biko 1986:29). According to Biko, it was only this kind of real participation that Biko that could emancipate Black people from the mental and physical slavery which had kept them hostage for centuries. For Biko (1986:285), spiritual poverty was the major cause of the Black people's dehumanised state.

Biko believed that Black Consciousness was the only means of liberation for Black people. He defined it as a method through which he could help:

> Make the Black man *[sic]* come to himself; to pump back life into his empty shell; to infuse him with pride and dignity, to remind him of his complicity in the crime of allowing himself to be misused and therefore letting evil reign supreme in the country of his birth (1986:29).

Biko identified and envisioned the culture of the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) by adopting the following principles as the means by which Black people can discover their true being:

i. To seek to rewrite 'Black' history (1986:29) an entire history that has been erased by the Apartheid regime and replaced by Afrikanerdom, namely, Afrikaner language, heroes, celebrations and culture. For Biko, Black people need to assert their positive stories, good role models and cultural values so as to appreciate where they come from.

ii. To seek to show Black people can value of their own standards and outlook (Biko 1986:30. Black people have a way of life different from Western society, as well as norms and mores which they can be proud of. However, in a society where such norms and mores have been overtaken by White civilisation, the Western way of life has become the new aspiration for Black people, particularly in the way they behave, speak and look. It is therefore vital that Black people know and understand their own self-worth and not only become conscious of these, but also grateful for the traditions and customs they uphold as a people.

iii. To seek to give positivity in the outlook of the Black people to their problems (Biko 198:30-31). This was a vital part of the awareness programme for Black people, seeing that the racist system of Apartheid was designed to break up and bring total emotional and systemic confusion to all Black people. Some had so much anger bottled-up inside, or diverted that anger to those around them while many simply had an emotional spill-over. Some expressed open hatred and anger and were little bothered about the repercussions of such emotions. For most Black people, hope for a better future meant very little. Many lived in fear of breaking the law, arrest, or betrayal by a neighbour that they could be an informant of the system and many other problems. This situation led to the further fragmentation of the Black people as some chose to join the system; others thought it safe to remain apolitical and while still others chose to fight the system. Black Consciousness sought to address the situation of disquiet within the Black community.

iv. To seek to talk to the Black man *[sic]* in a language that is his own (Biko 1986:32). The above contradictory viewpoints about Black people's emotional position meant that Black consciousness would only be meaningful to those who understood and experienced the injustice of the Black person. No fight for liberation could be fought on behalf of someone else. Biko did not regard Blackness as an issue of pigmentation, but rather a state of mental slavery that needed to be fought.

For Biko, one of the core beliefs of Black Consciousness was to bring to Black people a realisation that God had created them beautifully and wonderfully at source. It was meant to inculcate a new sense of understanding and pride in Black people for who they were and where they had came from. The awareness of the self, not someone else's interpretation, but one's own understanding of the self is what could lead to the liberation of the people in South Africa. Only in realising one's own freedom can one strive to free others. Black consciousness for Biko was not simply another methodology, but a deep sense of belief in the self, through discovering the self in community with others. Biko explained that the implication of discovering the self was to correct the distortions that have been created through culture, education, religion and economics (1986:51-52). The envisioning of a new person through Black consciousness was also foreseen in the resources of the land. Andile Mngxitama tells of Biko's dream which was to redistribute power, including land (Mngxitama, Alexander and Gibson, 2008:3).

In his (1986) book, *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature*, Ngugi wa Thiong'o also advocates the need of a new mindset in African literature. These perspectives represent a few examples that have influenced how oppressed people see have formed their identity in South and Southern Africa as well as further afield in the Global South. These examples constitute a valuable resource to explore so as to understand the importance of seeing life differently and the world wherein we live. These resources offered by Freire and Biko offer priceless knowledge and values for a liberatory learning ethos that this study seeks to promulgate.

The position of women and gender justice is an important matter that cannot be ignored in the liberative ethos of learning advocated by Freire and Biko. Women do not seem to feature at all. Women who have been part of the BCM have also questioned their position of women in the movement. Oshadi Mangena questioned the sexist language used in the published Manifesto of the BCM. These signs of gender inequality were confusing since women held positions of leadership. She mentions Manana Kgware among the leadership of the 1969 SASO inaugural conference. Mangena makes reference to a statement made by Mamphele Ramphele who was a member of the BCM. Ramphele explains that "Gender as a political issue

was not raised at all" and that "There was no evidence to suggest that the Black Women's Federation (BWF) was concerned with the special problems women experienced as a result of sexism both in the private and public sphere" (Mangena 2008:255).

This study is therefore important. It some way, it contributes at least partially, to filling the gender gaps, by advocating for learning paradigms put forward by liberation scholars. The present study takes seriously the understanding that liberation is for all people, not just men. While the ethos of learning presented the scholarly activism of Freire and Biko is of crucial importance, it is the stated concern of this study that a culture needs to be inculcated which seeks to improve the position of African women.

4.3. Learning Paradigms in the Church

The third components to evaluate are the kinds of learning paradigms offered specifically by the church. In particular, the works of R. Simangaliso Kumalo and Bongani Mazibuko and their interactions with the church will be critiqued in order to identify new learning concepts.

Kumalo's research of extant models of learning in the church led him to remind the church of Southern Africa of the importance of Christian education.[21] In particular, he reviewed the Journey to the New Land Programme in the Methodist Church of Southern Africa (MCSA) as one of the programmes or instruments for the implementation of Christian education. Kumalo's (2005) PhD research is entitled, "The Role of the Church in Education for Social Transformation." His main interest is in the need for the church to recover its teaching office through Christian education (2005:122). This concern for the teaching ministry came about out of a concern for the lack of Christian educational materials and meaningful programmes for adults and children in the church. He not only questioned the absence of materials and programmes but also the content of existing materials in the MCSA. He identified Christian education as a discipline that needs to be strengthened and traces the

[21] R. Simangaliso Kumalo is an ordained Methodist minister and a member of the academy at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

educational history of the Methodist movement to the work of its founder, John Wesley.

Even though Kumalo attempts to put in place a model of Christian education based in the context of Southern Africa and uses local educators for insights, he dialogues with John Wesley's experiences and understanding of education in order to lay a foundation for his own model. He measures the parameters of Christian education through the theories of established scholars such as Thomas Groome, Walter Brueggeman and Joseph Grassi who he names as pioneers in the field of Christian education. However, Kumalo's work is weakened because he exclusively relates to authors from the Global North.

Mazibuko has also done work on establishing a liberating theological education paradigm. Mazibuko, also an ordained MCSA minister, focuses his work on the people of Umlazi, KwaZulu-Natal, while he was a member of the faculty of Theology at the University of Durban-Westville.[22] Jack Johnson-Hill, his co-facilitator was a visiting Professor to the University of Durban-Westville. The project was mainly focused on leadership of the AICs. Mazibuko and Johnson-Hill explained the methodology and approach which informed their programme as follows:

> The project is guided by an emancipatory philosophy and approach which are fundamentally different from those typically employed in theological education in the academy. We may refer to this new way of doing theological education as, in essence, a liberating and praxis-centred theological dialogue (1997:248).

They go on to explain how this emancipatory philosophy of doing theological education is made real in the project. One of these is the engagement with the leadership of AICs which they hold brings the "intuitive theological perceptions and grassroots religious experiences of township Christians" to the fore since AIC leadership have had very little or no formal theological education. According to the facilitators, this grassroots interaction together with the resource people who mainly come from the Global North creates a convergence of the two worlds (1997:249-251).

[22] Now incorporated into the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

Importantly, the theological discussions were held in the vernacular, isiZulu (1997:249). The core of the learning sessions were guided by those subjects that were most applicable to the participants pastoral situations (1997:252). The project seemed to have had a positive impact on the functioning of the Faculty of Theology and the discipline of theological education at the University of Durban-Westville. It brought under scrutiny the curriculum and the teaching methods at the University as these were much more adaptable and accommodative at the centre. The particular, the project provided pedagogical insights to the University as it was much more culturally relevant, offering "African styles of teaching and learning" to its participants (1997:260).

Even though the project conveys a very positive image in developing a new notion of theological education both for its participants and for the University, one still gets uncomfortable about the relationship described between the University faculty and the participants. There exists an impression of an unequal power relationship between the resource people and the participants. The people of other racial and social backgrounds often served as teachers, facilitators and resource people, while local people served either as participants or translators. These teachers, facilitators and resource people were also responsible for the shaping and the focusing of the content of each session. The coordinator of the project was also responsible for the screening and recruitment of the participants (1997:255). Although the project used unconventional approaches of interaction, it remained answerable to the University and therefore seemed to have operated in a conventional way. The reason for this viewpoint is that the centre is named as an experimental site for potential research projects that have not been considered by the academy before. They brought their respective disciplines as a point of reference for the problems that surfaced. The centre therefore served as a place to test or expand scholarly knowledge of the Black church (1997:253).

There are important variances between Kumalo, Mazibuko and this particular research. One of these is this study's focus on women because of the social and societal location of the present researcher as an oppressed woman. Women in the church are in search of empowerment amidst massive challenges. Secondly, this

study does not the discipline itself, but the ethos of learning extant within the church. The third difference is that my focus is on the WAs in the UCCSA.

4.4. Women in the Church, Church Women's Associations and Liberatory Learning

An appropriate person to consider who suggests a learning ethos for women and WAs in the church is Mukti Barton. Barton is significant for this discussion not only because she is a woman from the Global South, but because as an Indian Bengali Christian woman, she was co-founder and director of an organisation that came into being after the Ecumenical Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women was initiated by the World Council of Churches in 1988.

Barton's writing arose out of her role as director of the Centre and her concern that religion in Bangladesh was rejected as a tool for liberation among enlightened women and instead was seen as perpetuating the oppression of women. Women that discovered their liberation preferred to demonstrate it through their involvement in civic organisations which offered them the freedom and space to do so.

Barton was particularly worried about the fact that justice was often not realised in the lives of ordinary Christian women because of the inherited systems of biblical hermeneutics. Barton probed the question of the oppression of women in church and society. Her main concern was whether the Christian faith leads to oppression or liberation. She used the Bible as a tool of empowerment in order to explore issues of liberation and justice. Barton demonstrated well her worry of women's search for lost freedom through a story that she related:

> A drunken man was seen one night looking for something under a lamp post. His friend saw him and asked, "What are you looking for?" The man answered: "My lost coin." The friend asked "where did you lose it?" "In the dark," was the answer. "Then why are you not looking for it in the dark?"—was the perplexed question of the friend. "I am looking under the lamp-post because there is more light here (1999:2).

The point made here is that instead of looking for their freedom in the 'darkness' of their own religion, women often choose to avoid the struggle. In her context, Christian women found it easier to talk about justice and liberation outside of their faith. Her aim was to focus on women that dared to search in 'the dark' for their liberation. She equates 'the dark' with the mysteries of the faith of the women. She wanted women to reclaim the Bible and the Christian faith as tools for liberation.

Barton joined forces with other women in establishing a centre which created opportunity for women to struggle towards their own liberation. The centre became known as the Netritto Proshikkhon Kendro (NPK) or the Christian Women's Centre for Liberation in Bangladesh. This ecumenical initiative by women set several objectives through which it functioned. Its primary aim though was to create opportunities of learning for women through the holding of workshops. This aim or dream of the NPK as Barton explains was captured: "in these encounters that women together sought for the liberating power of Christianity" (1999:86).

Participation at workshops was open to all women, irrespective of their background, education or class. This was one way through which equality was expressed. This conveyed the value of each woman and the contribution each one brought to the group in spite of the status she held in society. Group work was important to assist women to complement one another when there were any misunderstandings.

The organisation was also based on a set of simple values of equality. They believed that all people were equal and hence there was no need for a hierarchical system. They demonstrated this by their seating. All members sat on the floor in a semi-circle at their meetings and workshops. This was in contrast to the regular patriarchal seating plan which was practiced in the community in which males sat on chairs and females sat on the floor. It was also in opposition to the western pew seating which was introduced by Western missionaries. The setting in these gatherings was always indigenous. Indigenous value systems were reclaimed through the use of music and singing which was in the vernacular and the local worship with symbols of candles, the use of oil lamps and incense which were forbidden by Western missionaries were also reclaimed by the women (1999:91).

Other values of equality and justice were expressed in the ecumenical make-up of the workshops. While no specific doctrines were emphasised, concentration was placed on theological reflection at the heart of each discussion. Holy Communion which is often a contentious doctrinal issue for churches was replaced by feet washing or an agape meal. Another reason why Holy Communion was substituted was because they would have commonly had to get priests to lead the services and they were mostly men.

These visible symbolic practices in the worship and culture of the organisation were important in introducing anti-oppressive mindsets at NPK meetings, in contradistinction to the conventional patriarchal and colonial customs that were upheld in church and the wider society. Such symbolism clearly communicated the centre's principles to all who visited the NPK.

Since the Bible was central to women's empowerment, Barton utilised practical approaches in which women were encouraged to engage. The process of theological reflection was the other significant aspect to the learning of women. Barton had particular features included in doing the biblical reflections (1999:91-92). In Barton's reflection on the outcomes of this theological process on Bengali women, one can recognise the impact that the traditional learning approaches have had on women in Southern Africa. It is interesting to see the parallels between the struggles of the women in Southern African churches and those in South Asia. Women initially rehearsed the traditional western or patriarchal interpretations of a passage rather than critically engaging the narrative itself. Ordinarily, Christian women were not encouraged to think theologically by the church. According to Barton, women at the NPK took many years to understand that it is not the Bible that is he problem, but the inherited interpretations of the Bible. Women were not able to critically examine their subordinate and oppressive position as created by the church and society, but instead attributed it to a given status ordained by God (1999:91-92).

Even though Barton's study was formed by her Bengali context which is different from that of Southern Africa, her conclusions are consistent with this research. Liberatory learning on the Bible and particularly viewing Jesus as role model within

the Bible, can offer liberation to women. This perspective is confirmed by one of the original objectives of NPK, namely:

> To enable women to arrive at their own theological understanding of their value of Christianity, looking particularly at the example of Jesus and his revolutionary attitudes and behaviour towards women (1999: 97).

The process which NPK engaged in helped women to do social analysis of their contexts in Bangladesh and empower them to realise that they do have opportunities to live life to the full. Most importantly Barton states that the women came to the understanding that their oppression was not divinely ordered, but that God could bring about a new understanding of justice for women. To make this discovery, women do not need academic qualifications (1999:92).

Unlike the focus of this study, Barton's interest is not centred on understanding the ethos of learning but interestingly she knowingly or unknowingly uses learning with women that in her view "had an immediate effect on the participants" (1999:92). Another commonality between Barton and this study is that Barton locates her learning mostly, though not exclusively, among lay women. There are however some important differences between this study and that of Barton. This study is concerned with the WAs of the UCCSA and not with women who are ecumenically linked. Its grounding in the Southern African region also makes a difference to the study as will be explained in the theoretical framework.

5. Theoretical Frameworks

This study will be guided by two major theoretical frameworks. The first is the Village Learning model and the second is African women's theologies.

5.1. Village Learning Models

Various community intervention models evolved in the Global North with different meanings and responded to different needs as individuals became involved in various NGOs. Some of these give attention to community care and community development

projects. The zeal for alternative models of community work among grassroots people also became significant in the Global South. While many of the community development models were freely adopted from the Global North, some advocates of liberation, affected by the dominant oppressive systems, were yearning for different models of community work that were not intentionally liberative. The quest was for community work models that could respond to the realities of poverty and address the colonial mentality and gender injustice, interventions that could respond to health and other societal needs. According to Mark Smith, for some this became either a "Socialist conception of education" "People's education," or 'Models of adult learning.[23]

The researcher was exposed through tuition to the idea of Community Education.[24] At the time, it seemed to be the right kind of framework to enable people to develop a new ethos. Among the numerous interpretations attached to Community Education, Smith's philosophy seemed appropriate for this study. He defined Community Education as education that takes place not within a typical classroom context, but education that relates to the community. It is education that focuses on the whole person. It is a process through which people can understand themselves and the world of which they are part. It is not an easy form of education because it can be unpredictable and risky since it seeks to challenge the status quo. Yet, it also has the capability of emancipating or transforming people's life situations (Smith 1994:1). Another definition that Smith attributes to Community Education is that it promotes associational life and democracy by working with people to identify common interests, to co-operate and to organise themselves (1994:3). Community Education as it is commonly known has a number of strands. One such strand is named by Ian Martin as the Radical model (1987:24). These characteristics seemed appropriate in setting the principles of a liberatory ethos for the WAs of the UCCSA. However, experience has taught that there are indigenous resources to draw on as an alternate to the Community Education that originates in the Global North.[25]

[23] Conference Papers, Education for Affirmation (1988:27, 49, 65, 77).
[24] Even though the present researcher was exposed to Community Education as a community intervention model, she came to appreciate the idea of Village learning more and more.
[25] Keith Popple (1995:63) qualifies this statement. He explains that Community Education has a long tradition in the United Kingdom and that the strand that my work correlates with is named the conflict or radical model.

One can therefore conclude that the Western history of exclusivity linked to the concept of education that influenced the understanding of Community Education practice cannot respond to our culture and theology of liberation in Southern Africa.[26]

It is therefore critical to find those African indigenous sources that can facilitate discovering a liberatory ethos for self and communal empowerment for women in Southern Africa.[27] The framework of Village learning is divided into two areas. The concept of village must be seen from an African understanding. First, is the understanding of ethos.[28] One needs to bear in mind that an ethos, which is a key concept in this study, is not a discipline, a model of work or even a method. It is a belief system that needs to be given birth to in the depth of one's being.[29]

In a conversation with an elder in Kanye, Botswana, which initially seemed very informal and inconsequential to this study, one became deeply aware of the embedded Village Learning ethos that we have as Africans. Mr Mosimakoko,[30] a rural village elder introduced the researcher to very meaningful belief systems and put in perspective that which makes up the core understanding of the idea of Village Learning in Southern Africa. It is this concept of ethos that serves as the principle for the framework that will guide this study. Hence, with this African epistemological view, the theoretical framework will be named: Village Learning.

One of the first significant aspects about this African village learning ethos that was brought to the fore in the discussion is Mr. Mosimakoko's viewpoint that an ethos of this kind ought to be in people's nature.

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[26] Vishanthie Sewpaul struggles with this same dilemma in the field of Social Work in South Africa. She complains about the inherited social work history and tradition that have been rooted in colonialism and western hegemony with the professionalization process as defined within the logical-positivist paradigm (2003). I understand Sewpaul to suggest that Social Work operations in South Africa have continued to be defined by Western theories and traditional Western approaches. Professionalism in Social work therefore is determined by European standards.

[27] And to name it myself for what I believe it is.

[28] The concept of ethos was discussed earlier. See pp. 6-7.

[29] Freire names this process a conversion. He says that "conversion to the people requires a profound rebirth. Those who undergo it must take on a new form of existence; they can no longer remain as they were" (1996:43).

[30] Mr. Mosimakoko is a retired school teacher from the village of Kanye in Botswana

This aspect referred to by Mr Mosimakoko was pursued around conversation of the understanding of *botho* in the lives of Batswana. The concept of *botho* is similar to the concept of *ubuntu* in the Nguni languages in South Africa. *Botho* embraces a spirit of humaneness. Mr. Mosimakoko, the elder, explained that the whole of Batswana's being is embedded in the spirit of humaneness. He kept on saying that *botho* is in the nature of Batswana and if anybody does not behave in this character then *botho* or the spirit of humaneness has departed from this person. One can therefore say that *botho* is the framework within which Batswana conduct their lives. It is this framework that will be used as the foundation that guides perspectives around an ethos of learning in Southern Africa. This framework of Tswana community life is shared by many other traditional groups in Southern Africa.

The ethos of Village Learning in Southern Africa as described by Mr. Mosimakoko, resonates well with Biko's thoughts on Black Consciousness and has captured the agenda that shapes this study's theoretical framework. Biko dismisses the idea that Black Consciousness is merely a methodology or a means towards an end (1986:51). He regards Black Consciousness as an attitude of mind and a way of life (1986:91). It is a quest for true humanity.[31]

The second notion in this framework is that this *ethos* is undergirded by a particular learning culture which assists one to become empowered. It is pertinent again to draw on some phrases used by Mr. Mosimakoko through which he underscored how this spirit of humaneness can be empowering to individuals and communities. These will be applied to the second part of the theoretical framework, which is about liberatory learning in Southern Africa. Whilst Mr. Mosimakoko's discussion on the subject of *botho* could be valuable to assist the WAs with the notion that undergirds the ethos of

[31] Freire also promotes this as his core belief system. He names it humanisation. For him, humanisation is the people's vocation: "This vocation is constantly negated, yet it is affirmed by that negation. It is thwarted by injustice, exploitation, oppression, and the violation of the oppressors; it is affirmed by the yearning of the oppressed for freedom and justice, and by the struggle to recover their lost humanity" (1996:25-26). Freire goes on to name several ways through which this humanity can be recovered. Similar core beliefs are shared by Amilcar Cabral (1983:42) in which he calls for re-Africanisation, with the colonisation of his own people in the Cape Verde "to become African again."

learning, this second part of the discussion is helpful to analyse the implications of such an ethos for the empowerment of women in Southern Africa.

The first phrase to examine is *motho ke motho ka batho ba bangwe*. This means that one finds one's humanity through other people. The humanity of any person is formed through one's relation with other people. This is vital for any learning structure that we engage in. This phrase strongly brings out an ethos which encourages a learning model that is in community rather than individualistic. It also emphasises learning content that shapes the whole being of a person, your *humanity*.

The above ethos of humanity in the make-up of Batswana was also defined by the elder in phrases such as *ntwa kgolo ke ya molomo* (=warfare is through discussion and not weapons) and *more wa mafoko ke go buiwa* (=conflict is healed through discussion). These expressions are very revealing on how to deal with crisis situations. It encourages discussion and negotiations around predicaments faced by people. Once again, this undergirds the communal interests of society used in this study, including the openness to critical reflection around issues.[32] There is also emphasis on the importance of words in the oral tradition present among the people of Southern Africa.

The third term that all Batswana can relate to is one often used in the setting of the *kgotla: mahoko kgotla a mantle otlhe* ("words spoken in the kgotla are all beautiful." The *kgotla* can be described as the communal place used for cementing relationships through weddings, thanksgiving and other celebrations. It also serves as a sacred place and justice system. The saying *mahoko a kgotla a mantle otlhe* which is often used in this setting means "words spoken are all life-giving." This is evidence of the inclusive nature of life, in which all people's contributions are regarded as important. This phrase too is vital for my interpretation of learning that there are no hierarchies in society due to qualifications, economic and social status. *Mahoko a kgotla a mantle otlhe* highlights that each person's wisdom and experiences learnt should not be devalued and that every person is capable of contributing life-giving words unlike prevalent belief.

[32] One can relate this to the problem-posing educational approach explained by Freire.

Finally, for this introduction to the theoretical framework, but not exhaustive of African expressions and culture and its consequences for learning, is an exploration of the word *kgomo-mogojwa.* Mr. Mosimakoko made it clear that similar to other Setswana phrases *kgomo-mogojwa* does not have a simple translation into the English language. He however, related a scenario to explain the meaning of this word. He used the analogy of people running a race. In his culture, he explained, a race towards a goal post would only be fair if an enabling environment is created for all to participate. Therefore, when people are set up to start the race, the poorest runners will be put closer to the goal posts. Those who are average runners would be placed midway through, while those who were the fastest would begin the race from the starting post. This is a clear and informative indication of the character of the Batswana that captures a lot of my own concerns around learning. Learning should therefore be of this nature referred to by the concept of *kgomo-mogojwa* through which all are enabled.[33]

Biko also explores the implications of this liberatory culture of learning towards a true humanity. He states:

> As people existing in a continuous struggle for truth, we have to examine and question old concepts, values and systems. Having found the right answers we shall then work for consciousness among all people to make it possible for us to proceed towards putting these answers into effect. In this process, we have to evolve our own schemes, forms and strategies to suit the need and situation, always keeping in mind our fundamental beliefs and values (1986:92.

The struggle for existence in Southern Africa is to help one another discover *botho* or *truth for the sake of true humanity*. Truth for the sake of true humanity is vital in a region in which one's identity; faith and being have been distorted and erased. It calls for a re-learning or return to those African values on which humanity is based. Mphahlele refers to this type of learning ethos as one with a "humanistic face," one that can "mobilise the energies of the people, direct them, and maximize the will and

[33] Again related to Mr. Mosimakoko's reflections Freire distinguishes between the problem-posing educational approach as one that enables all whilst the banking education is an approach that instead gives reasons for various obstacles to enabling a learning environment for all. The banking education starts from the basis that some are totally ignorant. It invalidates the student's imaginative ability (Freire 1996:53-54) and therefore disqualifies the African learning concept or ethos of *kgomomogojwa* through which all should be enabled.

effort to liberate" (1988:viii). It is on these basic local values that the ethos of Village Learning exists and shapes the theology of being African and being woman relates.

5.2. African Women's Theology

African Women's Theology can be traced to the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians.[34] In reading Nadar's work, as with other African women theologians, this researcher has not come to terms with naming herself a feminist theologian (Phiri and Nadar 2006:3-4; Nadar 2009:135-150). This is so for a number of reasons. One of these is the reminder made by Nadar's historical chronicles of Feminist Theology as a term with origins from the Global North (Phiri and Nadar 2006:3-4; Nadar 2009: 135-150). The other reason is that in Southern Africa, the term feminist is an exclusive term used by only a few theologians. It is for these reasons the second theoretical framework is named as African Women's Theology.[35] Nadar describes the notion of African Women's Theology as a process of questioning of the experiences of living in a patriarchal environment with a fusion of Christianity and African culture. The ability as women to cross-examine this context, one's identity and spirituality is what results in African Women's Theologies (Nadar 2000:15-32).

Thoko Mpumlwana further sets the scene for this framework for women in Southern Africa when she draws a clear-cut relationship between racism, classism and sexism and notes that most Black women are subjected to these three forms of oppression:

> ...white women may use racism to maintain their own power base; Black men keep their power base through sexism; the privileged class use classism to maintain their base (1991:380).

Mpumlwana's reference to racism, classism and sexism sets out the foundation of the concerns around my pursuit "with correcting the false images of ourselves in terms of culture, education, religion, economics" (Biko 1986:52). Phiri and Nadar too note the importance of what they name the 'trilogy' in the discourse of women's theology

[34] Details of the beginnings of the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians is given in chapter 2.

[35] Nadar (2009:135-150) uses the terms Feminist and Women's Theology interchangeably. I prefer to use Women's theology as it is portrays an inclusive nature for all women. This is what I think is needed for WAs; embracing terms.

(Phiri and Nadar 2006:4). Recognising the historical, political, religious and economical context of Southern Africa, I suggest that these three oppressions: racism, classism and sexism cannot be ignored or separated in the interrogation of the context.[36] To put it more pertinently, for this study, is for women in the church to embrace a liberatory culture of learning that would enable them to become critical of their surroundings and their faith beliefs[37] and that WAs of the UCCSA offer just the opportunity for us to do that. This context of racism, classism and sexism is the basis which informs the principles of a liberatory ethos and empowerment for women.[38]

A theoretical framework for African Women's Theology that affirms insights around the concept of Village Learning, also includes the ability for one to confidently name oneself as Christian and as a woman I would suggest that this framework is already created and only needs 'blossoming,' as referred to by Fabella and Oduyoye:

> 'Blossoming' is a metaphor for a women's theology characterised by changes, growth, transformation, and especially for a corporeal theology born out of women's bodies and their suffering (1988:x).

Nadar names this 'blossoming' of women as a process through which women come to affirm and celebrate their womanhood rather than feeling humiliated and subjugated (Nadar 2002:156). This statement made by Nadar, Fabella and Oduyoye captures what I referred to above as a discovery of the true humanity. This fittingly depicts how Women's Theology in Southern Africa should guide our critical thinking processes as being African, being Christian and being woman. This concurs with Teresa Okure when she says that "African women's primary consciousness in doing theology is not a method, but life and concerns—their own and those of their own peoples (Okure 1993:77). Oduyoye also supports this notion by viewing feminism in theology as a theology of relationships. She holds that feminism is a fact of

[36]Oduyoye (1994:28), in her chronicles of EATWOT explains that the theologies of the organisation were by and large based upon racism and classism.
Denise Ackerman (2006:226) also locates her concept of feminism in her context of people's experiences of oppression and discrimination on grounds of gender, race, class, ability and sexual orientation.

[37] Phiri and Nadar (2006:5) also believe that key to women theologians, whether feminist or womanist, is their common ideology and concern for the liberation of women. My concern here is for this ideology of liberation to extend to women in the church especially the WAs of the UCCSA.

[38] As referred to by Biko, the Christian faith—as with other aspects—has been used as instruments to further cement these distortions. Indeed, the Christian faith has contributed to how women perceive themselves to be and how society perceives them.

experience and not a thesis (Oduyoye 1994:28). What Oduyoye has expressed here correlates well with the understanding of an ethos discussed earlier.[39] It is born from within a way of life. It is not an approach. These feminists' views gel well with the African nature of Village Learning which was expounded on by Mr. Mosimakoko.

6. **Summary**

At the heart of these theoretical frameworks ought to be the recognition and acknowledgement that we have distorted images in Southern Africa which has resulted in the altered perceptions about women, their societies, their faith and the world in which they live. This section embodied an evaluation and analysis of the values that could assist in constructing a liberatory learning ethos for the WA's.

Some of the key values of Village learning through which we can do African Women's Theology in the lives of women in Southern Africa is that it needs to be *in* community and *for* community, not about community. The heart of the ethos should be guided by a discovery of '*botho,'* values undergirded for the sake of true humanity. Such discussion about a recovery of true humanity will undoubtedly bring to the fore discussions about justice and equality. This would need open, frank and sincere critical discussion. Other community values are that it should be inclusive of all, a Village Learning approach that has no hierarchies. It should be a process through which nobody is devalued and in which all are enabled.

This ethos should bear in mind that we are born within an oral milieu and that should steer our engagement with Village Learning.[40] These critical in community discussions about *botho* should, like Okure and so many other Feminist Theologians

[39] See pp. 6-7.

[40] Kanyoro (2002:11) acknowledges the significance of oral media as a source of learning for theologians. She recognises that oral media was the most legitimate form of communication but over time regarded or 'immortalised' as she says, the written media as the 'source of truth.' This written media through colonisation resulted in the exclusion of the majority of the world's population. This is also excluded from the recorded story of faith formation as well. Phiri and Nadar (2010:15), recognise that the regular form of learning by African women theologians within the academy takes the form of the written word. They maintain that usually African women theologians have to play by these rules of the 'talking' that is allowed within the academy. Having acknowledged that the academy in Africa and in the West is constituted by a Western framework, they are constantly trying to meet Western academic standards. This discussion presents evidence of the current gap that exists between theologians and the WAs in Southern Africa.

say, be rooted in the realities of women's lives and women's theology[41] in the WAs of the UCCSA. The WAs of the UCCSA would then recover their potential and authenticity as women and their purpose as Christians amidst the challenges faced in church and society in the twenty-first century. It is this recovery of the true humanity that allows WAs to become the site of liberation. This encapsulates the view espoused on WAs as a potential site for a liberatory learning ethos for the empowerment of women in the church in Southern Africa[42].

6.1. Research Methodology

In order to answer the research question a number of factors have to be taken into consideration. In particular, these include:

i. My role as a researcher;
ii. The location and the participants of my research;
iii. The methods of research.

6.2. My Role as Researcher

What is my own role as a researcher in this study? Being a researcher and a practitioner, and an ordained minister and a woman in the UCCSA, one is caught in the very challenges faced by women in the church and society. This study is written from the margins that women find themselves in, in Southern Africa. Brown and McIntyre (1981:245) call the researcher a "practitioner." The reason for this is because:

[41] One of the common features that I have found in the writings of African Feminist theologies are their concern with a women's theology that is rooted in the realities of women's lives. Oduyoye (2002:23) remarks that Women's Theology has the whole of life for a context. Examples of these realities of women are related in reflections in Akoto (2006); Phiri and Nadar (2006); Phiri, Haddad and Masenya (2003). Perhaps the struggle is that these realities are not always realised by the woman in the pew.

[42] Ackerman (2006:225) believes that there in no one conception of feminist theology. My own understanding of Women's theology is embraced in this framework. It is not intending to put a divide between theory and practice to "sacrifice the theoretical upon the altar of activism" (Phiri and Nadar 2006:7) as this is not what I think should happen but for one to find meaning in the other. I find meaning in the ethos of being African, a woman and Christian and it is that which spurs me into activism.

> …the research questions arise from an analysis of the problems of the practitioners in the situation and the immediate aim then becomes that of understanding those problems… This implies a continuous process of research and the worth of the work is judged by the understanding of, and desirable change in, the practice that is achieved Brown and McIntyre 1981:245).

This study must be seen not only as a process of learning for the researcher, ordained minister and theologian but also for the WAs of the UCCSA and the wider church to understand that it could be beneficial for them. Therefore, the primary interest in doing this study is to improve practice—more specifically to improve practice through Village Learning and African Women's Theology. The researcher's role served a dual purpose of activist and researcher, the findings of the research are also filtered through these two positions that she inhabits. The researcher does presume that what is presented here is a comprehensive understanding; rather, it should only be seen as a 're-presentation' mediated through the researcher's own contextual lenses and experiences. This is not an outsider's reflection, but the experiences of a Black woman of mixed descent married to a Black Tswana man; the experiences of being an ordained woman minister; the experiences of the imposition of apartheid policies in both the church and society. In total, these all contribute to the analysis which is offered in this study.[43] This is because this research is qualitative (Bell 1987:4). It seeks to understand the WAs of the UCCSA perceptions of the world.

6.3. Location and Participants in the Research

Since the focus for the research was on the WAs of the UCCSA, it was important to locate the research in one of the countries wherein the UCCSA operates. The UCCSA is a trans-national church that operates in five countries within Southern Africa; these are Botswana, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe. Each country or Synod, as they are known, operates autonomously but not independently from each other as some decisions are taken jointly. Johannesburg, South Africa is the research location as this is where the Head Office of the church is situated, and where the

[43] Through the own experiences of her own research, Musimbi Kanyoro makes clear the conviction from which I discuss this subject matter. "I write as an African woman and I include myself in identifying with many of the cultural issues that I describe in this study. Thus, I write from within and that is reflected in the way I use inclusive pronouns, such as 'we' and 'us', which violates the rules of academia. I am part of this story and must write from within" (2002:12). I possess all the qualities identified with those being investigated.

researcher is based. This base provided good access to documentation about the UCCSA and the WAs of the denomination.

There are two Associations within the women's movement in the UCCSA. They are the *Isililo/Manyano/Bomme* (IMB) and the Women's Work Committee (WWC). In the five countries these two movements are historically divided along racial lines with the IMB movement being predominantly Black, while the WWC is predominantly 'coloured' even though originally it used to be the white women's movement born out of the missionary body. Diagram A explains the spread of the two associations in the UCCSA.

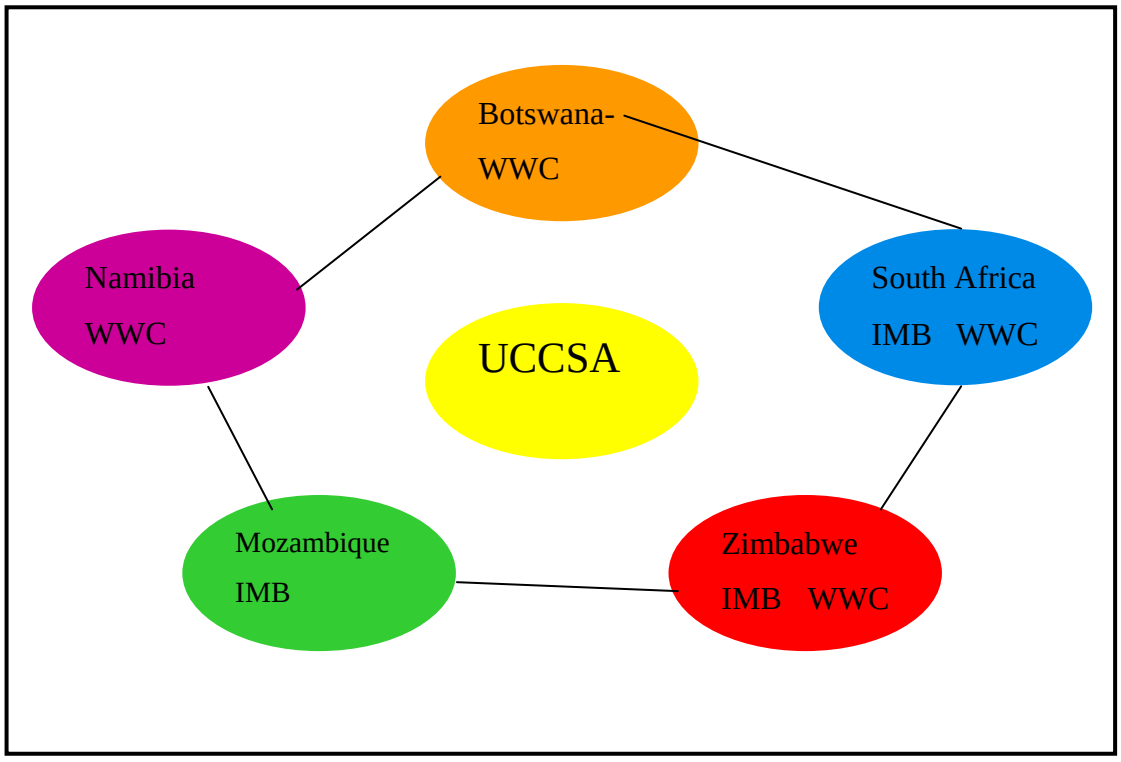

Diagram A

The Spread of the UCCSA Associations

Because of this researcher's commitment to the women of her faith community, this study becomes not just her research but it needs to also be accessible to the other participants and those beyond. They are the ones that need to benefit from the findings of this study. This is so because women are presumably the ones who are subjected to the oppression. This commitment to the faith community is in line with the approach

of liberation theology as it is understood by Leonardo and Clodovis Boff. The Boff brothers refer to liberation theology as a cultural and ecclesial phenomenon which by no means is restricted to a few professional theologians:

> It is a way of thinking that embraces most of the membership of the church (Boff and Boff 1987:11).

6.4. Research Methods

The key methodological approach to this qualitative study is that it is a literature based approach. The characteristic identified by Bell (1987:5) that the questions of investigation arise out of the fact that the researcher who is a practitioner has identified a problem within the organisation is applicable. The problem that I recognised within the organisation of WAs of the UCCSA was that they are following a predominantly Western notion of learning which is inherited from the missionaries and their Apartheid experiences, rather than developing a new and more critical ethos of learning, a liberatory ethos which challenged oppression in general, but more specifically the oppression of women in church and society. The reliance on the Western culture of learning to the exclusion of African values are based on stereotypes of African learning as primitive and un-critical because they are regarded as too involved with oral forms and too expressive. African learning is seen to be less systematic and hence of less value. This investigation is an effort not just to understand how these Western ideas are being utilised by the WAs, but also to propose a more African critical ethos of learning that could be taken up by the groups.

The second approach governing this research methodology is a case study approach. The focus of this inquiry is on the WAs of the UCCSA. Such a study could be applicable to any other organisation within the UCCSA or even any other denomination that has been influenced by past dysfunctional educational systems. Researchers call this case study approach a ‘free-standing exercise’ as one chooses or identifies one instance or situation to introduce a new development in an institution. Case studies are often relatable to instances or organisations in the wider institution (Bell 1987:8).

It allows for an in depth investigation on a particular example, in this case the WAs, but at the same time it may provide insights into the learning ethos which is upheld in the church in general. In a case-study approach, one focuses on a real-life circumstance instead of creating a hypothetical situation. Denscombe (1998:31) also explains that case studies usually explored within a social setting is concerned with relationships and processes. Spicker adds another dimension to this kind of study in which one does an in depth enquiry in an organisation. Spicker (2006:68) names it as an "intensive study," in which one focuses on a particular problem through which one asks pertinent questions of how and why things happen in the way that they do.

Using the two broad approaches for research, namely a qualitative approach and a case-study approach, as employed above, a number of different methods were employed for collecting the data needed in order to answer the research question. Some researchers refer to this as scholarship and systematic investigation (Spicker 2006:7). This means that this is a literature based study. Relevant material was gathered from historical documents, minutes of meetings, reports and newspaper clippings, in order to analyse both the wider church and the women's perspectives. Denscombe (1998:159) labels this library-based research. This is where documents are treated "as source of data in their own right—in effect an alternative to questionnaires, interviews or observation" (1998:159). This focus in which the research is entirely based on documents of various kinds is also described to achieve or produce a critical synopsis of an existing area, examining materials relevant to a particular set of policy decisions and intended to make use of available archival and other surviving documentary evidence to back up information (Blaxter, Hughes and Tight 1996:151). The sole reliance upon documentary sources was intended to assist the researcher in answering the research question.

The first method of data collection employed was used to collect information was the method of a survey. Getting 'a panoramic view' on the programmes and areas of interest which the women have focussed on over the last forty two years of existence in the UCCSA was helpful in establishing their perspectives on learning (*cf.* Denscombe 1998: 6). Through this process, the researcher was able to look back and draw out all the activities including the highlights of the WAs of the UCCSA to date.

The researcher also relied on archival materials showing the history of the denomination and the WAs in the UCCSA. This was important because these documents assisted in surveying whether the ethos of learning has changed or not from the time of the Western missionaries through to the organisations of today. Records, reports and minutes of meetings also assisted in understanding what the WAs of the UCCSA thought their role to be and decisions that were taken. Sometimes, within the minutes the emotions of the members can be recognised.

Newspaper clippings were also collected that set out archival articles which show the priorities, sometimes conflicts and concerns that were primary concerns for WAs and the church at specific times.

Their constitutions were vital for the study too. Policy documents such as constitutions, according to Spicker (2006:49-62) are loaded with statements that give particulars of an organisation's aims, values and goals. These statements reveal the organisations culture that guides actions. These are documents that set out those belief systems and values that have brought the organisations into being and have held the Associations together over time. These statements also indicated what the Associations are driven by as groups, and what kind of ethos of learning is exposed in their aims and objectives. Since such policy documents do not often get reviewed, they assisted in measuring over time whether these beliefs have changed or not.

The various methods that were used in collecting information served as a way through which cross referencing of information took place. It assisted with the verification of opinions of the WAs throughout the research process. To summarise, the process of the research involved probing inherent and inherited beliefs around life and faith, and through this process I hope that the outcome of this research will be motivating so that the women and the church in coming to know about this study might feel the urge to create a new ethos in the same way that it had an impact on my own life.

The researcher's firm conviction in understanding the liberatory values of the scriptures as a woman theologian is born out of a personal experience of a process of transformational learning.

By sharing this transformational journey with other women, through this study, it is hoped that the study will set the scene for us to be able to engage and find patterns in our experiences.[44] Through relating the narratives of the WAs of the UCCSA we might find the God who acts in history, in our daily lives, in our struggles, and it is hoped that out of these a liberatory ethos, a new perspective on Women's Theology is born. This seems to be the understanding that Leonardo and Clodovis Boff have when they write:

> Every true theology springs from a spirituality—that is, from a true meeting with God in history (1987:3).

The need for the study and having established the values which guide this understanding of a liberatory learning ethos through the background and motivation for undertaking this study, the objectives and the structure of the work, the theoretical frameworks guiding this research and the methods that were employed in the process of the research, the study now proceeds to discuss the challenges that women are faced with in the church and society in the twenty-first century.

[44] One of the strengths that I have found amongst some African Feminist Theologians is their ability to narrate their own life stories. It is in these personal stories that they find meaning and locate their theological dialogues with the society, church and the world. I believe that such personal narration of one's life story embodies an ethos of knowing the self (empowerment) which strongly opposes the 'traditional' rational, cold, academic notion from the Global North. It gives a genuine grounding of the society from which you come that could assist others to find value too since it is not about the other but begins with the self. Examples include: Moyo (2006:243-257); Kanyoro (2002:1-12) and Nadar (2000:15-32). It is these personal experiences that make Freire (1996), Biko (1986) and the work by Barton (1999) stand out amongst many. It is these experiences that propelled their passion for change.

CHAPTER TWO

THE CHALLENGES FACED BY WOMEN IN SOCIETY AND THE CHURCH

1. Introduction

In this chapter a description will be offered of the social, religious, economic and political challenges faced by women in Southern Africa in the first decades of the twenty-first century and the tremendous strides that have been made in recent years towards addressing these challenges. The objective of this chapter is to demonstrate that a liberatory ethos is needed in the WAs of the UCCSA. This will be achieved through a brief description of the initiatives taken by the UN (UN) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) in addressing the challenges which women face. Thereafter, it will focus on the church bodies which the UCCSA is affiliated to, who have attempted to respond to the challenges faced by women through various initiatives. The specific focus will be on the World Council of Churches (WCC), the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC), who recently became the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) and the Council for World Mission (CWM). The initiatives taken by these ecumenical bodies provide a clear demonstration of the precedents and examples for action for women which the WAs of the UCCSA can use to respond to these challenges.

2. The Challenge of Women in Southern African Society

The picture of the position of women, such as Setshego, sketched in chapter one is not unique to the Botswana context but is a common phenomenon experienced by women across Southern Africa. Gender inequality has been identified as a worldwide concern that must be addressed in order to improve the position of women. Whilst chapter one primarily set its focus on the researcher's personal motivation for pursuing this study

which concentrates particularly on women in her own denomination, this section of the study will offer an overview of gender issues at the socio-political level.

2.1. The United Nations

The United Nations (UN) has been instrumental in putting issues concerning women on the agendas of Governments and NGO bodies internationally.[45] The 1975 Mexico Conference[46] concentrated primarily on raising awareness amongst women at the level of their common problems, with the particular aim of achieving equality between women and men and the elimination of discrimination against women. This first initiative by the UN gave rise to some significant outcomes, including the International Women's Day which we celebrate on March 8, annually and the Decade of Women which was observed from 1976 to 1985.[47] Twenty years later in 1995, the UN held a follow-up discussion on the position of women. This they named the Platform of Action, with the designated purpose of integrating women as full and equal partners in all policies and decision-making processes. Governments, NGOs and gender activists gathered together in Beijing, China to deliberate on the struggles faced by women across the world. This conference adopted the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action which singled out specific problem areas in an effort towards the elimination of gender disparities. This conference was one amongst a succession of meetings and preliminary meetings ahead of the Fourth World Conference of Women.[48] The platform identified twelve critical areas through which women have been affected in their day to day activities. The members recognised that

[45] There is much debate on this viewpoint, where some hold that women's issues have been neglected by the developed world over the last three decades (De Gruchy 2001:70). While this study will not to go into the content of this debate, it will provide some background into the initiatives in the UN that have given rise to such discussions within the International Ecumenical community.

[46] This was one of their very first UN initiatives set towards improving the position of women. The main focus of the Conference was on issues of women's empowerment and women's rights.

[47] United Nations (2005), Commission on the Status of Women: 49th Session - Thirty-Year UN Effort to Promote Gender equality celebrated at International Women's day Headquarters Observance <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2005/wom1495doc.htm/> [Accessed September 22, 2008].

[48] United Nations (1995), Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, September 4-15, 1995, New York, United Nations, <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/Beijing%20full%20report%20E.pdf/> [Accessed September 22, 2008].

women face various barriers that prevent them from enjoying full equality with their male colleagues.

A systematic process was set in place to guarantee that a diagnosis was made for each critical area and that planned objectives were proposed together with concrete actions.[49]

In September 2000, five years after the Beijing Platform for Action, world leaders came together and grappled with what seemed to be the very same issues. The UNs focus shifted to that of Millennium Development Goals. De Gruchy links the beginnings of the idea of millennium discussions to the then UN General Secretary, Kofi Annan in 1996 when he called for a "Millennium Assembly" "to examine the relations amongst the various component parts of the UN system" (2001:58). This resulted in a series of documents and events. It is out of these processes that a common vision came about that captured some eight Millennium Development Goals. It is hoped these will be achieved by 2015 (Moolman 2005:4).[50]

Africa featured as a continent that needed priority attention. Focus on the Africa region was on poverty, infrastructural inadequacies, economic and political obstacles. De Gruchy explains the spirit of the discussions around Africa in two areas that were identified as main concerns:

i. Africa needed outside help
ii. Africa needed to help itself.

Whilst it is true that Africa needs attention, these discussions seemed oblivious of the colonial and neo-colonial effects on Africa (De Gruchy 2001:68-69).

[49] United Nations (1995), Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15th September 1995, New York; United Nations <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/Beijing%20full%20report%20E.pdf/> [Accessed September 22, 2008].

[50] In particular, these eight development goals have the aim of emancipating all people by 2015 from the dehumanising conditions of extreme poverty.

Women and Gender Development stakeholders have also brought under scrutiny the Millennium Development processes, with special attention being placed on the Millennium Development Goals. Gertrude Mongella, then Secretary General of the UN Fourth World Conference on Women (1995) believes that these goals ought to read "Women's Millennium Goals." This is because they referred to the very same issues discussed by the Beijing Platform of Action.[51] They deal with the struggles of women experienced everywhere; such as maternal health care, eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, reducing child mortality, empowering women, combating diseases and achieving universal primary education.[52] These issues are particularly prevalent in sub-Saharan Africa where the majority of women live below the poverty datum line.

The debate about Women and Gender and the Millennium Development discussion has been taken on by Steve De Gruchy too. In a review that he produced on the Summit of September 2000 and the subsequent published Report, De Gruchy concludes that women's concerns were noticeably absent. His perception is that the Millennium Report "deals with women purely as economic statistics" and that no substantive thought was given to culture and values[53] amongst other things in women and gender in development practice (2001:70).

Gender activists have questioned the value of these Millennium goals for people living in the Global South particularly in the creation of gender parity for the current

[51] Gertrude Mongella (2005) UN, Commission on the Status of Women; 49th Session; 2005 Thirty-Year UN effort to Promote Gender Equality Celebrated at International Women's Day Headquarters Observance <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2005/wom1495doc.htm/> [Accessed September 22, 2008]. Janine Moolman (2005:5) seems to share similar concerns as those expressed by Mongella, by relating how the previous World Conferences on women articulated a vision for a future in which women could take their rightful place as equal global citizens, while the MDGs which ought to have all the aspects of women at heart, conspire to bury the women's agenda instead.

[52] Musimbi Kanyoro (2002:69) explains how the United Nations took on the concerns of children at the United Nations Summit on Children in May 2002 in New York, US. The children who featured at the Summit we are told by Kanyoro begged the adults to build a world where food, water, education, health, security and friends are guaranteed. The areas of concern for children are significant because they are the exact same concerns identified for women. This is not a surprise as women are regarded as the carers of children and would therefore have similar matters that bother them.

[53] Kanyoro on the topic of gender as a concept of cultural analysis writes about the impact that culture can have on women. She believes that any analysis related to women's oppression needs to have a gender analysis process in place that can decipher how culture operates within a given society and who benefits from a particular interpretation of culture (2002:17). Kanyoro's study affirms De Gruchy's point that the disadvantaged position of women should be understood within a deeper context and not only as economical statistics.

marginalisation experienced by women. Janine Moolman (2005:3-5) argues that the Millennium Development Goals are merely "lofty ideals" if they do not address the deeply embedded conservative religious and traditional practices, which are the structural causes of inequality. She holds the view that gender dimensions are not visible within the goals other than those goals that refer to education and maternal mortality. Otherwise, the Millennium Development Goals do not have gender-specific indicators. Women's Rights, Moolman asserts are not recognised as a development goal (2005:5).

Other obvious shortcomings of the Millennium Development Goals is their silence on gender violence and the need to ensure sexual and reproductive health rights of women especially in the light of the HIV&AIDS pandemic in Southern Africa. The socio-economic factors underlying the impoverished position of women in Africa and the rest of the Global South need to be explicated, including the impact of global economic policies and free trade, all of which seem to be ignored by the Millennium Development Goals. For Moolman (2005:5), only when Gender equality is regarded as central to all International policies and agreements and is made binding on all countries regionally and internationally, will it have true value for women.

Gender equality is an ongoing pursuit.[54] Over time, the goal posts have shifted and the terms have changed. In the present researchers visit to the offices of the Botswana Government in 2008, the department which was commonly known as Women's Affairs, that was responsible for the Women and Development Programme and was the instrument set in place to monitor the UN Millennium Goals was now renamed the Gender and Development Programme. This shift from women's empowerment to gender empowerment was a sign that discussions around the position of women have become more advanced. It became clear that gender was not simply about women's issues but human issues that affect the entire human race. Wangari Maathai, a Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, who shared in the 1975 Mexico Conference explained in an evaluation paper put together by the Commission on the Status of Women at which thirty years of the promotion of Gender Equality was celebrated that there was still much to do. Maathai maintained that the journey was not complete, that there were

[54] Bam (2005:14) also acknowledges that a lot still remains to done for the cause of women.

many challenges that remained, such as climate change, deforestation and poverty which still need to be addressed for women to enjoy equal space and opportunity.[55] The struggle towards gender equality continues. Even up to the time of writing, there are still many issues that remain unresolved in this sphere as outlined by Charlene Smith (2006:14).

In summary, this brief and limited survey of the work of the UN on global gender disparities indicates that despite the many strides made, much more work needs to be done in order to address the challenges faced by women. These challenges find expression in the context of Southern African, as well as elsewhere in the world. It is for this reason attention is given in this study to the challenges in the Southern African region and the initiatives taken by the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to address these.

2.2. The Southern African Development Community (SADC)

The important areas identified at the Fourth World Conference of Women became central to the subsequent discussion at Regional and National level. Every region and country was able to identify their common areas of concern through such reflections In the SADC gender equality was identified as a major issue in order to address issues of sustainable development. Several structures, policies and support systems were created to assist the region in addressing issues of gender. Apart from such systems, the region also put instruments in place for nation States within the SADC to commit themselves to the process of gender equity. Amongst these were the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies; the Africa Platform for Action; the 1997 Declaration on Gender and Development and the 1998 Addendum to the Prevention and Eradication of Violence against Women and Children. One of the regional tools was the 2007 Protocol on Gender and Development which set out guiding principles for gender equity in an attempt to synchronise all the instruments previously adopted, both regionally and internationally. A Regional Advisory Committee and a Standing Committee of Ministers responsible for Gender Affairs became the catalysts for the

[55] Wangari Maathai (2005), UN, Commission on the Status of Women; 49th Session, Thirty-Year UN Effort to Promote Gender Equality Celebrated at International Women's day Headquarters Observance <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2005/wom1495doc.htm/> [Accessed September 22, 2008].

SADC to provide advice, monitor the way forward and also to represent the region on global fora on issues of gender.[56]

Among the areas of concern with regard to the position of women, most countries within the SADC identified education and health as their highest ranking priorities. The SADC States have put forth various reasons for the disadvantaged position of women and girl children within the educational systems.[57] The illiteracy level amongst women and girl children is one of the main concerns. Such high illiteracy levels are attributed to the fact that girl children are a marginalised group in the education systems. There is not enough enrolment numbers of girl children as compared to boy children in institutions of learning and it remains a huge struggle to keep girl children in schools.[58] This is due to increased teen pregnancy rates, household responsibilities in which girls are often occupied, traditional customs that the role of girl children and women remains in the home. These beliefs are further encouraged in the educational materials which continue to stereotype the roles of both women and girl children. In many countries there still remains unequal access to institutions of learning boy and girl children. These disparities within the education system result in more boy children remaining and completing their studies than that of girl children. This results in poor academic performance and a high drop-out rate by girl children which gives further rise to other socio-economic inequalities.[59] The All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) (2008:38) has also recognised that socio-cultural practices in Africa have contributed to the disadvantaged position of education for girl children and that there is need for educational services that can reverse the negative cultural perceptions that persist in society. Adequate healthcare is

[56] SADC Protocol on Gender and Development, (August 2007).

[57] This research will help clarify for us in chapter five the type of educational systems that have come to be accepted in Southern Africa and how these systems devalue and exclude many African people. What we explore in this chapter is how girls particularly are affected by the system. If one considers further aspects in chapter five then we can realise that girl children experience a double or sometimes multiple oppression of exclusion because of the educational systems.

[58] Relebohile Moletsane explains that girls' access to education is on the face of it no longer such a critical area of concern however she believes that using equal numbers as a parameter to test equality is to oversimplify gender issues and avoiding or ignoring its complexities. What is needed is to qualitatively consider "nature of power and girls' and women's access to resources, discrimination, exclusion from decision-making and denigrating portrayals" (2005:28).

[59] SADC, 1999, Gender Monitor, WIDSAA, Gender Equality in Education. <http://www.sardc.net/widsaa/smg/1999/smg_ch7.html/> [Accessed February 13, 2008].

another concern for women of the Southern African region,[60] especially those who are child bearers. Inadequate access and good quality medical care are huge concerns around the issue of health for women. This is so because healthcare is not affordable for the majority of women. Most of the diseases from which women suffer are related to poverty and malnutrition. World Bank and International Monetary Fund imposed Economic Structural Adjustment Programmes (ESAPs) that have been introduced in countries in the region have transferred the provision of healthcare from governments to families. Privatised health services are also a further burden to accessible health care. Women and children are affected the worst by these arrangements. This is especially harsh on women living in rural areas.[61]

Another factor affecting women and health care is the fact that women do not have decision-making powers on issues of their own health and sexuality. This is due to the prevalence of patriarchal cultures and structures. This is evident in the HIV&AIDS infection rate of women as compared to men in the SADC region. Phaladze and Tlou (2001:196) confirm that girl children have been more susceptible to HIV infection than boy children in Southern Africa. They attribute this to various factors of a socio-economic and cultural nature with the underlying cause being gender inequality. Women also have the role of care-takers in families and neighbourhoods, without the using protective measures or education on the topic. Within the SADC region, women constitute 80% of compliment of health workers, thereby marking them as the main caretakers of the ill. The other reason for this concern around sexuality and healthcare for women in Southern Africa is that the region has been known to have the highest number of people living with HIV&AIDS.[62]

[60] Extensive literature has been developed around women and health particularly with the emergence of the HIV&AIDS pandemic in Southern Africa. These materials cover a wide range of interests such as theology, development, statistics and adult education to name just a few. Of particular note are the works of Haddad (2008:47-57); Phiri, Haddad, and Masenya (2003); Dube (2002:31-42); and a host of materials for use in churches which have been prepared by the World Council of Churches. These materials all have one common viewpoint which is that women have been adversely affected by the HI-virus.

[61] SADC, (1999), Gender Monitor, WIDSAA, Health Care Still Dream for Some, <http:/www.sardc.net/widsaa/sgm/1999/sgm_ch8html/> [Accessed February 13, 2008].

[62] SADC, (1999), Gender Monitor, WIDSAA, Health Care Still Dream for Some, <http:/www.sardc.net/widsaa/sgm/1999/sgm_ch8html/> [Accessed February 13, 2008].

A third area of importance identified by the Nation States in Southern Africa is that of gender violence[63]. Anikie Mathoma (2001:117) describes some of the different types of gender violence that women and girl children in Southern Africa are vulnerable to, including incest, child prostitution, emotional abuse, partner violence, sexual harassment and rape. She concludes her study by maintaining that combating domestic violence is essential for the survival of women in the twenty-first century. Women generally continue to be the victims of violence regardless of their race, class or whether they live in rural or urban areas. They have several hindrances that prevent them from achieving a life free from gender violence. These include legislation which often favours the perpetrator rather than the victim and policies which are non-existent within SADC States, work places and organisations. Women and children often do not speak out because of fear or financial dependence on the perpetrators. In most cases, the SADC States do not have affordable or good quality legal support for women who experience violence.[64] African theologians such as Tinyiko Maluleke and Sarojini Nadar (2002:7) take special note of the social, cultural and economic effects of gender violence on the lives of the victims through narrating true stories. Of particular significance are the political impacts, predominantly in South Africa.[65] Another viewpoint is that of the African Feminist Theologian Isabel Phiri, who in her research (2001) "Domestic Violence in Christian Homes: A Durban Case Study" found that that religious beliefs have a major bearing on gender violence.[66]

The SADC has made several attempts to work towards opposing violence against Women and Children in the region. Among these efforts is the commemoration of the International Women's Day, the International Commemoration of 16 Days of

[63] Gender violence is yet another area that has evoked a lot of discussion and therefore research. With the HIV&AIDS pandemic the focus on gender violence has intensified as the two concerns have been related. Another big concern related to gender violence is Human Trafficking. As awareness around Human Trafficking has increased so has documentation around the topic. Of particular importance nare the works of Smith (2006:45-58); Nadar (2000:15-32); Phiri (2002:19-30); Mmereki (2001:124-132).

[64] SADC (1999), Gender Monitor, Women in Development Southern Africa Awareness (WIDSAA), <http://www.sardc.net/widsaa/gender.asp?action=widsaa/> [Accessed March 13, 2011].

[65] This is not often considered as a consequence of gender violence by gender activists. This is an important opinion for this study as it makes us aware of the extent to which the educational legacies have impacted on our beings.

[66] See Phiri (2000:19-30). This discussion will be further pursued in chapter 6 with the interpretation of the Christian faith and the Bible.

Activism for No Violence Against Women and Children, and the Declaration on the Prevention and Eradication of Violence against Women.[67]

The fourth challenge in the SADC region is that of poverty. Among those who that have identified the "feminisation of poverty" as a key challenge to development goals within Southern Africa is the South African journalist and activist, Charlene Smith (2006:36); *cf.* Lesetedi (2001:99-105); Chirongoma (2006:173-185); Moolman (2005:34-41). Smith quotes from a Communiqué from SADC Gender and Women's Empowerment:

> Women and girls form a startling 70% of those living in extreme poverty" in the region....SADC noted that "debt servicing and economic structural adjustment programmes have disproportionately harmed women..."Women are the majority of the population in the SADC region yet they are minority actors in so far as making critical economic decisions. Women do not have access to and control over resources and have remained locked into micro-credit, small-scale loans and income-generating projects. These have broadly failed to uplift women from poverty permanently (2006:36).

This Communiqué substantiates the view that most women are either financially dependent or have no collateral to invest in business. The sociologist, Gwen Lesetedi (2001: 99-105), makes a similar observation with regard to women's contribution to socio-economic development. According to Smith (2006:36), small-scale business initiatives do not privilege women to have any access to or control over the various resources in the countries such as land or input in policies around trade or budgetary allocations that could bring about economic justice.

A fifth gender concern in the SADC region is that of human trafficking. Recent research notes how human trafficking, especially of women and children have become a profitable business. The AACC (2008:14) compares trafficking to a modern day form of slave trade. They note that "1.2 million children are trafficked every year for forced labour, sexual exploitation and slavery" and in some cases "children are removed for purposes of removal of organs" (2004:14). This has become profitable for those criminal elements that exploit the poor. Poverty is cited as the cause of such

[67] SADC Protocol on Gender and Development, (August 2007).

exploitative habits, as most of the victims are in search of a better life and come from very poor circumstances. Women from neighbouring countries such as Mozambique and Zimbabwe are smuggled into South Africa and sold for as little as 500 South Africa Rands (approx. US$70). They are normally misled by being promised job opportunities and are then sexually exploited (Mpumlwana and Pato 2008:18-19). These are just a few examples of the socio-economic and socio-political drawbacks that women face in the context of Southern Africa. Further unease is the absence of women in the key decision-making structures of organisations, institutions and SADC States, whether they are political, financial, judicial, academic, cultural or religious.[68] This situation has persisted over many centuries in spite of attempts made to improve gender parity.[69] Moolman (2005:69) has noted that women in prison and those who have been displaced or live in refugee camps have not been given sufficient attention in Government policies and programmes. At the heart of such inequalities are religious beliefs, traditions and customs that advance all kinds of reasons why men are superior to women. These beliefs are enforced through a number of practices and religious laws. Given that the situation of gender disparity and the various challenges which the women in Southern Africa face, the need for a response from WAs in Southern Africa becomes all the more poignant.

Having surveyed the challenges that women face in society, we now turn our attention to the challenges that women face within the church and how various ecumenical church bodies have attempted to respond to these challenges.

[68] Elsie Alexander (2001) believes that an increase in representation of women in these leadership positions is important for the "achievement of democratic, transparent and accountable government as well as sustainable development". She suggests that women's equal participation in political decisions plays an important role in the "advancement of women as it will facilitate the opportunity to incorporate gender concerns and priorities at all levels of decision making" (2001:79). Even though this is the ideal situation that one would hope for this of course is not the case as we will see through my own study with the WAs of the UCCSA. Negative educational legacies keep women from recognising liberatory opportunities. This of course does not mean that the minimal numbers of representation of women in leadership and decision-making bodies is enough. Instead the need to provide women with the critical learning skills to understand the value of their roles in these positions must be recognised and acted upon.

[69] See SADC (1999), Gender Monitor, WIDSAA, Thirty percent Women in Power by 2005, <http://www.sardc.net/widsaa/sgm/1999/sgm_ch3.html/> [Accessed February 13, 2008].

3. The Challenge of Women in the Church

The initiatives mentioned above, introduced by the UN on the position of women have had a strong influence on other organisations, particularly Governments, NGOs and Ecumenical church Bodies. Several steps have been taken by Church organisations to overcome the unequal power relationships that exist between men and women in the church and the wider society. This is such a broad area that attention will concentrate on the three major Ecumenical organisations to which the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa is affiliated, namely the World Council of Churches (WCC), the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC),[70] and the Council for World Mission (CWM) to which it is a co-owner. The WAs of the UCCSA are also affiliated to these bodies.

3.1. The World Council of Churches (WCC)

The origins of the WCC can be traced back to the late nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century in the Global North. Amidst the missionary fervour of the time, a lot of interaction took place across denominational borders. In 1938, an agreement was reached by church leaders to establish a World Council of Churches in Utrecht in the Netherlands. It was only in terms of post-war reconstruction following World War II that the WCC became a reality. The first Assembly of the Council took place in Amsterdam in 1948 (van Elderen 1990:18-23).

The context of the birth and vision of the WCC is summed up in the emblem of the organisation *oikoumene* 'the whole inhabited earth.' This was also expressed in the statement which was adopted in 1948:

> To carry out the work of the world movements for Faith and Order and Life and Work.

The idea of the organisation was not to amalgamate churches but rather that the WCC would be a platform for churches to bear witness together. This is why the words in

[70] As of July 2010, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) and the Reformed Ecumenical Council (REC) agreed to join together to form the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC).

the Apostles creed, 'one holy and apostolic church' became an important key to understanding the vision and work of the WCC. The membership of the WCC comprises of a number of different traditions of Churches mainly Orthodox, Protestant Reformed, and Independent who all share a common belief in Jesus Christ. The membership of the WCC spans over 110 countries across the world with 349 constituent churches.

As the organisation evolved from the previously missionary, primarily European and North American membership, new visions and statements were accepted.[71] The influence of its membership which was now mainly from the Global South grew wider. One such statement of purpose was accepted by the 1998 WCC Assembly in Harare:

> The primary purpose *of the fellowship of churches in the World Council of Churches is to call one another* to visible unity in one faith and in one Eucharistic fellowship, expressed in worship and common life in Christ, *through witness and service to the world*, and to advance towards that unity in order that the world may believe.[72]

This common "witness and service to the world" has been expressed in the volumes of resources and programmes on global ecumenical matters such as 'The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, the 'Programme to Combat Racism' and the 'Ecumenical Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women' that will be discussed in this chapter.

Except for these programmes and resources, the WCC also witnesses through the Councils of Churches that have been established in the different countries and its various regional bodies. According to Elaine Kaye, the WCC has been concerned with women's issues since the inception of the Council in 1948 even though such issues were mainly placed on the agenda because of the presence of women through the representation of laity at the first meeting. During the planning of its first inaugural meeting, key concerns were noted that affected the church. Amongst these

[71] Van Elderen (1990:26) records the issues that emerged at the Second Assembly in Evanston, outside Chicago. Amongst the discussions racism and colonialism featured highly. Particular focus was on the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk (NGK) family of churches in South African. Member churches from South Africa held the Assembly responsible for not taking the apartheid situation in South Africa seriously. Shortly after the event three Afrikaans-speaking NGK churches withdrew from the WCC.
[72] See World Council of Churches, <http://www.oikoumene.org/> [Accessed March 13, 2011].

were the 'the Life and Work of Women in the Church.' In preparation for this debate at the WCC Assembly in Amsterdam in 1948 which was approaching, groundwork on the position of women in the church had to be done with the member churches to determine whether the concern over women's involvement or the lack of women's involvement in the church was a genuine concern (Kaye 2004:98 *cf.* van Elderen (1990:25).

Ursula King (1994) has made a significant observation on the position of women in the WCC in 1967 when the South African Brigalia Bam took charge of the Department of Co-operation of Women and Men in Church and Society. She notes that only during this time of leadership by an African woman did global issues of women's rights as human beings come to be recognised. Up until that time, women's issues were concerned mainly with women's ordination and participation in the church (King, 1994:9).[73] Since this period, discussion has became more advanced, especially with regard to research, the exposure of women to theological training having given rise to new networks that have been set up among feminist groups. Mercy Oduyoye (1994:31) remembers how through combined the efforts with the World Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) and the World Student Christian Federation, political, economic, socio-political, legislative, psychological, cultural and theological issues began to emerge.

As was the case with National Governments, the UN gave the cue to the WCC towards the end of the 'Decade for Women' to introduce an 'Ecumenical Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women.' Here again, we are told that an African Methodist Bishop suggested the idea since the UN decade did not improve the position of women much with in the churches (King 1994:10). This advocacy campaign took place from 1988 to 1998.

An evaluation report published after the close of 'the Ecumenical Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women' concluded that women were the ones primarily promoting

[73] The point made by King that women's issues brought for discussion to the WCC were very inward looking comes through clearly in Elaine Kaye's (2004) summary of how women's issues became noticed in the WCC. She states that amongst the issues raised that affected the position of women were namely, ordination of women, training of women church workers and under-representation of women in the councils of the churches including the World Council itself (2004:98-99).

the disadvantaged position of women rather than the churches. The report makes this conclusion by saying that progress in the Decade was attained mainly because of "solidarity of women with other women" and that "transforming the churches into truly inclusive communities" was still a goal to be achieved by the WCC.[74]

In the World Council of Churches it became clear that most issues, since the inception of the organisation, were often dictated by Europe and North America.[75] This created a split between views held by those countries in the Global North and those in the Global South. The result was the founding of the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (EATWOT) whose concern was with contextual issues faced by the so-called 'Third World.'[76] Women's theologies also became specific to the 'Third World' even though women realised that such a theology would have to be constructed by themselves and they had no place even in EATWOT. Oduyoye relates how Marianne Katoppe made known her dissatisfaction with the hostility with which women were treated at an EATWOT meeting. This according to Oduyoye brought to the surface a deep-rooted sexism. Oduyoye (1994:25) commended the efforts of Virgina Fabella who brought women into the conversations of EATWOT. Since the inception of EATWOT, Oduyoye has called upon its membership to take women theologians seriously. Her continuous outcry for women's contribution led to the establishment of a Commission on Theology from a Third World Women's perspective (Russell 2006:54). It was this explosion of women in the theological arena that Oduyoye calls an "irruption within an irruption" (1994:25). Women erupted with all their loaded passion of the pain that created their alienation. Women had to craft their own organisation through which they could develop their own voice. Mercy Oduyoye was thus instrumental in setting up a body of African Women Theologians to take the lead on this. Through Oduyoye's continuous efforts in 1986,[77] and under the auspices of EATWOT emerged the Circle of Concerned African Women

[74] World Council of Churches (1998), From Solidarity to Accountability: Letter to the Eight Assembly of the WCC from the Women and Men of the Decade Festival of the Churches in Solidarity with Women. <ww.oikoumene.org/gr/resources/documents/assembly/harare-1998/from-solidarity-to-accountability.html/> [Accessed March 13, 2011].
[75] World Council of Churches, <http://www.oikoumene.org/> [Accessed March 13, 2011].
[76]The Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians <http://www.eatwot.org/> [Accessed March 13, 2011].
[77] Kanyoro (2006) has written extensively on the life of the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians and gives a different date for its beginning, than that mentioned by Bam above. Kanyoro also records that Mercy Oduyoye founded the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians in 1988 (2006:19).

Theologians (*hereafter*, the Circle) that was tasked with creating their own theology (Bam 2005:9). Bam goes on to explain that the dream of the Circle was to produce quality theological reflections written by African women for African women. Since its inception in 1989, the Circle has produced over one hundred books. The vision of the Circle has also been to encourage an ever growing circle of women of all faiths as well those with no faith across the African continent and the African Diaspora. Included in this vision was the idea for the Circle to challenge the structures, systems and challenges which seek to disenfranchise women in church and society (Bam 2005:12). Another ecumenical body which has attempted to address the concerns of gender inequality has been the WARC. We now turn our attention to this body.

3.2. The World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC)

The second body that the UCCSA has had affiliation with is the WARC. Unlike the WCC, the WARC is a fellowship of Reformed Christians. Theologically, the WARC locates itself in the history of sixteenth century Western Protestant reformers such as John Calvin, John Knox, Ulrich Zwingli and others. The Churches that bear this heritage are mainly Congregational, Presbyterian, Reformed and United Churches in the tradition. WARCs stated purpose is "to bring churches together to seek theological clarity that will unite churches for social action and encourage joint church initiatives for economic, ecological and gender justice."[78] The organisation has served this purpose well through projects such as the 'Covenanting for Justice in the Economy and the Earth,' 'Theology and Ecumenical Engagement' and the 'Church Renewal, Justice and Partnership.'

Kaye (2004:101-102) explains that even though WARC was established in 1857, issues of women only became a concern in 1986 after the Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women. There is a difference of opinion by the General Secretary of WARC, Setri Nyomi who traces the beginnings of WARCs concern to address issues of gender inequality to 1921 at the 11th General Assembly (WARC 2003). Nyomi does however corroborate Kaye's statement that it was only around 1987 that more serious attention was paid to the position of women in WARC with the formation of a

[78] World Alliance of Reformed Churches, <http://warc.jalb.de/> [Accessed March 13, 2011].

Programme to Affirm, Challenge and Transform: Women and Men in Partnership in the Church and Society (PACT). In 1997, a Department of Partnership of Women and Men was founded.

With the reorganisation of the structures of the WARC between 2005 and 2007, the Gender Justice Network took responsibility for issues of Gender within the WARC. This Network continued the work initiated by the previous Department of Partnership of Women and Men. The Network was located within the Office of Church Renewal, Justice and Partnership.[79]

A report presented by the Executive Secretary of the Office of Church Renewal, Justice and Partnership, set out the areas upon which the Gender Network focused, particularly between 2005 and 2007. It is clear that the primary focus of the organisation was on promoting women in leadership in the church. This was done through giving support to the 'Theological Education Scholarship Fund for Women in the South' which was launched in 2001. A study on women's ordination was commissioned and a Consultation on Gender, Leadership and Power held to re-examine current models of leadership in the church. These activities helped ascertain whether the member churches affirmed the sharing of power between of women and men or not. The outcome was the production of a Gender Manual to assist with training. These activities were pursued either in partnership with other organisations or with their member churches.[80] One of the weaknesses identified of the Gender Network at the time was that there was no male representation. This has since been corrected with WARCs comprehensive work and production of literature on Promoting Positive Masculinities (Sheerattan-Bisnauth and Peacock 2010).

As of July 2010, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) and the Reformed Ecumenical Council (REC) agreed to join together to form the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC).[81]

[79] Sheerattan-Bisnauth, B1, Report, Exec. Comm. (October 2007).
[80] Sheerattan-Bisnauth, B1, Report, Exec. Comm. (October 2007).
[81] World Communion of Reformed Churches, <http://www.wcrc.ch/> [Accessed March 13, 2011].

3.3. The Council for World Mission (CWM)

As with the WCC and the WARC, the CWM also has its roots in the engagement of missionary bodies. The organisation came into being through the missionary work of the London Missionary Society, the Commonwealth Missionary Society and the Presbyterian Board of Missions. In 1977, a new identity was created based on the heritage and legacy of the member missionary societies, "to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ throughout the world." This new body was named the Council for World Mission (CWM).

Since its inception, the work and calling of the CWM has been to be o tdevelop "a partnership of churches in mission." Mission is core to the existence of the CWM. This vocation is encouraged in the 31 member churches across the world through the sharing of resources, people, skills and finances. One of the values promoted in the organisation is the value of mutuality. This means that there is recognition that all members have something to give and something to receive. This mutuality is lived out in the various CWM missionary programmes such as the sharing of Personnel and Education and Training (CWM 2005).

In 2001, the decision-making body of the CWM agreed to commit funding for the establishment of six regional bodies. These are located in the Caribbean, East Asia, Europe, Pacific, South Asia and Southern Africa and the Indian Ocean (CWM 2009).

In an overview of the work of the CWM, Francis Brienen relates how issues of gender became a concern (CWM 2001). She confirms that the 'Ecumenical Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women' introduced by the WCC was the primary programme that was instrumental in Eileen Thompson, the Communication Secretary of the CWM calling for a Pre-Council Women's Consultation in 1989. The Pre-Council Women's Consultation marked the beginning of a journey for the CWM of placing issues of gender on its agenda. The aim of the Consultation was to raise the profile of women so that their voices could be heard in the CWM Council meetings that followed. Thompson's intention was for women who were representatives of the Council Meeting to be empowered so that they might participate fully in the meeting.

This has been a permanent feature of all subsequent CWM Council Meetings. De Gruchy in his (2008) paper "Change and Continuity in the Council for World Mission, 1977 to 2007" attests to this by highlighting that "in the early documents of CWM there was no reference to gender equality, for this was something which still had to emerge" (2008:224). The topic only emerged in the 1990s.

The Pre-Council Women's Consultation led the 1991 Executive Committee held in New Zealand to consider the position of women compared to that of men in the church. The response was an acknowledgement of the need to empower women in its member churches. This was achieved through the establishment of the Community of Women and Men in Mission (CWMM). The then, General Secretary, Preman Niles played a critical role in the formation of the CWMM (Brienen 2001).[82]

Since its inception, the CWMM programme consists of four areas of intervention, namely, research, consultations, an awareness campaign and networking. The research and the consultations which were held across the six regions of the CWM proved that women had several drawbacks within the member churches that made it difficult for them to participate on an equal footing with the male members. As with the WCC and WARC, the same kind of issues surfaced through the survey. In many respects, these issues were also comparable to the issues exposed by the UN, namely, women and leadership, violence against women, ways to tackle sexism in the church and to develop awareness raising programmes for women and men. From its inception, the programme published the newsletter, *Insaka*, whose main purpose was to raise awareness through the sharing of stories, Bible study reflections, and news items. Another important function of the publication was to build networks among it member churches (Brienen 2001).

The outcomes of the survey led to regional consultations on the community of women and men in the home, church and society. Focus will centre on the outcomes that

[82] The WARC and CWM seemed to take the same line as the WCC in the choice of name and this is also reflected the focus of its programmes. Hence, while the WCC set up the Department of Co-operation of Women and Men in Church and Society, and the CWM set up the Community of Women and Men in partnership in Mission (CWMM) in 1991. In 1997, the WARC instituted a Department of Partnership of Women and Men. This title of WARC later changed to Gender Justice Network but continued the work of the Department of Partnership of Women and Men.

emerged within the Africa Region, more specifically Southern Africa of which the researcher was a part in 1996. Again, the same subjects surfaced, namely, the need to promote equal representation on decision-making bodies of the church, the fact that theological training and the vocation of ministry seem to have been the preserve of men and the need for awareness programmes for women and men. These consultations in turn led to the production of Bible Studies and a mass of promotional material to draw the churches attention to gender injustice in the family, church and society.

One of the strengths of the CWM has always been the 'face to face' interactions on issues across lines of gender, culture, race, class, lay and ordained. This was an approach that was put in place across all CWM programmes. Currently, this is being done in the Community of Women and Men in Mission programme through exchange programmes and inter-regional Team Visits in the various denominations, to learn and share ideas (CWM 2005). The present researcher's participation in the UCCSA Team Visit makes up part of this research in chapter three in which an evaluation of the position of women in the UCCSA will be presented. In a global forum in which an evaluation was conducted on the journey of the CWMM it was realised that even though one could name several milestones that the CWM had set in order to achieve gender justice as an organisation, one could also set out several challenges with which the organisation is still faced. These include, representation of women and men in decision making positions and meetings, differing views on how gender issues affect those who come from the north versus those who come from the Global South and the struggle to ensure that progressive policies in CWM on issues of gender justice translate into parity at a structural level in member churches, regions and at global level.[83]

The unequal power positions between women and men has continued to be a controversial issue and a long time struggle for church organisations, ecumenical bodies and the member churches, both in the Global North and Global South.

[83] Dibeela (2008), unpublished paper.

4. Summary

An overview of this kind of social analysis on the position of women can easily result in an overwhelming feeling of discouragement in the face of so much deeply-rooted oppression. An evaluation of the advances made by the ecumenical organisations also leads to the deduction that there is still so much that needs to be achieved. Without devaluing that which is already happening within the ecumenical world, one cannot but feel that these efforts are only scratching the surface of the multitude of oppressions still experienced by women.

The purpose of this chapter was to describe the social, religious, economic and political challenges faced by women in Southern Africa in the twenty-first century so as to demonstrate why a liberatory learning ethos is needed. While the challenges are immense, this chapter has described some of the great strides which have been made by ecumenical and other bodies to address these challenges. Nevertheless, as this chapter has revealed, many of these challenges remain overwhelming and have indeed confirmed the need for a liberatory learning ethos. In the light of these challenges Haddad's statement that Women's movements are "'hidden sites' waiting to be discovered for social transformation in the church" (2001:6) becomes all the more poignant, since the challenges that women face in the SADC member States are the very issues that need addressing in the church. Women are ultimately the ones responsible for their own liberation, hence in the next chapter a survey of the external environment in which the WAs of the UCCSA operate will be undertaken.

CHAPTER THREE

THE UNITED CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF SOUTHERN AFRICA (UCCSA)

1. Introduction

The previous chapter offered a description of the challenges which Southern African women in face in church and society and focused on some of the initiatives that are being taken by global and ecumenical bodies to respond to these challenges. This has helped to reinforce the argument that women in the WAs of the UCCSA need a liberatory ethos of learning in order to empower its members. The chapter thus begins with an audit of the current ethos of learning which operates with the WAs of the UCCSA. In addition, it will provide a survey of the environment in which the WAs of the UCCSA operate.

This section begins with a brief analysis of the history and beliefs of the UCCSA. The second section provides an outline of the socio-political and economic context within which the UCCSA operates. Thirdly, a SWOT analysis will be used to determine the most pertinent issues identified by the UCCSA as reflected in their Vision Plan document. Finally, by drawing on a report from a CWM Team Visit on the participation of women and men in the church, it will be argued that while significant strides have been made in terms of achieving gender parity, gender inequality still exists in various sectors of the UCCSA. This will be done in order to assess the extent to which gender injustice is identified as a concern of the church. The overall objective of this chapter is to establish how conducive the environment of the church is towards an ethos of liberatory learning.

2. Introduction to the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa (UCCSA)

2.1. The History and Nature of Congregationalism

Following many years of negotiations in Southern Africa, three church and missionary bodies of Congregational tradition merged in 1967 and formed the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa (UCCSA). These were the Bantu Congregational Church of the American Board Mission, the Congregational Union of South Africa and the London Missionary Society. Five years later in 1972, the UCCSA again joined with another organisation, the South African Association of the Disciples of Christ.

Historians such as Kaye (2004), Wing (1980), and Briggs (1996) have identified characteristics of Congregationalism in terms of its origins and the form of governance which it upholds. These features made the English Congregational tradition distinct from other English and European church traditions. Congregationalists were known as Independents in the early years. This is because they chose to disassociate themselves from the Established Church in England. Elaine Kaye traces Congregationalism back to what she calls:

> …dissenting traditions which grew out of the religious conflicts of the seventeenth century in England and Wales (2004:1).

On the other hand, Joseph Wing locates the beginnings of Non-Conformism to 1580 when Robert Browne promoted the ideals of the Reformation. The 'dissenter' notion introduced by Robert Browne resulted in the formation of what were called Separatist Churches. This movement was said to have been founded on Biblical inspiration and in conformation to God's will rather than those norms set by society (Wing 1980:37). Dibeela (2007:4) attests that the notion of non-conformity which Congregationalists became known for, especially in seventeenth century England was linked to the Pauline passage of Romans 12:2, "Be not conformed to this world…"

Members of the Congregational movement in England were later labelled with the names 'Non-Conformists' or 'Dissenters.' This became the first defining theological concept for the new movement. The Non-Conformist movement debated on every political and social issue of their day so as to discern God's prophetic voice. One of the issues which gave credibility to what later became known as the Non-Conformist tradition was the controversy of concerning the headship of the church. This was at a time when English monarchs were directly asserting their authority over the church. Congregationalists stood firm in their belief that there was only one Lord and King who reigns over the church, namely Jesus Christ and that the Congregational movement would not pay allegiance to the reigning monarch (Briggs 1996:5). In addition, Roy Briggs maintains that the idea of Christ's presence constituting the church was fundamental to Congregational belief. For Congregationalism therefore, Christ, the Head of the church creates the church and holds it together. This declaration was made in opposition to the authority of the English monarchy.

A second important theological trait in Congregational ecclesiology is what Briggs refers to as the "covenant relationship." Robert Brown introduced this concept as early as 1580 when he defined the church as:

> A company or number of believers which by a willing covenant made with their God, are under the government of God and Christ, and keep his laws in one Holy Communion (Briggs 1996:18).

Briggs emphasised that the Covenant relationship with God and with one another was a unique mark of Congregational belief and practice throughout the history of Congregationalist development. In South Africa, this Covenant relationship was affirmed by a service held in October 1967 to signify the union of the missionary bodies to form the UCCSA and again when the South African Association of the Disciples of Christ merged with the UCCSA in 1972 (Briggs 1996:18). The concept of the Covenant relationship is based on Holy Scripture. It signifies a bond of community, people sharing a mutual relationship with one another and a special relationship with God. This mutual relationship endorsed by the Covenant relationship is based on principles of love, responsibility, equality and justice for all members.

A third feature of Congregationalism is in its emphasis and policy on "the sovereignty of the church meeting, the gathered community of believers" (Kaye 2004:1). The so-called "sovereignty of the church meeting" has often been viewed from either a negative or a positive angle by those who are in leadership in the church. The claim to Independence can sometimes benefit the church and give them space to explore their own life while the very same claim could well be a detrimental as congregations claim to hold independence and autonomy outside of the larger body. If however the "sovereignty of the church meeting" is used well, it can have great value for the church. It is within the church meeting that Congregationalists believe that the discernment of the will of God takes place. It is not in the Bishop's court or General Secretary's office, but when the church is gathered together to seek the will of God that true spiritual discernment is realised. This makes the Congregational church different from the hierarchical structures of the Episcopal churches, in which there are different layers of ecclesial authority. Congregationalists operate with a conciliar system of governance. This means that the church is run through courts or committees. Briggs (1996:30-35) sets out the Episcopal structure shown in Diagrams B and C below. Diagram B is the hierarchical structure through which the Episcopal traditions usually function. Diagram C demonstrates the Congregational structure within which the UCCSA operates.

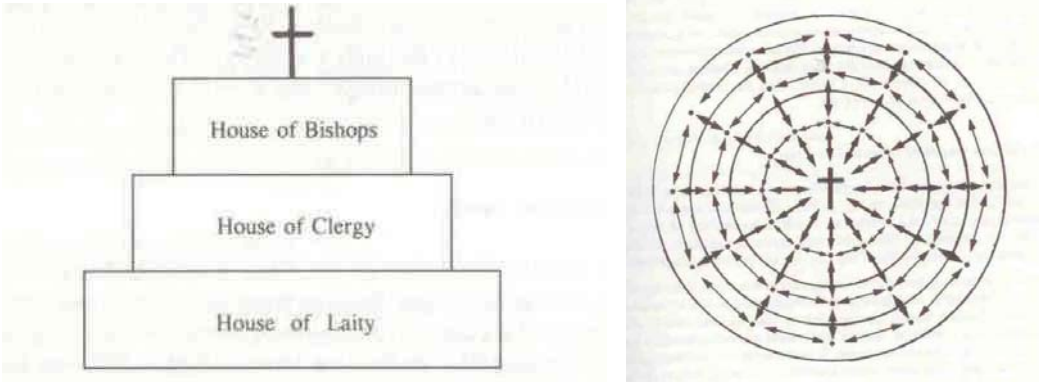

Diagram B

The Hierarchical Structure of the Episcopal Tradition

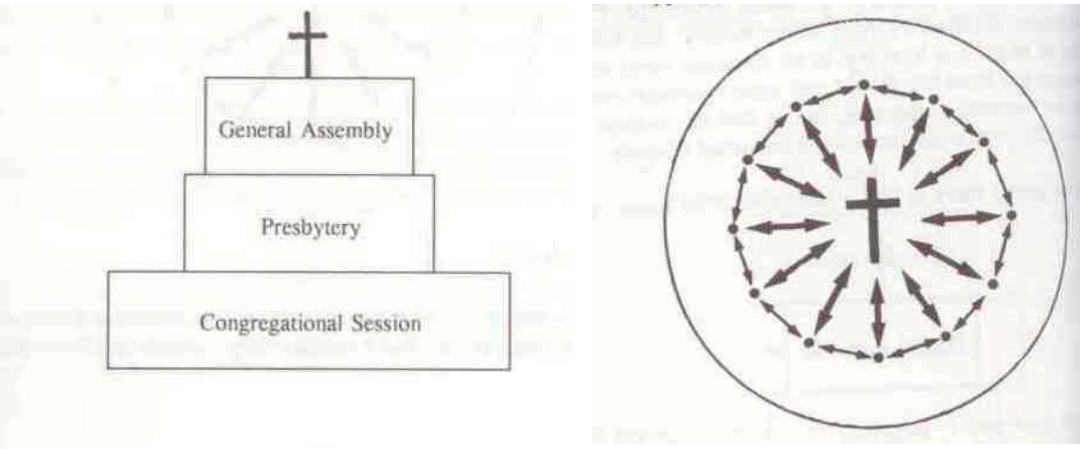

Diagram C

The Congregationalist Structure of the UCCSA

Instead of a hierarchical model of governance that goes up and down as depicted in Diagram B, the representation of the UCCSA flows outwards as in Diagram C so that there is a wider and larger representation: from the local church, then to the region, the Synod and finally to the Assembly. Decisions are not made by individuals but by the collective. Rev. Samuel Arends, a past General Secretary of the UCCSA explains the decision processes in the congregational tradition when he states:

> It allows the church the space to discover her potential, to develop her skills, to empower her members for service… (Arends 1996:viii).

A fourth important feature of Congregationalism is the emphasis on the Lordship of Christ. This is consistent with the Non-Conformist tradition that is so dear to Congregationalists. By declaring that Jesus is Lord, Congregationalists locate themselves in the Apostolic Tradition, which used this theological assertion to confront first-century imperialism. When it was compulsory to worship the Roman Caesar, to the contrary, the first-century Apostolic Church declared, "Jesus is Lord!" (Briggs 1996:5). This subversive Christological statement was adopted by English Congregationalists to reject the tyranny of the monarchy, institutionalism, and episcopacy. During the dark days of apartheid, Congregationalists in South Africa appealed to this theological tradition.

The nature of Congregationalism has an important bearing on how we perceive the influence of the church in creating an ethos of critical and liberatory learning opportunities for the members. The spirit inculcated within the polity and traditions of Congregationalism can help us appreciate how receptive or otherwise the church is to the ethos of a critical and liberatory learning.

The self-understanding of the church, its history, doctrines and theology provide good grounds for addressing the struggles of women. The conciliar system, including traditions such as Non-conformity, Dissent, and the emphasis on Covenant relationships are indicators of an Ecclesial setting that could be friendly to the culture of liberation and critical learning. There is a noteworthy commitment to equality of all people embedded within Congregational history and ecclesiology. This will therefore form the basis of our assumptions within this research.

2.2. The UCCSA as a Denomination Today

Since its union in 1967, the UCCSA is a trans-national denomination which spans across five countries of Botswana, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe across Southern Africa. Each country operates as a Synod. The five Synods are further divided into regions, namely, six regions in Botswana, two regions in Namibia, two regions in Mozambique, eleven regions in South Africa and five regions in Zimbabwe. This structure is further cascaded with each region being split into several local churches. This means that from the local church dimension throughout to the Assembly or Denomination decisions are taken by the collective. Diagram C on page 77 illustrates how these dimensions function. In the process, organisations, ministries, committees, commissions or task/working groups are critical in the conversations and consultations that lead to decision-making.

The material that came forth from the discussions linked to the Vision Plan Workshop of August 2006 not only served as an assessment on the life of the UCCSA at the time but also as a means of strategic future planning. The participants at this event had thorough deliberations on issues that affect the church's ministry and mission. The second task was to purposefully plan how to address these issues over a period of three years. The representation of the members at this workshop was made up of

leaders from various settings: representatives from within the denomination, synods, regions, local congregations; as well as representatives from across the entire church including all organisations and ministries.

The approach employed during this workshop was called the 'Consensus model.' This meant that the participants would talk through matters together, listen to each other and agree on areas where there was consensus. Throughout the process it was agreed not to seek to conquer each other but to make sure that the participants wrestled through the issues together. No ideas were to be disregarded; in fact there was to be a deliberate effort to listen to those who were often victims of marginalisation.

The SWOT Analysis exercise was used for the discussions, whereby the process was described as a listening and interpretation exercise. Participants were arranged in 'table talk' groups. Each table was to list what they saw as the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats within the UCCSA. The SWOT analysis methodology was described in the following manner:

- Strengths = Characteristics that contribute to an organisation achieving its goals;
- Weaknesses = Characteristics that limit an organisation from achieving its goals;
- Opportunities = Favourable circumstances that if captured could benefit the church;
- Threats = Negative circumstances that could inhibit the growth of Church (UCCSA 2006a).

The 'table talk' groups presented their ideas according to the above schema. Amongst others, the exercise was entitled "Voices from the church" as the intention was to spend time to listen to the ideas of all the participants as to where they thought the church was at that current time. Members focussed on the concerns and those areas that needed celebration. Presentations allowed ample time for discussion and critique on matters that needed clarification or on which participants differed. Appendix I of the preset study records the outcome of the discussions pursued under the SWOT Analysis.

The theme identified at the Vision Workshop for the period 2006 -2009 was 'In Christ there is a future.' The participants also put a mission statement in place to guide the church during that period:

> The UCCSA, a church in five countries, is called and committed to be a caring and inclusive community that bears testimony to the fullness of life in Christ, and proclaims that in Christ there is a future (UCCSA 2006b).

Out of this process came a proclamation which spelt out the current beliefs of the participants present at the Visioning workshop, which was to serve as inspiration for the future direction of the church. This was followed by a recommitment of values to which the UCCSA pledged itself. These values are set out in Appendix II. The values are in conformity with the features listed in the form and nature of English Congregationalism as discussed above. Concepts such as 'Covenant' and 'Proclaim the Lordship' are prominent within these values. In line with Non-Conformist practice, were aspects that affirm transformation among the members for the purposes of ensuring the promotion of justice. True to its Congregationalist traditions and after some thirty-nine years of existence, the UCCSA has maintained those historic features which allow for the adoption of a liberatory ethos of learning.

Within the evaluation process, six priority areas were identified, to which measurable strategies were attached to ensure implementation. These were:

i. UCCSA Identity: To re-think congregational ecclesiology in the light of identity, authority, autonomy, discipline, and other related issues.

ii. UCCSA Relationships: To strengthen covenant relationships across the five countries where the UCCSA exists in order to build a higher level of spirituality for a caring and inclusive church

iii. Mission and Evangelism: To develop a dynamic life-giving church in which there is vibrant worship, full participation of everyone and a genuine response to the needs of the church and society.

iv. Training and Discipleship: To design and develop training and discipleship programmes and materials by the year 2008 to

facilitate leadership development and ministerial formation within the UCCSA and throughout the wider community.

v. Political, Economic and Social Justice: To rekindle the prophetic responsibility of the church to enable appropriate responses to political, economic, and social injustice.

vi. Administration and Policy: To review the UCCSA structure in order to facilitate wide scale participation, effective communication, a sound administrative framework and proper use of all resources (UCCSA 2006b).

One of the concerns identified through the analysis was that gender justice issues are not given distinct prominence in the life of the church. Instead, there is an underlying inference that women's issues are included among other issues such as social justice. Women continue to feature only in a limited way in the various structures of the church, whereas decision making bodies of the church continue to be dominated by men.

3. The Operational Context of the UCCSA and the Social, Political and Economic Impact on the Church

Even though the five countries in which the UCCSA serves are diverse in terms of politics, economy, culture and language, they all have in common certain historical legacies. One such common legacy is that of Western colonialism. Another commonality was that each country experienced apartheid or was affected by it in one way or other.

A brief historical analysis on some of the countries in which the denomination exists will provide an idea of these commonalities. This reflection should also assist in the understanding of what constitutes some of the psychological 'baggage' that women have continued to carry with them. Mozambique, according to Basil Davidson, had total freedom from their Portuguese Colonisers in 1975. *The Frente de Libertação de Moçambique* (FRELIMO) was responsible for this political freedom. Throughout the struggle for Independence, FRELIMO wanted to replace the colonial state with a democratic society for the people of Mozambique (Davidson 1980:84). With this

attained freedom came a great deal of destruction that the new leadership had to deal with:

> There was a desperate scarcity of medical practitioners and schoolteachers, practically no road transport, very few skilled workers, and above all, no political institutions capable of serving free people (Davidson 1980:76).

Through the struggle for political liberation, FRELIMO had to change the social order of Mozambique from that of a police state to one of freedom and democracy. In addition, Mozambique also had to contend with military insurgency from apartheid-ruled South Africa because it had become a haven for the oppressed. One of the biggest struggles of Mozambique, named by Davidson, was that people were entrenched in colonial traditions and cultures of behaviour. For Davidson, one of the things that stood in the way of people's freedom was their mental captivity to colonial idealism (1980:76-84). An example of this was how certain leaders came to believe that the power to change their situation did not lie with them but with the authorities.

Davidson also explained the position women held in Mozambique at that time. He stated that the struggle of women's equality was a long-standing issue. Under FRELIMO was the *Organisacao da Mulher Mozambicana* =Organisation of Mozambican Women. In spite of attempts such as this and the introduction of progressive laws, Davidson (1980:84) believes that it was difficult for women to achieve much since both the pre-colonial and colonial eras intensified the suppression of women.

Namibia shares certain similarities with Mozambique in its history of colonialism. Andre du Pisani records that in pre-colonial Namibia, several ethnic groups settled in the country such as the Ovambo, Herero, Nama, Rehoboth Baster, the Dama as well as the San being the oldest inhabitants of the country. These groups were mainly agrico-pastoralists while the San were hunter-gatherers.

The first foreigners that arrived in Namibia were Western missionary in 1802 from the London Missionary Society. They were later followed by other Missionary societies. Germany took possession of Namibia in 1834. Du Pisani advances commercial

interests as the core reason for the occupation by the Germans. The local people were primarily used for the purpose of providing cheap labour. This was instituted through the imposition of a violent military and bureaucratic authority. One of the first methods to be implemented was land occupation by the Germans. This resulted not only in locals serving as cheap labour but also established a lasting village arrangement which set apart the indigenous population from the colonialists. This was followed by other systems of control, including structures and policies which totally excluded and negatively affected the indigenous groups (Du Pisani 1987:16-18).

The suppression of the indigenous population gave rise to resistance against the German authorities.[84] This however created the political space for the white supremacist South African Administration to firm up the German oppression through its apartheid-inspired policies and systems. The German conditions laid the foundation for the divisive apartheid system which was to follow. These inequalities led to the emergence of various resistance movements among which were SWANU in 1959 and SWAPO in 1960 (Du Pisani 1987:22-23).

As with Mozambique, the after-effects of the Apartheid Regime had severe political, economic and social results. Richard Moorsom and David Simon (1987) give perspectives of Namibia's political economy since colonial times. They blame the apartheid legislation for the great disparity between those who had excessive wealth and those who had nothing. Exploitation is advanced as a main source for funding the inequalities. These were the same features attributed to the previous German regime. They were described as having:

> …expropriated all Namibian land in the so-called Police Zone, banned Namibians from owning livestock, subjected them to a harsh regime of forced labour, and planted settler farmers on the land (Simon and Moorsom (1987:87).

Joseph Diescho (1987) provides an analysis of the emotional bearing that the political systems have had on the people of Namibia. He discusses education as an instrument

[84] In 1919, the South African government was granted responsibility of mandatory power over Namibia under the guise that they would restore the damage done to the indigenous people groups.

through which the people of Namibia were socialised. He believes that the repercussions of education on locals:

> …was aimed at firstly, 'taming' the Africans to become servile and to despise their own culture and history; secondly, converting the African people into becoming blind emulators of European culture; thirdly, creating society of Africans that would please the European-implanted, solidly ecclesiastically and even ecclesia-centrically oriented Christian Church as it had been known throughout Europe; fourthly, securing cheap African labour for European mercantilists; and finally, opening new markets for labour and products to supplement the ever shrinking European markets (1987:153).

The historical position of women in Namibia was no different from the position of women in the rest of Southern Africa. Kazombaue and Elago (1987) gave testimony of how they believed women were affected in all sectors of society and the home. They maintained that women were respected and honoured in their traditional societies for the contributions they made in pre-colonial times. Pre-colonial traditions allowed for a strong structure through which all family members complemented each other with each having set tasks and responsibilities. According to Kazombaue and Elago (1987:196-197), imperialism, colonialism and the imposition of apartheid policies contributed to the change in family structure. Patriarchy as a dysfunctional power system was also present.

There can be no doubt that these European lifestyles and systems had an impact on family life but they do make some questionable assertions when they claim that women were treated differently, 'with honour and respect' during pre-colonial times. This discussion on the role of women in African culture and the role of women in colonial culture will be raised later in this study. However, as Kazombaue and Elago (1987:196-197) have shown, African culture expressed through customary laws and customs disadvantage women. We might differ of course on the understanding of 'honour and respect' as perhaps in equating 'honour and respect' with women's disadvantaged position. Kazombaue and Elago also use examples in employment and healthcare to show that women are marginalised.

Due to space limitations, a detailed history of Zimbabwe and Botswana will not be discussed. Examples of how the history of these two countries has affected the

members in the UCCSA realities will however be highlighted. Zimbabwe has continued to have unresolved conflict issues with which it is still dealing to this day. In Mozambique, Zimbabwe, South Africa and Namibia, the oppressive political authorities that ruled these countries were not dismantled without bloodshed. In most cases, the resultant wars were brutal in that it destroyed infrastructure, landscapes and livelihoods.

As the Global Peace Index (GPI) has recognised, Botswana has been ranked as the most peaceful country in the region.[85] It also remains one of the most affluent countries in Southern Africa. In spite of this, Botswana's positive track record has not been without its setbacks. The same political party has led Botswana since gaining its Independence from Great Britain in 1966. This same party has raised questions about the country becoming undemocratic. Again, even though it is regarded as a country of wealth, this has not been equally distributed to all the citizens, resulting in almost half of its citizens living below the poverty datum line.[86]

The effect of the political histories discussed in this chapter has continued to impact the political, economic and social relations and policies of the member States of the SADC region. While all have received political Independence from their erstwhile colonial rulers, their current political and socio-economic circumstances have not necessarily been liberated from the legacies of the past. Among these is the legacy of Western superiority in the form of degrading indigenous people's cultures, traditions and belief systems which have persistently been measured against those from the Global North in spite of the fact that they live in a post-colonial era. Citizens in these countries continue to struggle with the colonial, racial and patriarchal worldviews inherited from the past. This has determined and maintained the colonial-era ethos of learning.

[85] See, "GPI Ranks Botswana Most Peaceful African Country," June 11, 2010 http://www.gov.bw/en/News/GPI-ranks-Botswana-most-peaceful-African-country-/> [Accessed March 17, 2011].

[86] The Minister of Finance and Development Planning of Botswana, Mr. B. Gaolathe furnished figures of the citizens of Botswana who live under the poverty datum line in his foreword to a Status Report of the progress made in relation to the Millennium Development Goals. He gives details that the estimated figure of Botswana citizens that lived under the poverty datum line in 1994 were 47%. The projected figure for 2000 was projected at 36.7% (Gaolathe, 2004, UN, Botswana, Status Report, 5).

Rev. M. C. Kuchera, who served as General Secretary of the Zimbabwe Christian Council in 1985 makes an important analysis of the situation in which Zimbabwe finds itself as a post-colonial nation which is appropriate for all the countries of the SADC region. He maintains that "when the church came to Zimbabwe all priorities were decided and determined by missionaries..." He also contends that most of the churches are still institutional and empire building oriented (Kuchera in ZCC, May 1985:19-20).

The position of Kuchera on Colonial-style education in Zimbabwe sheds light on the current position of the UCCSA. He reasons that "what started as a missionary venture to convert people to Christianity resulted in half educated people completely dependent on the missionary church." He uses the example of labourers to clarify the previous point of dependency. Labourers, according to Kuchera, just had sufficient knowledge to take instructions (Kuchera in ZCC, May 1985:19-20). He summarises his viewpoint by referencing research conducted by the Tanzania Christian Council which provided a snapshot of the consequences of Colonial education on the indigenous peoples of Southern Africa. The statement reads:

> Given our colonial past, the underdeveloped and dependent nature of our economy and the persistence of classes in our society many problems were bound to develop within the educational sector after independence. We have witnessed for example the growing failure of our economy to absorb productively all those youths that have received vocational or formal education. We have witnessed the migration of our youths to the towns in search of wage–employment instead of becoming self-employed in the villages. We have witnessed the persistence and expansion of educational structures that are not in line with our policies. And finally we have witnessed a growing dependency on foreign donors for capital, expertise and technology instead of self-reliant development in the educational sector (Kuchera in ZCC, May 1985:22).

One can deduce from Kuchera's reflection the intense mental damage that has been caused by these systems. In the UCCSA, the past has continued to haunt many of its members as these political, social and economical situations impacted the structures, programmes and policies of the church. This had the added effect of determining the way UCCSA viewed itself and how related to others. One such example has been its relationship with the different ethnic groups. Some are regarded as major whilst

others are considered minor ethnic groups. This depends on how 'civilised' these groups were viewed by their peers. The result has been racial division to the extent of civil war breaking out in Mozambique. In other countries such as Botswana and Namibia, indigenous groups such as the Basarwa have become totally marginalised from the so-called 'mainstream groups'.[87]

The culture of competition for superiority has been rooted in the behaviour of UCCSA members not only towards one another, but other neighbouring countries in the SADC region. This dominance has been displayed in the language and attitude toward neighbouring countries. This supremacy has been based on those who are regarded as the most prosperous, have the best infrastructure and are the most urban as this is often meant to prove who is more advanced. The worst outcome of domination was shown through the violent xenophobic attacks on black foreigners from neighbouring countries in South Africa.[88] This attitude remains prevalent in the UCCSA.

Racial hierarchy is another continuous struggle for the UCCSA. The entrenched opinions of superiority or beliefs that those who are White are more superior to those who are Black continue. This is evident in the accessibility of services and availability of resources in Southern Africa. Power, decision-making, employment and resources can still be measured along racial lines, particularly within South Africa. The ever-widening gap between the rich and the poor is increasing all the time. The introduction of conversations on issues of economic injustices has become crucial. This aspect is also visible within the UCCSA.

Another communal feature prevalent in all SADC member countries is the patriarchal traditions in which the UCCSA operates. The Tswana Culture which we will explore later, is but one amongst all the traditions across the Southern African region which upholds these patriarchal beliefs and has continued to disadvantage women through

[87] Moiseraele Dibeela (2004:179-180) bemoans the situation in Botswana in his own study which exposes how the San people have been excluded and disadvantaged as a cultural group. One of the latest controversies in this regard has been the displacement of the Basarwa in Botswana from their ancestral land by the major tribes for the sake of "civilization and integration".

[88] From May to July 2008, South Africa witnessed a series of atrocious xenophobic attacks that made some commentators suggest that xenophobia was akin to apartheid. See for example "Xenophobia is apartheid" Mail and Guardian, July 01, 2008. <http://mg.co.za/article/2008-07-01-xenophobia-is-apartheid/> [Accessed March 17, 2011].

the maintenance of certain customs, laws and social mores. These have had a major influence on the governance, structures, programmes and behaviours in the UCCSA as stated in the language of the Social Justice proposal. Hence, it is reported that these:

> …hierarchies feed negative attitudes; stereotypes and prejudices which legitimise other stigmatisations in our societies and in our churches e.g. people living with HIV/AIDS or people of other black nationalities through xenophobia, especially in situations of limited jobs and resources (UCCSA 2007b).

In the church, these attitudes are played off in that one racial group regards itself as very different or more important than the other. This is obvious in the still existent activities or names based around certain racial groupings and the separate racial organisations such as the *Isililo* versus the Women's Work Committee. Unequal power relations are also apparent in the Synods, Regions and local churches. Again, this is viewed in terms of who has the most money. Often, this is entrenched by the imposition of certain 'rules' concerning who can serve as leaders, depending on their financial wealth. Manifested in the church are still other ideologies of superiority, in relation to age, sexual orientation, ethnicity, the urban/rural divide, as well as gender and positions of power and domination of certain language groups. These have resulted in negative socialisation on issues of race, gender and class which individuals have internalised and through which oppressive mindsets have been developed.

4. The Position of Women in the UCCSA

4.1. A Council for World Mission Team Visit Report

An international team from the CWM who visited the UCCSA to evaluate the partnership between women and men that exists in the church gave an outlook of the denomination in general. The CWM administers a programme called the Community of Women and Men in Mission (CWMM). The aim of the programme was to create equal partnership between women and men within its member churches. In 2001, at a global review on the programme, the participants decided to use 'Team Visits' as an approach to assist churches to do an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses that exist within the church on the question of partnership between women and men in the

life of the church. During such a visit, a group comprising of approximately six people from different regions within CWM came together "to learn, share, understand, encourage, and challenge the member church that you visit" on issues of gender (CWM 2007).

The present researcher was a member of the team and served as a host-enabler for the team that visited the UCCSA. The host-enabler's role as a team member was to ensure that all logistical arrangements such as the groups to be visited, the accommodation and travel arrangements were in place. The team visited four of the five countries which make up the countries of the UCCSA, namely: South Africa, Botswana, Zimbabwe and Mozambique. The team spoke with several groups including, church leaders and church groups within the UCCSA, national church councils, governmental and non-governmental associations in the countries they visited. The host-enabler was able to participate fully in all the discussions.

The team wrapped up their findings by giving details specific to each individual country that they visited within the UCCSA. Focus will be given only on the final recommendations suggested by the team to the UCCSA as a body. These recommendations highlight the concerns that the team had, and the areas where the UCCSA can be encouraged for her attempts to achieve gender parity. The findings of the group were categorised in a SWOT analysis set out in Appendix III.

In addition to the findings, the team also made recommendations on areas that they thought the church needed to pay specific attention to. The recommendations suggested by the team were as follows:

> We affirm that the UCCSA has made significant strides to promote a community of women and men. In particular we acknowledge the goals and objectives in the denominational vision plan as it strives for gender parity. We wish to encourage the church in the journey to promote a community of women and men in partnership for God's mission. In this regard we recommend that the UCCSA:
>
> - Encourage continued implementation of denominational vision plan
> - Advocate for the mainstreaming of gender issues in theological education in currently recognised theological institutions.

- Incorporate gender issues in the training programmes of the Leadership Academy.
- Pursue research on whether there is need to complement present programmes for theological formation with gender sensitivity.
- Consistently implement its policy for equal representation of women in leadership at regional, synodical and denominational levels.
- Implement a training programme to build awareness of gender issues at every level of the church with every existing group available including combined discussions between groups.
- Encourage economic independence by offering training opportunities for sustainable project management and implementation.
- Undertake a review of existing education programmes to identify places where gender issues can be incorporated into spaces of learning.
- Critically analyse the challenge of colonial and missionary influence, African cultural traditions and their effects on gender, based on re-reading and interpretation of the Bible.
- Draw up protocols for the implementation of current policies and procedures in instances of complaints of sexual harassment.
- Advocate for involvement in public debate on issues that affect women (CWM/UCCSA 2008).

In addition to the above recommendations, graphs will be utilised showing the ratios of male and female representation in positions of leadership in the church. This is most telling in terms of what progress the institution has made in the area of gender justice, particularly in positions of decision-making held by women. Diagram D reflects the ratio between numbers of men and women within the Executive Committee of the UCCSA. This is a committee that makes decisions on behalf of the church in between the biannual meetings of the Assembly. These figures have to be taken into consideration with the knowledge that women make up an overwhelming majority of the membership in the UCCSA, both in individual synods but also throughout the entire denomination. These ratios of male and female representation re-appear in other groups in the life of the church, including, the women ministers in relation to the male ministers, the standing committees such as the Training for the Ministry Committee and several others. Without doubt, women are a marginalised group in the decision-making processes of the church.

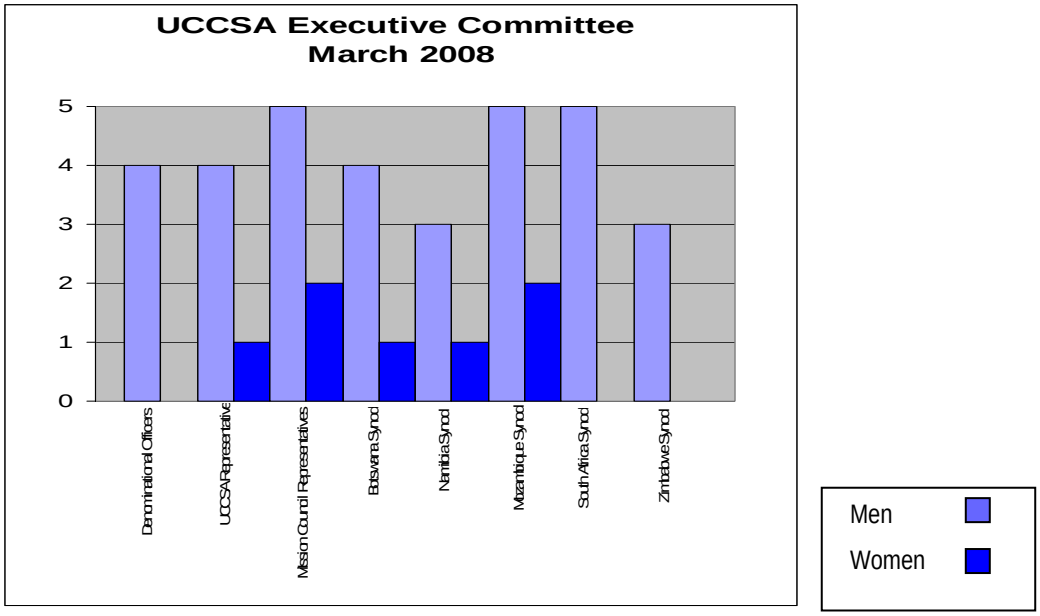

Diagram D

The Ratio of Men and Women within the Executive Committee of the UCCSA

4.2. Outcomes of the CWM Team Visit Report

The report of the team visit was circulated amongst members of the Executive Committee in a meeting held in March 2008. The meeting was above all concerned with two areas in particular:

i. That definite and concrete measures need to be taken to eradicate the scandal of sexual harassment everywhere, especially in the Church
ii. That definite and concrete measures need to be taken to ensure equal participation by men and women in the Church (UCCSA 2008c).

The Executive members entrusted the Officers of the church to seek ways through which the above proposals could be implemented in the church. The Executive meeting following the March meeting set out suggestions for a way forward on the proposals. One of these was that the existing sexual harassment policy of the church be given to the theological commission for review, in order for it to address current concerns.

After the officers had considered the whole question of representation in the life of the church they made recommendations to the subsequent Executive Committee meeting. The recommendations, which consequently came under discussion, included the following:

Firstly, the meeting agreed that representation at regions and synod meeting should be an equal 50/50 balance for males and females as anything less would perpetuate an old system which has been predominantly male. Secondly, with regard to representation at Executive Committee that the current core of five members per synod (four synod officers plus the mission council convenor) be enlarged to eight members. These will include the current five members plus two women from each synod and one young person per synod. The third decision was around the representation of delegates to the Assembly. The meeting agreed that the church should strive towards an equal balance of male and female members (UCCSA 2008c).

The officers were authorised to prepare a notice of motion so that these recommendations might become part of the policies of the UCCSA.

5. Summary

This chapter has sought to reveal that gender inequality still persists in the UCCSA. This is consistent with Dibeela's (2000) earlier research which focused on the church and gender equality in the Botswana Synod that ascertained the overriding position of the UCCSA with regard to issues of gender. It also confirms report findings conducted in 2000 showing that the position of women in the UCCSA has not changed. While the UCCSA does support the idea of equality for both men and women, it does not fulfil this in practice. The reasons for this are varied. Discriminatory gender practices are rooted in the long history of patriarchal biblical teachings upon which the faith of the church is based. Although certain strides have been made regarding gender justice, the church continues to be held back by how people have been socialised, the political history of marginalisation, the cultures and traditional perceptions on gender roles. Women do experience difficulties in the church and in society due to gender inequality and that the church is not responding

adequately to these. This is attributed to the fact that the church has other priorities, and gender seems to be subsumed under broad categories such as 'social justice.'

The UCCSA officers noticed that:

> Our ecclesial system is intrinsically patriarchal and requires a radical shift that will totally change the way we operate (UCCSA 2008i).

They also recognised that these attempts to put in place gender-specific policies by the officers at denominational level.[89] With the new enlarged meeting the figures will show that the church officers endeavour to improve the current 18% representation of women at Executive Meetings to 30%. It is often through the policies of an organisation that one can recognise the philosophy of the members on issues, in this case the issue of gender justice within the organisations. We also have to be mindful, however, that these progressive policies have to translate into parity at structural level and in practice.

The officers of the UCCSA have acknowledged other means are needed to bring about gender justice. Among these suggested methods they named education:

> Commitment to justice will require us to find ways of conscientising…This would involve a long process of educating and re-orienting our people at the grassroots (UCCSA 2008i).

This acknowledgement seems to be recognition that numbers or policies in themselves would not create gender parity but that an integrated approach is needed to change attitudes and mindsets so as to instil gender justice.

The recommendations from the team visit that other approaches such as research, advocacy and the improvement of structures are pertinent. For the church to sufficiently address the issues raised by the CWM Team visit the church needs to mark gender justice as a priority area for funding it from the budget. Another strategy is for all the levels of the church to embrace gender justice as a priority. Deliberate

[89] While this can only be applauded, it cannot alone be the answer to bring about parity.

ways should be identified to instil an ethos of justice for it to flow throughout all the levels of the church.

Even though the history and nature of Congregationalism should be conducive for an ethos of liberatory learning, the reality is that factors such as the socio-economic and political environment do not facilitate the same ethos. It is that enslaving ethos that has been internalised by the church members. The congregational history and ecclesiology seem to be a mere theory, an ideal culture for liberation that has been left untried. One can deduce from the documents and the conclusion arrived at by the Officers of the church that the UCCSA is in need of a liberatory learning ethos for the empowerment of its members. Such a situation in which the external philosophy is in opposition to the internal philosophy presents a dilemma for Kenneth Koma. He relates this in his review of Education in Botswana. As Koma maintains:

> If the philosophy of the education is not similar to or the same as the philosophy of the society, if the philosophies are not complimentary, then we shall be dealing with only a small aspect of a major problem (1976:25).

The priority for the UCCSA in a Southern African society which relates to the thinking of Koma is for the church to determine and uphold its philosophy. The church needs to have clarity on the philosophy of learning so as to direct it to all its members. Such new philosophies of learning can guide the way theology ought to mould the members instead of the inherited philosophies of the erstwhile Western missionaries. The result of Koma's statement is that there is a ripple effect of how a philosophy impacts on one's personal, church or societal environment.[90]

[90] This of course creates a challenge between the philosophy of the external environment in which the UCCSA exists that is in opposition to the ideal ethos of liberatory learning that I am encouraging but I have seen through examples of Biko (1986), Freire (1996), and Barton (1999) that the ability to create or recreate such an ethos of opposition to the dominant one is possible. In actuality, this is what this study is calling for.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE WOMEN'S ASSOCIATIONS OF THE UNITED CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

1. Introduction

The previous chapter explored the history, theological beliefs and current discussions within the UCCSA so as to find out whether they facilitate an ethos of critical learning in the area of gender discourse. In this chapter, attention will focus on the Women's Associations, since the proposition is that the WAs provide an ideal opportunity to enable liberation for women. In order to assess the culture of the WAs as a "site" (Haddad 2001: 6) for liberatory learning, it is necessary to first establish who the WAs are and what role they play in the UCCSA.

This chapter relates the history of the WAs of the UCCSA. This history records the background of the missionary bodies out of which the WAs of the UCCSA were born. Thereafter, a survey of the WAs programmes will be presented, by describing the activities that the WAs have engaged in over the years. These surveys will examine the areas of priorities in their work. Finally, the chapter will provide information on the beliefs held within the WAs of the UCCSA. These will put into perspective the current ethos of learning extant within the Associations.

2. The Background of the Women's Associations of the UCCSA

The origins and role of the WAs as they developed among the traditions which came together to form the UCCSA, is the primary focus of this section. Firstly, a brief history of the London Missionary Society (LMS) will be presented, it being the oldest and largest among the three bodies that were united in 1967. Its history is important in order to understand the make-up of the WAs as they function today in the Church.

2.1. The London Missionary Society (LMS)

Very little has been written about Women's groups or Associations in the LMS. The LMS previously known as the 'Missionary Society,' was founded in 1795. The initial idea was for the Society to be an interdenominational agency, drawing upon missionaries of British origin. According to Briggs and Wing, the LMS had one aim in mind:

> Not to send Presbyterianism, Independency, Episcopacy or any other form of Church Order and Government …but the Glorious Gospel of the blessed God to the Heathen (1970:13).

However, things turned out very differently for the LMS. With time they became primarily Congregational since other denominational traditions founded their own missionary societies. Out of these came the London and Netherlands Missionary Societies as well the South African Society for Promoting the Spread of Christ's Kingdom, established by van der Kemp, one of the first Western missionaries to Southern Africa. As Briggs and Wing (1970:14) aver, "this was equal to the birth of Congregationalism in Southern Africa."

The LMS records seem to be very selective in that most of the materials do not focus on the work set up by local populations, or the work established by women, even the LMS missionary women, for that matter. The little we are told according to Congregational records is that women constituted a two-thirds majority in the church. In the same document, the Women's ministry in the LMS is summarised in a two sentence comment which states that the LMS women's work was organised at district church level and that whilst women in the districts of Northern Cape and Botswana wore a similar uniform to that of other districts, they did not have a common pattern of organisation and different rules related to those who wore the uniform (Briggs and Wing 1970:294-295).

In spite of the scanty notes on women's contribution within the LMS, there are a couple of celebratory essays of the Bicentenary of the LMS in Southern Africa which recognises the contribution that women have made to the missionary input. These

two essays will be used to depict the kind of life missionary women lived at the time. Natasha Erlank (1999:84), a historian, sketches a picture of a very patriarchal social order which was upheld by the LMS Missionaries This arrangement in Southern Africa, according to Ludlow (1999:113) this was the same gender specific lifestyle that separated the roles of women and men with which Great Britain was identified at the time.

Erlank records episodes from the household of Jane and John Phillip to make her point. Even though Erlank regards Jane Philip as different from her counterparts in that she performed roles which were not ordinarily acceptable for women, one can notice the patriarchy embedded in the attitudes and gender particular roles of their time. Erlank describes early nineteenth-century European society as one in which the woman was regarded as the man's helper. This situation does not seem reversed in which the man is named as the woman's helper. Erlank quotes a letter from John Phillip to his wife in which these circumstances are explained;

> A good marriage rested on the man and woman bringing to it their complementary characteristics. The man would be the 'lofty pine', the woman the 'slender vine', the man would take responsibility for the stormy world of business and politics, the woman would cast her sunbeams over the murky clouds he had to contend with and 'sweetly smile' the cares of the world away (1999:84).

This extract makes it clear that there was a social expectation that the women's place was confined to the domestic sphere. The woman's major role was related to family life; in other words, a mother to the children and being a good wife. In spite of John Philip's definition that a "good marriage rested on the man and the woman bringing to it their complementary characteristics," women were only supposed to assist in a supplementary role rather than contributing as the main person. The main role in the relationship was left to the man to fulfil. This was the practice throughout society, in that the woman was only expected to serve as a volunteer or do charitable work.

In 1822, Jane Philip founded the charitable organisation, the Ladies' Benevolent Society in 1822.[91] The function of 'provider,' which was associated with fulltime missionary work, was closely associated with the man. Indeed, Erlank mentions a number of examples of women to which John Philip was totally against because of the role they played in the public sector or because they were too outspoken on issues that affected men, such as in LMS affairs.

Another example which was related to the function of women particularly during the LMS period was the establishment of schools and the instruction of children. Erlank (1999:88) names Jane Philip as being instrumental in setting up an Infant School at the Cape of Good Hope. Erlank regards this and other initiatives of Mrs. Philip as out of character for women at the time and thinks that such ventures express something about the uniqueness of Jane Philip as a missionary wife. For Jane Philip, women's involvement in schooling was just another duty connected to philanthropic work amongst indigenous African people to the traditionally accepted role of women raising their own children.[92] School teaching was just another part of the domestic sphere, "an extension of childrearing" and henceforth accepted as the women's field of work (Ludlow 1999:113). Erlank goes on to explain that Jane Philip's work was often disguised as domestic labour and hence she was not frowned upon by her husband or her contemporaries. Whether Jane Philip's work was disguised at all is doubtful since these gender specific roles were explained away as being 'God ordained'. Hence, Jane Philip believed that not only was she 'useful' to her husband but also to her children and to God (Erlank 1999:92). Indeed, in her correspondence to a friend, Jane Philip affirms her belief that females were born to attend to certain tasks only.

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[91] Benevolent work was one of the core activities of white missionary women. Gaitskell (1997:260) recalls that the main goal of white Methodist missionary women was to organise 'good works' because they did not have any fulltime paid work. An example of this is the report of the Queenstown WA in 1930, "All have shown a fine spirit, giving cheerful and happy service to every call. These calls have kept our Visiting, Social and Work Committees busy" (1997:260).

[92] The school system served as a means of transmitting European values to the local peoples. Gaitskell (1997:255) explains how European missionary Christian ideals were propagated through ideals of marriage, wifehood and motherhood. The sewing of clothes signified a sign of conversion, since "to be dressed" was associated with seeking Christian instruction or baptism. Not only did the instruction of women and young girls serve to assist in bringing about a European concept of clothing and the concept of Christianity but it also made women and girls believe that sewing is a female responsibility. As Gaitskell further affirms, "An example of the domestic education for African women was emphasised...the 1923 the manyano conference on "Health and Home" and "Duty of a Christian Mother to Her Children" (Gaitskell, 1997:256).

This separation of responsibilities was visible in all arenas of life: in the home, as well as in religious and public life. Ludlow summarises these roles as follows:

> Men headed committees, selected pastoral staff, controlled finances, spoke on behalf of the community. The women's roles were more supportive and informal—extensions of appropriately nurturing and formative activities of the home. They participated most notably in teaching Bible classes for adult women; running, through the auspices of the Ladies' Benevolent Society, a school of industry for lower-class girls; and in Sunday School teaching (1999:103).

Even though these essays focus mainly on the life of Jane Philip, the situation portrayed is typical of most missionary women of the time. This information is relevant for this study as it provided information of the teachings that were passed on from the LMS women to local women.

Themba Mgadla (1989) has provided some research on the contribution of LMS women to the Bechuanaland Protectorate during the years of 1859-1904. He lists Alice Young, Ellen Hargreaves, Ella Sharp and Mary Patridge as those who were instrumental in the development of Western-style education for both teachers and pupils. For Mgadla, the LMS missionary women also played an important gender specific role in teaching Bible classes in Sunday Schools, English classes for women, sewing and bread making, and in the preparation of food. Local women, he believes benefited and learnt a lot from their leadership (1989:28-30). The research provided by Mgadla on the missionary women therefore corroborates the societal role that women were expected to play.

2.2. The American Board Mission (ABM)

Much more seems to be known about the origins of Women's groups in the Bantu Congregational Church of the American Board Mission. The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions arrived in South Africa in 1835. The Society represented the Congregational Churches of the United States of America (CUSA 1932). As in the case of the LMS, the initial structure of the ABM was one in which the missionaries had supervision over the local people and the churches that developed. The example of Derek Jones serves to describe the widespread

supervision relationship that existed between these missionary bodies and the local people at the time. Jones remembers how in the LMS at the age of twenty-seven he preached the Gospel, but was more of a bishop than a missionary and was often amazed at the authority the exerted as a newcomer over the locals (CWM 2008). In the ABM, the mission gradually handed over responsibility to the local people but financial capacity and the formulation of policy remained in the hands of the Western missionaries. It was only in 1964 with the acceptance of the new Constitution, that the Bantu Congregational Church received independence over her own business (Briggs and Wing 1970:282). Total authority of locals over the church was a gradual process.

It was under these circumstances that associations or movements such as the women's fellowships developed among the local indigenous peoples. Vellem calls these movements the *iimanyano* from the Xhosa word *umanyano* which means unity. While Gaitskell (1995:220) refers to the reasons for this unity as prayer unity, Vellem (2007:51) believes that *imanyano* signifies "a yearning for unity among Black Africans who were fragmented by missionary enterprise and colonial repression," hence the fact that these associations were mostly African initiated or had taken on a form of worship that was characteristically African. These groups became popular among young people, both women and men. The concept of *'iimanyano'* took on different names depending on the cultural or language groups represented and people's interpretation of why such unity was needed. Gaitskell (1995:221) describes the Nguni meaning of *'Isililo'*; which was initiated by the ABM churches, as the "wailing or lamentation" of women which she links to a state of helplessness and submissiveness on the part of women.

As a result of evangelism and revival by African Christians in the period 1895-1915, the *Isililo* of the American Board Mission (ABM) saw much growth. In 1912, separate female groups were revived and extended by the women who founded the *Isililo* in the ABM in Natal, even though they participated in other combined prayer revivals long before then (Gaitskell 1995:212).

At St. Cuthbert in the Transkei region, the Anglicans were caught with this same spirit of eagerness when female missionaries began monthly prayer meetings for women in 1899. This led to the formation in 1903 of the Mother's Union of St. Cuthbert. Anglican women in Tsomo in the Transkei region, also began holding prayer meetings in 1905. This same model of ministry spread like wildfire amongst women throughout Southern Africa in the various missionary bodies during this period of revivalism. In 1905, northwest of Pietersburg which was then known as the Old Transvaal some prayer meetings are recorded to have taken place in the Methodist circles which also expanded to Natal and other areas (Gaitskell 1995:215).

Vellem (2007:50) records the beginnings of the Free Church Women's Manyano as early as 1883 at Lovedale within the Presbyterian tradition. One of the commonalities in the setting up of these *iimanyano* or *Isililo* movements amongst women was the leadership roles that ministers' wives seemed to take in leading the spread of ministry amongst these missionary organisations.

The story of the Women's Association in the ABM compiled by women in the UCCSA records that the movement was established at a meeting of the church at the Groutville Mission station in 1912 in Natal.[93] A committee was set in place to manage the business of the *Isililo* as it was spreading across the ABM mission stations of the Bantu Congregational Church (BCC). They also introduced the concept to other mission stations of the ABM of the BCC to set up new fellowships, especially in and around Natal. By 1913, the idea of the *Isililo* had spread as far as Johannesburg in the Transvaal and people used to come from far to attend combined conferences of *Isililo* in Natal. By 1922, the *Isililo* was well established in the Transvaal. However, relations between the two groups were not always congenial.[94] Even though the *Isililo* was never constitutionally part of the BCC, its membership and presence dominated the church.

One of the primary aims in the setting up of the Women's Association at this gathering was for women to teach their children at home "to fear the Lord at an early

[93] Mbili and Dludla (2000), Unpublished paper.
[94] Mbili and Dludla (2000), Unpublished paper.

age."[95] This was born out of a concern that women did not satisfactorily fulfil their role as mothers. Mothers were blamed for not taking responsibility for their children's sexual behaviour which resulted in teenage pregnancy and other immoral behaviour amongst the young people.

Allegiance to these newly found Christian Women's fellowships meant Christian repentance and a renewed commitment to take up a refreshed responsibility to family life on the part of women. Brandel-Syrier's investigation sums up the kind of atmosphere that was brought about during time of repentance by naming these women's organisations as a places of:

> …weeping, sighing, and mutual loud commiseration when the women spoke about their troubles as regards their children, family, sickness and death and the struggle for survival (1995:222).

According to Brandel-Syrier (1995:222), it was for this reason that the local women agreed to name themselves *Isililo.* Women wept greatly for their own lives and the lives of their families through prayer, devotion and singing. A special sermon at the founding of the *Isililo* in Groutville appealed to women to return home and repent, to preach a new Gospel and turn over a new leaf. The word of the day was *Niyolahlwa kanye Nobantwanabenu* which means "You will be cursed together with your children."[96] From the outset of the organisation, the main aims of the fellowship were:

- To teach the youth about Christianity and make them aware that our bodies are the Lord's temple.
- To encourage the youth to actively participate in Church activities.
- To teach women how to introduce Christianity to their children at home i.e., teach children to fear the Lord at an early age.[97]

These core motivations for the existence of the *Isililo* have remained in the Constitution of the *Isililo* of 1926, the revised Constitution of 1949 and the Constitution of the UCCSA of the IMB which was received in 1991.[98]

[95] Mbili and Dludla (2000), Unpublished paper.
[96] Mbili and Dludla (2000), Unpublished paper.
[97] Mbili and Dludla (2000), Unpublished paper.

The narrators of the story of the *Isililo* in the UCCSA and Gaitskell, report that the *Isililo* received a lot of criticism from the ABM women missionaries. They not only did not believe that a name such as *Isililo Samabandla e Bantu Congregational Church of American Board* was appropriate for the fellowship, but they also disagreed with the kind of activities that the women adopted.[99]

2.2.1. Activities of the Women's Association of the American Board Mission

Table A highlights the activities of the *Isililo* as noted by Mbili and Dludla before the establishment of the UCCSA in 1967.[100]

1912-1914	Establishment of the *Isililo*, First Meeting at Adams Mission.
1922	*Isililo* established in Transvaal.
1942-1947 1947-1953	Funds collected to purchase a farm. Introduction of a meeting for girls, Reconciliation meeting between Natal and Johannesburg branches.
1960-1962	Introduction of Jumble Sale as a fundraising method.
1962-1964	Celebration of 50 years of existence, memorial stone laid in memory of those who started the *Isililo*, first booklet on the history of the Church was printed, a play was composed on the development of the *Isililo* from infancy.
1965	Introduction of Thursday as Day of Prayer.
1966-1968	Unification talks between Black movements in CUSA, ABM and LMS.

TABLE A

Selected Activities of the *Isililo*[101]

2.3. The Congregational Union of South Africa (CUSA)

The third ecclesial body which had a strong influence on the life of the UCCSA was known as the Congregational Union of South Africa (CUSA). The name of the body

[98] Mbili and Dludla (2000), Unpublished paper. See Appendix IV for the UCCSA Constitution of Isililo/Manyano/Bomme (IMB)..
[99] Mbili and Dludla (2000), Unpublished paper; *cf.* Gaitskell (1995:222).
[100] Mbili and Dludla (2000), Unpublished paper.
[101] Note that the selected activities in Table A are those of the present researcher and not Mbili and Dludla.

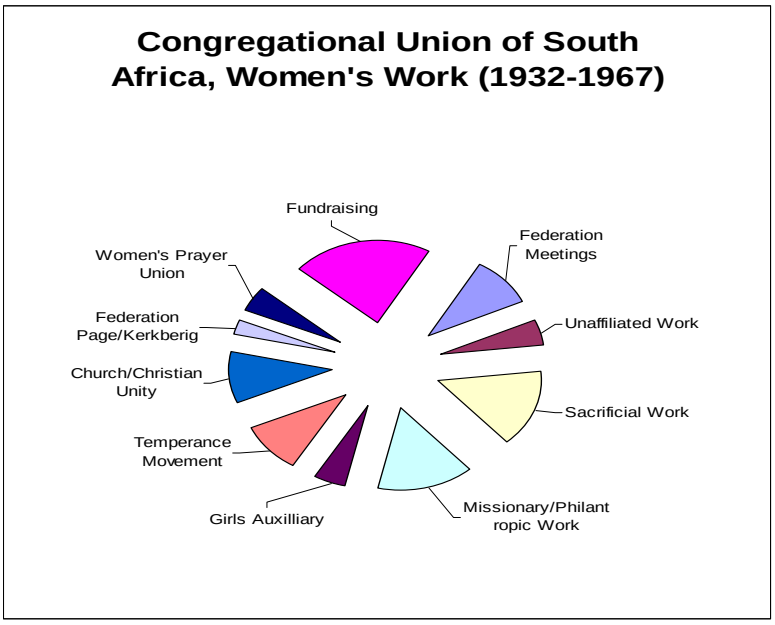
was ‘The Congregational Union, Church Aid and Missionary Society of South Africa’ as it was a coming together of those Congregational churches, associate churches and missions which had a concern that the church needed to become a voluntary institution. One of the reasons given for a voluntary institution was the fact that when the British arrived in the Cape of Good Hope, the church was not recognised as being independent of the colony’s administrative body. Instead, the church was regarded as one of the administrative departments of the *Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie* (VOC) (Dutch East India Company) which was the governing institution in the colony at that time. Church ministers were even paid and appointed by the VOC (Briggs and Wing 1970:110).

On the other hand, the LMS churches that were established in the Cape had a history of being ‘Free’ or ‘Voluntary churches’ with no accountability to the Colony’s Administration. It was only in 1875 that a bill was successfully passed in parliament for other churches to operate independently from the colonial government. It was against this setting and the withdrawal of the LMS from the Cape that circumstances necessitated the founding of the ‘Union of Voluntary Evangelical Churches in South Africa.’ The first of many Biennial meetings of the Union was held in 1861. Seventeen years later, the name ‘Congregational Union of South Africa’ was agreed upon. This name was in line with the Congregational Unions that existed in England and Wales and other overseas bodies. Even though the name stipulated that the association was of Congregational origin, their Constitution made it clear that no person or church body would be excluded from its membership (Briggs and Wing 1970:111).

CUSA materials present a contradictory picture of the position of women. On the one hand, there is evidence of what seems to be an equal power relationship between women and men, particularly in leadership roles. On the other hand, materials from the Women’s Federation portray a traditionally subservient role being performed by women. For example, women seem to have played a major role in the exercise of leadership in the church. On April 3, 1929 the first ordination of a woman, E. W. Mackintosh, took place in Johannesburg. This was the first ordination of a woman in a Western-initiated Christian church in Southern Africa. In addition, the CUSA was

also the first Western-initiated Christian church in Southern Africa to have a woman, Emilie J. Solomon as its leader, when she was elected Chairperson to serve for a full term (Briggs and Wing 1970:292-294). In 1922, Solomon was also the first President and Founder of the Women's Association established in CUSA and called the Congregational Women's Federation of South Africa. Regular reports were made by the Federation to the Union's annual Assembly.

Pie Chart A sets out some of the key issues reflected in the reports by the CUSA and portrays a much more traditional picture of the role women played in the CUSA. They are set out in categories because the CUSA reports unlike other missionary bodies were more accessible. The year books that were available also contained the reports of the Women's Federation of the Congregational Union since 1932. The size of each segment in the pie chart depicts the number of activities and time spent by women on particular issues.



PIE CHART A

Issues Reflecting CUSA Reports

2.3.1. A Survey on the Women's Federation Activities of the Congregational Union of South Africa between 1932 and 1967

2.3.1.1. Fundraising

This category contributes the largest percentage in the pie chart since it appears that the Women's Federation in the CUSA had a great number of activities that needed funding. Among these were several other categories under which one could divide their financial obligations.[102]

2.3.1.2. Registration Fees

Amongst the various registration fees, the CUSA charged for the privilege of attending Assembly gatherings. These monies were paid over into a hospitality fund that could be used at the discretion of the Executive in assisting towards the expenses of centre where the Assembly was held. According to the CUSA Constitution of the Congregational Union, IV, 2d:

> A registration fee, as determined from time to time by the Assembly, shall be paid for every member attending the Assembly…The registration fee shall be paid at the time of the registration and shall be credited to the "Entertainment of Assembly Account" to be used, at the discretion of the Executive, in assisting towards the expenses of the Centre in which the Assembly is held.

2.3.1.3. Internal Missionary Work

These were internal projects that were supported through what was itemised as CUSA Missions and General fund. There was also the financing of vacant pastorates and needy churches. The financial support of recognised Evangelists was also provided for. Added to this was a Muriel Marshall Memorial Building Scheme Fund to

[102] Fundraising was one of the key missionary responsibilities. Gaitskell recounts how the "English Speaking women were avid fundraisers" This is not only true for British women as Gaitskell records several ventures of fundraising. Amongst the Methodist women's groups there were "many and varied activities ...included a Box Supper, and concert, gift evening and Sale of work" while Vryheid's efforts were "bring and buy, cake and jumble sale, talent money, lantern lecture and ping-pong tournament" (Gaitskell, 1997:260). This fundraising tradition has continued among the WAs of the UCCSA.

develop property. A Forward Planning Fund, which was later named the 'Women's Gift,' was given at every Assembly gathering. The women would often name what this money needed to be set aside for. The Group Areas Relief Fund was adopted by the CUSA and supported by the women when the Group Areas law was introduced by the Apartheid Regime. This fund assisted what they called 'Coloured and African' churches to rebuild their churches after their forced removal to new areas. Large amounts of money were needed to replace church buildings. An example was that in Korsten, Port Elizabeth from where 'Africans' were removed to Kwazakele. This meant the rebuilding of a church building in Kwazakele (CUSA 1958:55).

2.3.1.4. External Missionary Work

Externally located, missionary works called 'foreign missions' or 'outside societies,' were financial supported by the LMS.

2.3.1.5. Civil Society

Of particular significance here was the 1941-1942 War Support provided by the Women's Federation. Religious services were held at Women's Camps, war funds were collected and special tributes were paid to Emilie J. Solomon the first President of the Federation by General J. C. Smuts for their efforts (CUSA 1942).

2.3.1.6. Federation Meetings

The Women's meetings were divided into Executive Council meetings, an annual Federation Day, Federation Annual Meeting, the District Associations and the local Women' Association meetings. These meetings primarily served as the settings for decision-making, the planning and talking about the life of the Women's activities. Mary Abbott best describes what took place at the fixed meetings in her report of 1957, where she states

> …at those meetings not only business and routine matters have been dealt with, but the needs of the members of the women's associations

> and the contribution they can make to the life and witness of the churches have been discussed (CUSA 1957:73).

An Executive Committee served for a period of three years. Executive Council Meetings met once a month. The positions elected for the leadership of the Executive of the Women's Federation included, the President, Vice-President, an Honorary Secretary, an Honorary Treasurer, an International Correspondent, and the Convenor of Unaffiliated Work. Some of these positions are symbolic of what the priorities were within the Federation at that time. At local and district level these business meetings were also highlighted and interspersed with prayer sessions.

2.3.1.7. Unaffiliated Work

In terms of the Group Areas Act which was then in force under the Apartheid Regime, the work of CUSA was divided into three racial groups: European, 'Coloured' and 'African work'. The groups under the CUSA administered their own affairs and presented reports to the CUSA Assembly. In the same way, the Women's Federation divided their work among the racial groups. Under the Women's Federation, the work among the local population was started by the European wing of the women and called 'unaffiliated work.' Supervision was provided by the missionary women and progress reports about their work were reported to the Executive Council. A convenor was appointed at every executive meeting to this 'unaffiliated work.' There are records that explain that later in the life of the Women's Federation the local women travelled long distances to attend the monthly meetings.

The type of work, the agenda and priorities were no different from the Executive Council or the European Women's section. An example of this is the programme of Midland District Bantu Congregational Women's Association which consisted of weekly prayer meetings, visiting the sick, caring for the aged and the poor, as well as the renewal and improvement of church furniture and property.

Work in other countries among the local population, such as in the Rhodesian churches, was also identified as 'unaffiliated work.' L. H. Warden, the acting President of 1961 reported to the Assembly by referring to the Rhodesian work "even

though they are far away, we do regard them as part of the family and look forward to the time when they will be in a position to become formally affiliated to the Federation" (CUSA 1962).

2.3.1.8. Sacrificial Work

Sacrificial work is marked by the daily sacrifices of women especially at district and local level. These are mostly tasks that were performed by women in and around the church. Among their responsibilities was the provision of anthem books to the choir groups, the making of alter cloths, visiting the sick, making tea, the cleaning and decoration of the church buildings. It is this section of the women's work that sustains every local church. These sacrificial works together with the fundraising and the prayer meetings have been the core functions of WAs of the UCCSA.

2.3.1.9. Missionary/Philanthropic Work

Philanthropic works are those outreach programmes which are also known as charitable works. They are featured in the adoption of poor families whom they assist with food and clothing at Christmas time, their adoption of orphan children, and the distribution of care parcels to hospitals. The WAs of the UCCSA, together with other welfare organisations provided clothing parcels to charitable organisations such as the Society for the Blind, the Leprosy Mission, and various child welfare organisations in and around their communities.

2.3.1.10. Girls Auxiliary

This concerns the introduction of associations among young women and girls. Young women and girl children were mentored into gaining knowledge about and prepared for work in the WAs. These auxiliaries were also divided under the same racial groupings. They operated under the supervision of the WAs.. Their functions were modelled around the same activities of the associations, including, fundraising, prayer, sacrificial work and philanthropic work.

2.3.1.11. Temperance Movement

Temperance work was done in collaboration with other organisations. The Temperance Movement was concerned about the abuse of alcohol primarily among the local population. To address this issue, protests against the erection of Native beer canteens and licensing courts were initiated. Literature was distributed such as booklets explaining the Temperance Movement and provided Bible Studies in the vernacular. They also addressed young people in schools and churches.

Sometime in 1937 -1938 an incident is recorded in which an experiment was done on twin boys. One boy was given a daily ration of milk while the other was given wine. The Temperance Movement wrote a letter of protest to the ministers of Justice, Public Health, Labour and Social Welfare deploring these experiments. An annual Grape Festival or Raisin Day was also celebrated to raise awareness on Temperance activities (CUSA 1928).

2.3.1.12. Church/Christian Unity

The Federation had strong links with overseas organisations. They played tape recordings, exchanged reports and letters, as well as magazines and face to face visitations with sister organisations. Among those mentioned are the Congregational Women's Federation of New Zealand, the World Wide Federation of Women, and the Congregational Women's Guild of England and Wales. Combined ecumenical efforts were the initiation of the first Women's World Day of Prayer Meeting in 1930. The 1941-1942 report explains that the lead on activities was mainly taken from the Congregational Women's Guild of England and Wales (CUSA 1942). Women from these overseas bodies came regularly as guest speakers at locally held functions.

2.3.1.13. Federation Page/*Kerk berig*/Congregationalist

Frequent articles on the activities of the Women's Federation were included as the 'Federation Page' in the *Kerk berig* and the Congregationalist magazines.

2.3.1.14. Women's Prayer Union

The Prayer Union was particularly concerned with praying for missionaries. This was a regular prayer circle which was arranged for missionary work. A handbook of prayers was also produced for this purpose.

In summary, one cannot dismiss the fact that learning might have taken place among the members of the Federation through their different activities. The women were obviously very active through fundraising, as well as in the preparation of the articles written for the 'Congregationalist' or the '*Kerkberig*,' or perhaps through relationships in their 'unaffiliated work' which really meant work with 'Coloured and native' people or even in the protests which they organised. In the documentation however, there appears no mention of deliberate learning activities being employed amongst its members. These might have also taken place at Women's rallies which are mentioned. One of the commonalities of the Women's Federation with that of the *Isililo*from the ABM is what is called "cleaning the House of God, decorating the manse, beautifying the Church Sunday by Sunday and many other duties lovingly carried out." The women who participated in these activities were commended by the missionaries as being good mothers and wives and expert fundraisers (CUSA 1964-1965). Even if these learning opportunities did occur, from the tone of the reports it is doubtful that they were geared towards liberation.

2.3.1.15. Constitution

As in the case of the ABM, the Constitution set out the beliefs of the Women's Federation.[103]

[103] See Appendix V.

2.4. The South African Association of the Disciples of Christ

The last group that became part of the UCCSA was that of the South African Association of the Disciples of Christ (SAADC). A Covenant Service was held September 23, 1972 to mark the beginning of the SAADC.

The Disciples of Christ, also known as the Christian Church, came into being with the birth of two movements in Western Pennsylvania and Kentucky in the United States of America who protested against what they saw as rigid and inflexible denominationalism in the early 1800s. In Pennsylvania, it was the father and son, Thomas and Alexander Campbell of Scottish Presbyterian descent who objected to the inflexible sectarianism that excluded many people from partaking in the Holy Communion. In Kentucky, Barton Stone who was also a Presbyterian, protested against ones ability to know the Christian Creeds as a test of fellowship within the church. These two movements combined and formed the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in 1832; the name selected being an indication of the founders' wish that the church should be focussed on unity not through adopting doctrines but through the implementation of New Testament beliefs and faith practices. Their vision to be a movement rather than an institution, as well as their desire to restore unity did not last as some groups eventually pulled away due to various disagreements. The first group that pulled away was in 1906, another followed by another in 1926. In the years that followed, others also left (Teegarden cited in Cradock, Faw and Heimer 1999).

The South African Association of the Disciples of Christ was composed of two main groups. These were 'African' works under the auspices of the United Christian Missionary Society and the South African Disciples of Christ and the African Churches. Once the unification talks were finalised with the UCCSA, three of the four White congregations withdrew to form their own independent congregations.

A Memorandum of Agreement was signed between the UCCSA and the South African Association of the Disciples of Christ. The Memorandum addressed various issues, including, theological principles of doctrine and sacraments, the Roll of ministers, Evangelists and full time church workers, Regional Councils and local

churches, property, trust funds and financial management. However, no mention is made of any organisations such as the Women's Associations at the time (CUSA 1970-1972).

Kenneth Teegarden (cited in Cradock, Faw and Heimer 1999) does give a view of the position of women in the Disciples of Christ in the 1970s. This was around the same period when the unity between the South African Disciples of Christ and the UCCSA was being sealed. This might provide insight into the influences of women from the Disciples of Christ, as a missionary body of the women of the UCCSA. Teegarden shows that the numerical strength of women was stronger than that of the men. A typical example of this is the number of registered participants at the General Assembly of 1973 in which women amounted to more than half (Lollis 1975:98). Teegarden explains that in spite of these recorded numbers, women were in the minority when it came to leadership positions such as elective positions or senior staff positions. Women were for most of the history of the Disciples of Christ under-represented in decision-making bodies at all levels of the church. Ordained women were also only a small group.

Women in the Disciples of Christ did however find their niche within the church when they formed the Christian Woman's Board of Missions (CWBM). CWBM sent and supported missionaries to other continents and began a number of outreach ventures in the USA. With this new venture, the CWBM in the Disciples of Christ had a number of responsibilities which related well with those women involved in the Congregational Union of South Africa above, including, fundraising for the support of missionaries, the recording of meetings and events, the writing of articles, holding planning meetings to make decisions regarding the work of CWBM, and finally various initiatives with other Christian Missionary Bodies.

3. The Present Status of the Women's Associations of the UCCSA

With the establishment of the UCCSA in 1967, the 'bloused women,' as they were commonly called, or (more correctly), the Black Women's Associations from the three missionary bodies grouped together and formed a committee to oversee their

union. According to Dludla, there were three groups: in Natal they were known as the *Isililo*, born from ABM; in the Cape they were known as *Manyano* with their origins from CUSA and in the Orange Free State; and in the Central Region, the *Bomme* with their roots in the LMS which formed the *Isililo/Manyano/Bomme* (IMB).[104] However, the history of the Women's Associations is not as neat and tidy as Rev. B. K. Dludla wants to suggest. In an area such as the Transvaal, all three groups existed alongside each other. The areas that Dludla identifies with these three groups may have been their strongholds, but in the multilingual regions there would be *Bomme, Manyano* and *Isililo* existing within a short distance from each other.

Following the formation of the UCCSA, records show that in 1968, the three 'bloused women' bodies called a meeting with the intention to unite. As a sign of their unity, the three bodies agreed to wear one uniform. The Bantu Congregational Church (BCC) disposed of their pink ribbons and accepted the blue ribbon worn by the CUSA and LMS. By this time, these women's groups were a strong force throughout Southern Africa. Even though unity attempts seem to have taken place as early as 1968, within these three bodies, union only seemed to have been realised when the so-called 'bloused women' wanted representative status within the UCCSA.[105] In addition, the *Isililo* in Natal requested support from the other regions and synods. Amongst those who offered support were the *Manyano* in the Cape.

According to historical records, the two most influential women's groups in the UCCSA appear to have come from the CUSA and the ABM. During the union of the church in 1967, the 'bloused women' or *Isililo, the Manyano and the Bomme* (IMB) groups were left out of the process of uniting. While the main church bodies journey towards union, this did not mean that the WAs were on a similar journey. Indeed, there was an assumption that they would, as indicated in the records, serve under the umbrella of the then Women's Federation of CUSA which upon the union, became the Women's Work Committee (WWC). It seems that there was an impression on the part of the leadership of the time that the IMB would simply become subordinate to

[104] Dludla (2000), Unpublished paper.
[105] Following the unity meetings of 1968, their next joint meeting was held as late as January 20, 1990 specifically called to prepare for the first joint national conference of 1992 (Mbili and Dludla (2000), Unpublished paper).

and operate under the umbrella of the Women's Work Committee. No attempts seem to have been made to bring the different groups together as equal partners as was the case in the process that led to the formation of the UCCSA.

The difference between the IMB and the WWC was not historical in nature, but was primarily determined by racial difference. The WWC was in the main comprised of White and 'Coloured' women, whereas the IMB was predominantly Black. Strangely, these racial divisions did not seem to concern anyone at the time. What made it worse was that it was rooted within the context of the Group Areas Act of the apartheid system.

One of the IMBs greatest struggles since Union in 1967, was the belief that they were 'under the umbrella of' the WWC. The WWC, who came about through the Congregational Union of South Africa as 'The Congregational Women's Federation' was formally instituted and received representative status in the Assembly of CUSA in 1922. This automatically continued with the formation of the UCCSA. As a result, the booklet 'The Story of the Women of the Peninsula Region of the South Africa Synod of the UCCSA' somewhat heroically declares that:

> Today, this birthmother of women's work namely the Congregational Women's Federation is known as the National Women's Committee which is the umbrella body of all local and regional Women's fellowships throughout the UCCSA (UCCSA nd).

This seems to be an expression of total ignorance of the existence or recognition of any other birth mothers of women's work within the UCCSA. Indeed, it seems those who came from the WWC simply saw themselves as being a superior 'birth mother'. Instead, the IMB sought independent constituent status as a recognised body within the church. A tense racially-charged situation soon emerged in 1985 when the President of the WWC raised the concern that the *Isililo* spent too much money on an annual conference and that the money should be used differently. After much debate between the two groups, the *Isililo* decided to separate from the WWC and asked to be given constituent status as a group. The WWC disagreed with the *Isililo* on this

matter.[106] Following an impasse, the matter was referred to the Denominational Executive Committee which met in 1988. After writing a letter to express their dissatisfaction with the ongoing situation in which they had no representative position, the IMB was registered as a Standing Committee within the UCCSA at the Assembly in 1989. This appears to be almost an opting out on the part of the leadership to deal with the racial tensions. Indeed, the decision to provide representative status to the IMB meant that they were not represented by the WWC, but instead were given their own voice at all fora. It was during this time that joint efforts between the *Isililo*, the *Manyano* and *Bomme* were pursued.[107]

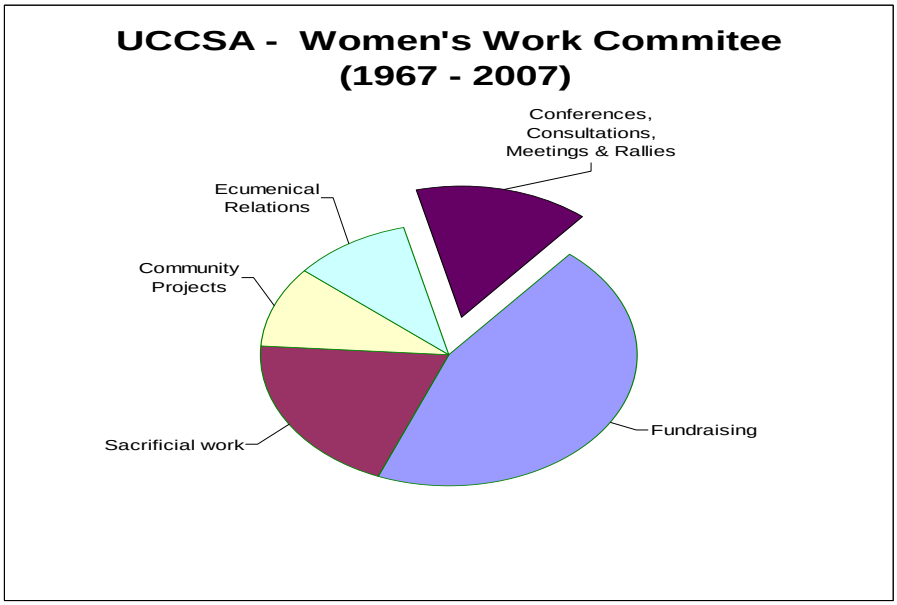
Apart from the racial stand-off between the WWC and the IMB, another matter of concern was the competition for the control of the other synods. South Africa as a synod was only established in 2002, being much later than the other synods (UCCSA 2003b). Prior to this, the women's structures were organised around regions, and as such there was an expectation that the other synods should also be structured in like manner. The numbers of delegates at meetings were determined by the South African regions and this applied automatically to the synods held outside of South Africa. However, the South African regions always had larger number of delegates at meetings than the other synods. The WWC and IMB only changed their status from National bodies to Denominational (International) offices at the time when South Africa became a synod. This placed synods such as in Mozambique, Botswana and Zimbabwe who were 'bloused' in great difficulty. Indeed, the minutes record how Mozambique and Zimbabwe floated between the WWC and the IMB, having been visited and received invitations by both groups. Botswana also made a deliberate decision to join the WWC. This decision went against the status quo of the time, in that it was assumed that Black or uniformed women belonged to the IMB. Indeed, attempts as recent as 2009 were made by the IMB to recruit Botswana to become part of the IMB. In March 2008, Zimbabwe ultimately ended up on both sides of the fence, where there were those members who wanted to associate with the 'bloused' women and those who did not wear uniform (UCCSA 2008a).

[106] Dludla (2000), Unpublished paper.
[107] Dludla (2000), Unpublished paper.

When there were opportunities for the other synods to take leadership of the Women's Associations this did not go without difficulty since the bank accounts were held in South Africa which left the leading synods with little or no financial capacity (UCCSA 2003a).

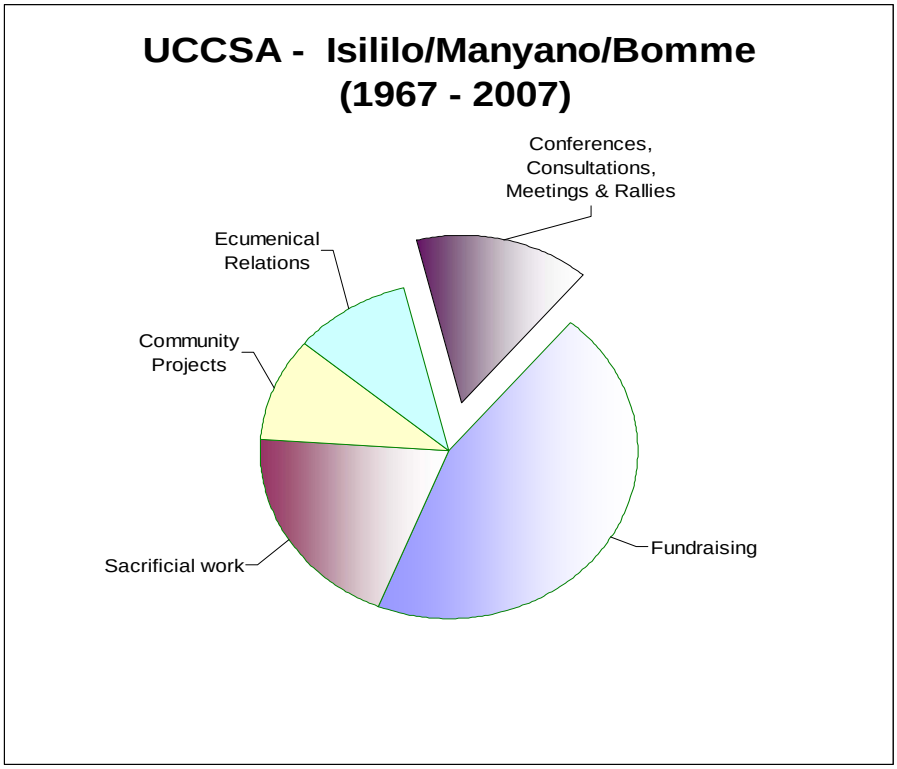
In spite of these differences, the IMB and WWC have also shared a history of commonalities. While the WWC had an existing uniform, in 1969 they adopted a new one (UCCSA 1969). Both groups had male involvement especially in the initial stages of the journey towards Union. Rev. Saul Damon held the office of President of the Upington Women's Association from 1935-1949 as well as the Kenhardt Women's Association in the 1960s (UCCSA nd). Men became part of the decision-making of the IMB as well when in 1987, Rev. B. Ngidi was asked to become part of the special committee to pursue the issue of separation. Male involvement has continued ever since, either explicitly or implicitly.

These IMB and the WWC groups have continued to operate as separate Women's Associations in the UCCSA.



PIE CHART B

Women's Work Committee Activities (1967-2007)



PIE CHART C

Isililo/Manyano/Bomme Activities (1967-2007)

4. An Analysis and Survey of Women's Associations Activities 1967-2007

The WWC and the IMB report on much the same issues. The time period chosen for the purposes of analysis and survey in this present study is the forty-year period of union and the formation of the UCCSA in 1967 to 2007. Pie Chart C therefore consists of a graphical breakdown of the activities of the WWC during the period 1967-2007. Pie Chart C offers a graphical breakdown of the activities of the IMB during the same time period.

4.1. Ecumenical Relations

Ecumenical involvement with other Christian organisations such as the Women's World Day of Prayer (WWDP) and the Church Unity Commission (CUC) is an important aspect of their international activities. The representation of the UCCSA in leadership positions at national level, especially in South Africa, as well as in some of the major ecumenical organisations such as the WWDP have continued to be held by WWC women. Other ecumenical involvement has been in the 1992 Consultation with the Southern African Alliance of Reformed Churches. At the same meeting, discussions were held on the Ecumenical Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women, an initiative led by the WCC (UCCSA 1992). Ecumenical relations are also extended to overseas partners and their relations. In 1990, it was detailed in the WWC Assembly report that Mrs. M. Du Plessis and Mrs. J. Wanless attended the Disciples of Christ Quadrennial Conference in Indiana in the United States of America. Mrs. Z. Makhanya is also reported to have attended the National Industrial Mission Conference in the UK (UCCSA 1990a).

4.2. Conferences, Rallies, Meetings and Conferences

Core to the Women's meetings are their rallies, meetings and conferences and consultations. These are usually held locally, regionally, at synod level and at denominational level. The women in leadership often serve for one or two terms. The annual rallies or conferences and consultations are meant to raise funds, provide time for prayer, business meetings and fellowship. It is at these meetings that major

decisions are taken that direct the work of the WAs such as the election of leadership. Ministers' wives conventions have also become part of these regular meetings for the IMB and WWC.

4.3. Community Projects

These projects range from caring for the destitute, providing Christmas parcels for those in hospital, or orphaned. They also provide toys and blankets to disadvantaged children in crèches and run soup kitchens in the church. Specific examples mentioned include:

> Different regions continue to take care of disabled children according to their physiological, spiritual, socio-economic and educational needs (UCCSA 2005a).

Funds are raised for drought-stricken or flooded communities. Jerseys for AIDS orphans were collected ands distributed in the three synods in which the WWC operate. Each Synod received one thousand jerseys to give to children in need (UCCSA 2007a). Ministers' wives have done patchwork blankets that were donated to the Entembeni Old Age Home (UCCSA 2005b).

4.4. Sacrificial Work

Designated 'sacrificial work' after the missionary language which includes, feeding of church members at church meetings, tea and refreshments, providing church flowers and cleaning of the church and visiting the sick. The IMB agreed to commit itself to Inanda Seminary in prayer and material support, including crockery, cutlery, tablecloths and a lawnmower. The Women's Work Committee in the same report pledged to purchase and make curtains for the UCCSA Office (UCCSA 1999a; 1999b).

A specific incident in the report that was made by the women in Zimbabwe at the Assembly in 2003 is of particular interest. The women had built a kitchen for the Assembly gathering and requested assistance to furnish the kitchen with stoves,

curtaining and other equipment. The women also reported on the hardships they experienced in Zimbabwe due to the political instability, including, shortages of staple foods such as bread and Mealie meal and explained that farmers were unable to cultivate crops. The WAs made a recommendation to provide the women in Zimbabwe with basic food stuffs (UCCSA 2003b).

4.5. Fundraising

Fundraising makes up the biggest part of the activities of the women. The traditional Women's Gift which was introduced by the Women's Federation is still ongoing. The IMB has also adopted the idea. Mrs. Ndayi, the President of the IMB informed the Assembly delegates that the IMB will donate the Women's Gift to the widow/widower pension fund as some members only receive between R100.00 and R150.00 per month (UCCSA 2005b).

Women also continue to take responsibility for the purchasing of church furniture and equipment. They also raise funds to pay the stipends for Evangelists, provide bursaries for new students and many other needs identified within the church.

The Women's Federation have taken various financial responsibilities under their care. They have continued to sustain the work of the church at large. Mrs. Mary Abbott who was the President of the WWC in 1972 emphasised the need for financial assistance for the work of the Committee. The matter was referred "back to the Women's Committee for consideration, the possibility of presenting regional budgets to meet the financial needs" (UCCSA 1972).

The colour difference indicated in the pie charts is a particular key to the differences between the two groups. The use of lighter colours symbolises that the IMB would use every forum for prayer and revival services and for spiritual renewal. The IMB view their members as 'prayer warriors' and set aside time in their programmes for spiritual sharing and testimonies which they name 'cast thy burden'. By doing this, the IMB believes they were bringing:

> …a new dimension in the life of the UCCSA. The emphasis was on the practice of bent knee praying for the creation of Christian families wherever people of God are found (UCCSA 1990b).

The nature of the spirituality of the IMB is evident in a decision in 1995 when they decided to change their name to the UCCSA Women's Prayer Force (UCCSA 1995). This decision however never materialised. This seems to be born out of the history of 'wailing' of the *Isililo.*

The emphasis for the WWC has always been different, however over time this difference has diminiahed. A special agenda item to encourage women to do something extra within their localities to grow spiritually was introduced in the WWC. Reports were received of how the exercise empowered women to grow spiritually. They named this as being "truly evident of God's Spirit in motion" (UCCSA 2007a).

5. Summary

It is noticeable how identical the areas of focus are between that which was started by the missionary women and the current activities which the WAs of the UCCSA engage in. The women today do not pay the same attention to magazine editorials or the Girls Auxiliary groups but have duplicated the rest of the activities.

Although learning might take place during these activities, they have not noticed any deliberate critical learning activities planned. One cannot recognise any particular liberatory ethos through which individual and communal empowerment can take place. What is present is a repetition of the missionary activities and they seem to be replicated without question. Although there were leadership training events such as the one held in 1971 led by Lou-Ann Parsons which focussed on the "role of women in the church," these do not appear to be a regular part of the programmes that women report on. A significant aspect to recognise in the event that was organised during Lou-Ann Parson's presidency is that the representation of the women seems to have come from different racial groups. The women also seemed to have done an in depth reflection on their role. The group discovered that:

> …there are many different needs according to our traditions and places and ages. We discovered that we have many things in common, even with our differing needs, and that these can bind us together in our common task (UCCSA 1971).

The women formulated their reason for existing as an organisation in the following points:

- To develop and strengthen the spiritual life of women of the church
- To plan a programme which will meet the needs of younger women and older women, wives and mothers
- To be of service to the local church
- To be of service in the community
- To be responsible for the development of leadership amongst church women
- To seek information and develop understanding between all women in the UCCSA and women of other denominations (UCCSA 1971).

Even though one can celebrate this initiative of self-reflection through which women have had the opportunity to become critical about who they are, one cannot help but notice how 'inward looking' and how similar the outlook of the WA's reasons for existence are to that which they have inherited from the Western missionaries. This does not give the impression that this model of reflection is a regular occurrence within the WAs of the UCCSA.

It is questionable whether the two groups are aware of the striking similarities between them. Even though they are so alike they have never deliberately created an opportunity to become one, except for sharing space at their yearly consultations in which they come together at worship times. One event that does stand out was a report recorded in the Proceedings of the 25th Assembly at which the women came together because of their dissatisfaction over a remark that was made about the minimal role they play in the church. The women also expressed their dissatisfaction with the fact that all ministries at the Assembly were allocated a place to meet, except themselves. This agitation experienced by the women resulted in them joining together, even if for that brief moment only and writing a firm statement that was presented to the Assembly about the churches general attitude towards women

through which they felt marginalised. This action led to a resolution by the Assembly to recognise the equality of all in the church. They also confirmed that this equality needs to be affirmed and implemented at all levels in the church (UCCSA 1991).

This chapter has sought to show two things. Firstly, it has demonstrated that both the IBM and the WWC have not moved in terms of their agenda or role in the church. Secondly, the chapter has sought to demonstrate that notwithstanding the racial segregation that exists between the two Associations, in terms of what they believe and what they practice they are almost completely identical. The overall intention of this chapter was to audit the extant learning ethos within which the WAs of the UCCSA operate through an evaluation of the environment both from outside and inside their associations to ascertain whether it is a liberatory learning ethos or an enslaving ethos. Without doubt, this audit proves that there is no liberating learning ethos extant within the WAs. Instead, there is a repeat of that which has gone before in spite of the new local leadership. In the light of these findings, the next chapter will examine the educational heritage that came about through these traditions of the WAs in the UCCSA, and the impact this heritage has had on the WAs current ethos of learning.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE IMPACT OF MISSIONARY AND APARTHEID EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS ON THE WOMEN'S ASSOCIATIONS OF THE UNITED CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, we surveyed the activities and initiatives of the Women's Associations of the UCCSA. It highlighted the fact that there was not a liberatory ethos evident within them. It has been argued throughout the study that the WAs of the UCCSA present enormous potential to be sites of liberation. The research question asked:

> Do the WAs in the UCCSA impart a liberatory learning ethos to enable individual and communal empowerment for their members?"

Since the response to this question appears to be negative, it requires further discussion and explication so as to understand why such a liberatory ethos is not prevalent. Before we engage with the question of what is needed it would be helpful to explore why these Associations function in the way that they do. This study claims that the WAs lack a culture of critical learning because of their educational heritages. It is this claim that will be explored in this chapter through a detailed description and analysis of the two major educational heritages on women's lives in Southern Africa. These are the missionary and Apartheid educational systems. Thereafter, drawing on Matongo's theory of knowledge construction as a gendered practice, it will be argued that these educational systems have had a detrimental effect on women's ability to think and act in a critical and liberatory way. By way of summary, we will examine

what educational heritage the WAs of the UCCSA have been exposed to, and the influences of that heritage on the WAs current ethos.

In the preceding chapter it was noted that centuries of colonial influence have had an enormous bearing on the mental and structural operations of the WAs of the UCCSA. These factors have not only shaped their programmes, but also their behaviour, relationships and their future course. What we see throughout the narration of the life of the WAs of the UCCSA are strong inherited influences. These might be ordinarily taken as traditions and looked upon as a positive memory. However, these influences, particularly in the area of learning, are oppressive. They have withheld from women the potential to analytically direct their own lives at a personal, cultural, societal and faith level. What is of concern here is the oppression of the mind of the WAs of the UCCSA. As Sewpaul has clearly noted, they have not learnt "the importance of developing resistance to educational and cultural imperialism" (2003:2). Steve Biko clarifies this point further when he explains what it is like for one to have the freedom to direct one's own life. He names 'Freedom' as the ability to "define oneself with one's possibilities held back not by the power of other people over one but by one's relationship to God and to natural surroundings" (Biko 2007:156). One can connote 'power of other people over one' to include the power of history or traditions or influences over one.

Neil Thompson (1997) reminds us that oppression has several layers. He describes these layers as PCS: Personal, Cultural and Societal. According to Thompson, for an individual to work against oppression, one needs to understand the layers of such oppression and how they impact on our person. Layers of oppression that have been caused by our educational legacies must be uncovered. This process of working against the oppressions is called "anti-oppressive practice" (Thompson 1997:1). It is this anti-oppressive practice that is defined as a culture of critical learning.[108]

[108] It seems like the women of the UCCSA Associations have been held captive for the past forty two years by that which they have inherited from the Western missionaries, and their colonizers. Except for their frank reaction at the incident at the Assembly in 1991, women do not present an image through which one notices the freedom that Biko (2007:156) refers to when he says, "If one is free at heart, no [hu]man-made chains can bind one to servitude…"

Specific attention will be paid to the educational systems that have been inherited and how these have negatively influenced the way people have come to perceive themselves in the UCCSA. Since the focus of this study is on the WAs of the UCCSA, attention will be given to the role women have played in these inherited systems as this will further highlight how they feel about themselves today. The effects of these systems have also impacted on the programmes in which they engage, the approaches they employ, and the beliefs they hold in church. The WAs of the UCCSA have been victims of these systems.

This chapter begins with a discussion on the concepts of 'learning' and 'education.' Secondly, two types or models of education are identified that have been used over the years in Southern Africa, both of which have had a huge impact on the consciousness of the WAs of the UCCSA. Thirdly, these models are discussed and compared with the educational approaches that have emerged out of them. General terms such as Apartheid or missionary models, are used to explain the type of education employed at the time and represent people's perceptions on the models of education. This exploration should assist us to figure out the layers of continued oppression the ideology brought about through past educational systems and approaches so that we might know how to work against such an oppressive educational culture, and to adapt and replace it with a more critical learning ethos in the WAs in the UCCSA.

2. Concepts of Education

Scholars have long theorised about education. Akinpela (1981:22-55, 141) has traced the development of education to various scholars such as Plato (427–348 BCE) and Aristotle (384-322 BCE), the French scholar, Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778), and the American philosopher John Dewey (1859-1952), with his philosophy of a pragmatic education and others who he believes have done extensive work in this area.

Lesiba Teffo (2000:113) has not only questioned the imperialism of the Global North who developed and imposed these theories of education upon Africans, but also

chides African writers who cast doubt on their own cultural heritage and humanity by believing that African history has not contributed to social development. Teffo thinks that before the introduction of European culture, all cultures disseminated knowledge, skills and information informally. Africa also contributed to this process. Teffo mentions several African Empires such as Ghana and KwaZulu that existed before the arrival of the Europeans. He believes they provide evidence of sound political, social, legal, moral and religious systems (2000:114). Teffo further locates African Knowledge Systems (AKS) to several achievements in Africa prior to the colonial occupation such as among the Egyptians as early as 2600 BCE.[109] The Pyramids in Giza near Cairo and the Great Zimbabwe historical sites in Mashvingo Province, Zimbabwe he believes could only have come about through the level of geometric and mathematical knowledge that existed in pre-colonial times. Another example of the African contribution to social development is in the mining and processing of metals such as gold and copper; here, Teffo cites Ralushai, an anthropologist in the Thulamela pre-historic site at the Kruger National Park as a vivid example (2000:116).

Writers and theorists in the field of education have over the years developed myriads of ideas by which they describe 'education.' The different theories on education vary considerably and continually grow into new ideas as more inquiries are conducted. A few systems of belief and their historical effects will be presented to help stimulate thinking around the diverse concepts of education as an introduction to the cultures which have been used in Southern Africa.

The term 'learning' is preferred as the term 'education' conjures up images of a very historic, traditional European, static, classroom, and rational institution.[110] This

[109] Nyerere (1974) regarded these kinds of developments that came about in Egypt as material developments. He thought that the "Egyptian culture of those days—with all the knowledge and wisdom which it possessed- was quickly overthrown by foreign invasion because it was the culture of a few: the masses were slaves who simply suffered because of the demands of this material development, and did not benefit from it." Nyerere also expressed doubts as to whether the Egyptian pyramids at all made a difference to the history of the countries or the lives of the people. He maintained that development can only bring freedom if it is development of the people (1974:27). What Nyerere argues for here is no doubt true, but I still think it does not take away the point that Teffo makes that Africa has been a bearer of knowledge and that these social developments are signs thereof.

[110] I have discussed the reason why I make the claim that education presents a linear traditional European notion in chapter one of this present study. Van der Zee (1996:165) adds to this concept,

traditional idea of education seems no different from what Freire (1996:56) calls the "banking approach," which is nothing more than a 'pouring in' of information. Such a traditional educational approach creates a picture of a very inactive role on the part of the learner. The learning ethos that needs to be taken up by the WAs of the UCCSA is different from this traditional, "banking method." It involves interactive and participatory modes of critical learning, i.e., learning for liberation and justice. It is for this reason that the term 'learning' is used as far as possible throughout this study. This has not been easy, as the term 'education' has become a popular term and has not often been questioned.

There is no better way to start off this discussion than to think through the idea of 'education' as it has been understood by those from the Global North through whom Southern Africa has inherited it ideas of education. Education has always been equated with the economics and politics of Western Society.[111] In Sir Frank Coffield's chronicle of the British 'learning society' an overriding theme is present that education has been developed around the requirements of Great Britain's economic markets. Van der Zee, in his review on education explains that education has been under scrutiny since the 1800s in which Friedrich Nietzsche complained that "educational institutions, far from seeking to civilize men and society, teach people to be functionaries and make them marketable[112]" This puts into perspective the concept of education that Southern African has been burdened with for centuries. Coffield (1997:3) gives details of how policies were developed previously in Government systems. He mentions three White Papers which were produced at the time on the themes of competitiveness for developments in technology, methods of production and in the globalisation of world trade. What one can deduce from Coffield is that a society which focuses on education to boost economic prosperity polarises its citizens in a number of ways. Coffield reminds us that such education, led by an economic

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where he regards learning as an overall understanding of acquiring knowledge, while education only makes up a dimension of society.

[111] Berman (1975:4) makes reference to T. F. Buxton, a member of the British Parliament in the 1800s who called for the commercialisation of Africa. This call related to the new market economy in Great Britain, where the factories in the industrial heartlands of Birmingham, Sheffield, and Manchester were producing goods in need of markets.

[112] Van der Zee presents different philosophies on the investigations of the educational system amongst these are the de-schoolers who have argued that, "little by little, a colossal learning factory has been created from which everything resembling education in the original meaning of the word has disappeared. Our schools have become instruments of repression: they reinforce social inequality, keep people dependent, stub out initiative and creativity, and impede common action" (1996:164 *cf.* 162).

imperative tends to work against values of social justice. It therefore does not consider the structural and social barriers that lie between those who have access to education and those who have none. Some of this division is due to the "indefensible discrimination between "deserving" generally younger, academic, full-time and better qualified and "undeserving" learners often older, vocational, part-time and poorly qualified" (Coffield 1997:11). Such divisions create social chasms between those who are rich and those who are poor which affects the social cohesion of a community. Basic skills have continued to be around subjects of maths and science and that which is regarded as academic versus that which is practical. This philosophy of education has further created classism: there are those who are regarded as full citizens because they have the ability to achieve and nothing that restricts them and the partial or non-citizens are those who are the long-term unemployed or adults with learning difficulties and ethnic minorities (Coffield 1997:13). The result of this segregation has been that these groups daily experience exclusion, discrimination and poverty. All of these so-called norms are inculcated in the policies in which the responsibility of education is transferred from the society to that of the individual.

This exclusivist notion of western education is also captured in the beliefs of those educators who held views that people's race or their status has an effect on their intellectual ability. Berman (1975:10) explains how ideologies such as pseudo-racism reared its head in Europe in the middle of the nineteenth century. Several "scientific" confirmations on intelligence at the time brought to light that the Africans were inferior to Europeans. This they attributed to fundamental physiological differences, such as the supposed capacity of the "negroid' skull was less than the European skull. This subject of intelligence and race was no different from many contemporaries who believed that the European races were intellectually superior.[113] This point is further affirmed by Ngugi wa Thiong'o who records comments on race and intelligence by people that he refers to as "geniuses of racism" such as Rider Haggard, Nicholas Monsarrat, Thomas Jeffersen and Hegel who compared Africa to "a land of childhood

[113] Charles Darwin's famous book on theory of evolution entitled, *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life,* was published in 1859. According to Berman (1975:10), Darwin's publication strengthened the beliefs around African inferiority.

still enveloped in a dark mantle of the night as far as the development of self-conscious history was concerned" (1981:18).

The concept of intelligence became much more expanded through the centuries. A distinction has been identified between nineteenth-century mechanistic educational models of education and the twenty-first century holistic educational model. One of the many differences identified between the two models is that the mechanistic model fragmented knowledge into parts, while holistic education regarded knowledge as integrated (Schreiner, Banev, and Oxley 2005:23-27).

Having looked at some of the nineteenth century models of education we can now turn to the twenty first century concepts from the Global North. One such educator is the American psychologist Howard Gardner, who came up with a different theory about human intelligence. In his work, he explored the theory of multiple intelligences. Gardner conclusion was that human beings are born with numerous or more precisely, seven intelligences. These he classifies as linguistic, logical/mathematical, musical, spatial/visual, kinesthetic/physical and inter- and intra-personal intelligences (Gardner 2005:36). Gardner felt that traditional educational approaches limited people's perception about learning. People tend to think that one has achieved only if one has the ability to read, write and calculate. For Gardner, this focuses only on the linguistic and logical intelligences. As a result, any person understood to be without these two intelligences has often been regarded as being unintelligent (Gardner 2005:36).

The British scholar, Brian Wren, goes beyond theories of intellect and looks instead at the processes of learning. He describes education as the "act of knowing." Wren believes human beings have the capacity to know themselves. This self-awareness transforms the character of human knowledge. Wren sees the self as the subject (knower) and the world as the object (known). He believes that the object is how the subject perceives her/himself. The relationship between the subject and the object is dialectical, which put into plain words, is the art of investigating the truth of opinions. This means the subject stands outside of the object and deliberately contemplates upon it, questions it to get a better understanding of it, so as to bring change to it.

This Wren calls critical consciousness. Some people are deprived of this critical reflection because instead of being seen as co-subjects they are treated and seen as objects (Wren 1986:10).

Wren further explains that people are born into a world which is a cultural entity that consists of language, customs, politics and economics. Throughout an individual's lifetime, perceptions are built-up of the world and everything that is in it through listening, learning, and seeing. Getting a new awareness of something or the "act of knowing" as Wren refers to it, is something that comes about both unconsciously and consciously. Wren aptly explains how a learning ethos is developed among individuals and communities when he states:

> Knowing is an act performed by a human subject. It is something I do, not something that can ever be done to me or for me by someone else (1986:10).[114]

Even though educationists might vary in their understanding and emphasis of how they characterise theories of education, they agree on one common feature, namely, that learning is the undertaking through which knowledge is acquired or transferred. What appears clear however from the literature is a general difference in theory between those scholars from the Global North and those from the Global South. Most theories from the Global North around education portray an individualistic idea of learning, which is always about the individual, the learner as the subject and the most important in the process of learning. For African educationists, the theory of learning involves more than the 'I'. Learning is the 'act of knowing' as Wren names it, or self-discovery. The stark difference however from Wren, who is from the Global North and those from the Global South or more specifically from an African belief system is that learning happens in community with others, about ourselves as human beings, and the world around us.[115]

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[114] Wren's thought correlates well with Freire's ideas of education. Wren further explains that a revolutionary society needs to be clear about the meaning of the act of knowing as it demands of its subjects to be creator, re-creator and re-inventor (1986:10). Freire (1978:12) also believes that the role of curiosity is important in relation to the object to be known. This means that the learner uncovers for herself or himself the object of study again and again rather than a bureaucratic transference of knowledge.

[115] Examples of such African educators are Nyerere (1974); Koma (1976); Mbiti (1969) and Biko (1986).

Another important aspect about this process of learning in community is that opportunities of learning are created for the learner through which she or he would be able to know the self, know the society of which they are part, and make final choices about the direction she or he envisages life should take. Hoppers makes the same point when she writes about the significance of African voices in education. She believes that education for Africans in the twenty-first century should attempt to recover the ethical and humanistic principles that have been lost in the educational arena. As Hoppers can state:

> Knowledge and minds are treasures to be cultivated to improve the quality of life of both individuals and society (2000:6).

One of the key terms used by African educationists for this renaissance in education, is that of 'Africanism' (Teffo 2000:106). It retrieves the idea that learning is not done in isolation but affects the community in which the individual lives. The idea of 'in community with others' is central to traditional African life, which is about kinship and community. This notion is often absent from Western ideas of learning from the Global North. The belief of kinship and community binds everyone together in community. John Mbiti, in his (1969) book, *African Religions and Philosophy*, summarises the ethos of learning postulated by this study when he looks at African community life:

> In traditional life, the individual does not and cannot exist alone except corporately. He [sic] owes his existence to other people, including those of past generations and his contemporaries. He is simply part of the whole…*Only in terms of other people does the individual become conscious of his own being, his own duties, his privileges and responsibilities towards himself and other people*….Whatever happens to the individual happens to the whole group, and whatever happens to the whole group happens to the individual. The individual can only say: 'I am, because we are; and since we are, Therefore I am 91969:104) *[Italics Added]*.

Such perspectives are important for the emergence of an ethos of liberatory learning within Southern Africa. The conclusion drawn from the above concepts of learning is that the educator's notion of learning is often influenced by their socio-economic, cultural, and political backgrounds and beliefs. Wren's concept of learning which is

based on the subject 'I' is born out of his British context. This point also further highlights the line of reasoning established in this present study, that the currently held ethos of learning has been over-influenced by the inherited history of the context of learning in which the church operates and by extension, the WAs of the UCCSA. Even though his focus is on African culture and not on learning, Mbiti emphasis that he is African provides a concept of learning from such experience. As Mbiti confirms:

> Only in terms of other people does the individual become conscious of his *[sic]* own being his *[sic]* own duties, his *[sic]* privileges and responsibilities towards himself *[sic]* and other people (1969:104).

This for is what learning is about. Koma in accordance with Mbiti, admits that:

> [In] imparting skills and developing latent capacities, we cannot but also admit that in discharging its duty and facing its tasks the school cannot succeed without the help, assistance and cooperation of both the home and the community (1976:25).

For Koma any knowledge gained or transferred is not done in isolation but in community with others.

Having surveyed the concepts of education in the Global North and Global South, attention is now given to the educational heritage of women within the UCCSA, particularly the influence of the Western missionary education system and the system of education developed under Apartheid.

3. The Educational Heritage of Women

Thompson's theory on levels of oppression is in line with the African understanding of learning as described by Mbiti when he points out that:

> Whatever happens to the individual happens to the whole group, and whatever happens to the whole group happens to the individual (Mbiti 1969:104).

This statement is true with respect to the effect such educational approaches have had on the members of the WAs of the UCCSA, as well as the other Associations of the church.

3.1. The Missionary Model: The Arrival of the London Missionary Society to Southern Africa

Es'kia Mphahlele (1919-2008), the legendary South African educator, artist and activist, believed that when Apartheid education was introduced in South Africa the damage had already been done by three hundred years of Western colonial education. For Mphahlele, Western colonial education was not innocent; indeed, since the arrival of Europeans:

> …education had been dragged about by White rulers... reinterpreted to and turned upside-down to serve specific sectional politics….the establishing and manipulating of power of any kind (1988:vii).

Ngugi wa Thiong'o makes no distinction between missionary and colonial education. In fact, he does not even mention missionary education. Instead, he regards the education system that was introduced as a deliberate mechanism designed to colonise Africa. He says the decision taken in Berlin in 1884 to invade Africa was one which was brought about by the sword and the bullet. Immediately after the physical violence of the battlefield, Thiong'o declares, "the psychological violence of the classroom took effect" (1981: 9).

The education system promoted by Western missionaries is portrayed by Western theologians and educators throughout their historical reflections. Many of their essays mention the importance education played within the missionary activity of Southern Africa. In recalling that education was an important tool in the missionary work of the London Missionary Society (LMS), Constable can state:

> A large proportion of revenue of the church went into promoting and sustaining education in the Gamtoos valley (1999:27).

Constable goes on to state:

> For mission work to succeed it was necessary for children to read and write (1999:27)

It seems as if mission work could only survive alongside education.

The educator, Edward Berman, confirms Constable's point when he writes:

> Missionaries established schools because education was deemed indispensable to the main purpose of Christian denominations—spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ….The school was the inducement to lure Africans into missionary orbit (1975, xi).

One can conclude from the above statements that education was an important tool for missionaries to achieve their goal of evangelisation. It would be pure naïveté to consider Western missionary education without considering the economic, social and political pressures that came from several avenues. The ultimate purpose of Western missionaries to 'spread the Gospel' through education became obscured because of the internal and external pressures through which some wanted to lay claim to the economics, cultures, faith and land of the African people. Amongst these internal and external pressures one can include some of the missionaries themselves, their missionary institutions, colonial governments and officials, religious groups, as well as those Africans whom they came to 'inform.'[116] These influences had a strong bearing on the kind of education that was initiated by the Western missionaries. Whether intentionally or unintentionally, the engagements of Western missionaries with Africans was part of the same colonial system that brought them to Africa and caused them to impose their imperialistic and supposedly superior culture on the indigenous populations of the Southern Africa region.

The personal beliefs of the missionaries cannot be discounted here. The background, interests, beliefs, and male gender of the missionary, had a determinate effect on the kind of education that was offered. Some came as teachers, agriculturists, medical

[116] As with Mphahlele (1988) and Thiong'o (1981), Musa Dube (2000) also firmly believes that one cannot separate the work of Western missionaries from the desire to colonise. Dube names David Livingstone as an example of how integrated the imperial system operated. Livingstone served in various capacities as missionary, doctor, explorer, and others, and therefore championed colonial domination from all angles.

personnel or artisans of all kinds. It was because of these skills and backgrounds that each missionary station established different styles of educational initiatives.

3.2. Educational Enterprises Introduced by the Western Missionaries

Both adults and children received education through the ventures introduced by the missionaries. In spite of the rapid increase of more and more schools, this kind of education was not considered as necessary for the local population by the many of the colonialists. They advanced a number of reasons for this, including the belief that the indigenous population did not have the mental capacity to cope with scholarly education. Charles Darwin's book *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*, published in 1859, as well as the 'scientific studies' pursued were sources that fuelled the theory that Africans were inferior beings. Berman further explains that these beliefs were so widespread that in 1914 the Chairman of the Continuation Committee of the World Missionary Conference was to remark that:

> Industrial education seems to have a special application to the education of the child race, whose 'mental digestion' is weak and who are more successful in getting knowledge than in using it (1940:10).

In spite of these beliefs there was an overwhelming request for education by the local population. When the LMS could not afford to build schools, open air schools were created, the communities also made contributions to build schools themselves. Mgadla (1989:24) tells us that for the Bangwato in Botswana, the Western education that was brought became an important tool for 'dealing' with the Europeans with whom they had to live.

These educational initiatives led to the establishment of various undertakings. Day schools for children became common features, which were mostly started by the wives of missionaries. These day schools also led to the need to train school teachers (Constable 1999:28; Mzilethi 1999:66**)**.

As a result, places of learning were established across Southern Africa as far as the then Bechuanaland and Rhodesia. As Mgadla has noted:

> Between 1876 and 1889 the growth of education gained momentum in Shoshong. Seven rudimentary elementary schools existed in the village…These schools spread throughout the villages (1989:20).

Other educational initiatives also emerged. Local assistants to the missionaries were initially educated to become evangelists, and in some cases were sent for ministerial training. As a result, ministerial or theological training became an important addition to the type of education brought by the missionaries (Pudule 1999:72; Makuzeni 1999:35; Butler 1999:54). This was of great consequence for the missionaries since local people served as a means of getting the Christian message to the community. They understood the local languages and were accepted more readily. This is how the LMS Bursary fund came into being. For the local people who were considered for these roles this was important too, because they then shared certain privileges with the elite. The missionaries always tried to provide material goods for those who had been trained and with whom they worked. They also received a wage. Hence many Batswana could not afford the benefit that pastors and teachers had of wagons, groceries and clothing; to do so, meant the acquiring of a newly attained social status (Mgadla 19889:16).

The missionaries also introduced crafts training by the setting up of vocational and industrial educational institutions, such as masonry, carpentry and leatherwork.[117] Agriculture was another form of skill transfer, for example Aloes were cultivated and prepared for export, while vegetable gardens and fruit trees were planted at mission stations such as in Kuruman (Constable 1999:24-25).

Another intention on the part of the Western missionaries was that of their own commercial interests. Indeed, they had on hand a large supply of semi-literate and semi-skilled workers. The reason advanced for these business ventures were that it was advantageous for Africans since they were paid for the work and would not have otherwise received such financial rewards. Vocational training was also regarded as

[117] Tiger Kloof is a site where such crafts were offered *cf.* Pudule (1999:72).

the answer for the so-called 'lethargy and wickedness' that was thought to be prevalent among the African people. Skills training schools were already experimented with among the slaves by the Protestant Missionary Society in North America. Berman names David Livingstone as the advocate of vocational education since he made a famous missionary address in 1857 at Cambridge University which "set in motion events sparking an era of mission expansion which did not end until the nations of Western Europe effectively spread their colonial nets (Berman 1975:12). Vocational training also served as a way by which the missionaries, who were often low on funds, were able to sustain themselves. Foodstuffs were produced and artisan skills were used for local use such as vegetable gardens (Constable 1999:24-25).

The development of literature was another important tool used by missionaries to broaden the scope of education.[118] Robert Moffat's translation of the New Testament into Setswana became the book of faith for many Batswana. It was in Kuruman that Setswana was developed and written down, and in 1857 the entire Bible was translated and printed (Pudule 1999:69).

The practice of some professions alongside other vocations offered by the missionaries also had an impact on the educational processes of many locals.[119]

It appears that education was used for different ends and purposes. There was education through which people received specialised skills. However, there was also education which focussed specifically on spiritual nurture or moral education that was offered alongside that which would have taken place during church activities. The aims of the moral education which members were taught through preaching, their interaction with missionaries and regular classes, as directed by the missionary leadership was to instil 'Spiritual responsibility' in individuals and groups. One such example was the 'spiritual' life of the children and youth that was improved through Sunday School education which tended to be an extra-mural activity of the day school

[118] The translation of the Bible in different languages, spelling books for schools, hymn books are all examples of the literature that developed. *Cf.* Gilley (1999:97); Constable (1999:24); Makuzeni (1999: 35).
[119] Examples of these other vocations include, medical training, nursing and midwifery, *cf.* Jones (1999:55).

(Briggs and Wing 1970: 296). There were also Catechumen classes. Constable tells us that in Bethelsdorp:

> Children were exposed to training in Christian values and other basic religious principles. These contributed to the development of moral values of the communities they served. Day school teachers inevitably took charge of Sunday Schools and became involved in the life of the church (1999:27).

Adults as well were taught 'Christian responsibility' in similar ways to the children. The women's groups also played an important role as set down by the missionaries. The Women's Christian Temperance Union identified alcohol as a problem among the 'natives' and a hindrance to the establishment and development of the Christian mission, hence they fought against alcohol use and abuse by the local people. The women also saw 'charitable contributions' as an activity which they needed to continue. Large sums of money were raised for various internal and external uses (Briggs and Wing 1970: 294).

3.3. Educational Approaches Employed by the Western Missionaries

Not all missionaries had the same approach and concern for the people whom they came to 'save' and therefore it would be wrong to class all of them as if they were a homogenous group. However, one commonality held by all missionaries of that time was the call to evangelise the heathen, this being the primary reason for them coming to Africa. An example of the fervour expressed by missionaries was an incident which took place in 1904 when a meeting was called in Serowe to ask the Imperial government to take over education in their territory. A missionary of the time felt that this was the right thing to do so that the "brethren in the country would be free to devote their attention to the work for which they were primarily sent out" (Mgadla 1989:37). This belief was the expectation of the LMS Head Office, in spite of whether the missionaries were professionals, or gifted in teaching, medicine or any other proficiency. Another reason for this line of thinking might have been that the LMS did not have the funds to sustain further development of education or keep their erstwhile established schools in operation and felt that the government needed to take responsibility (Mgadla 1989:37). Whatever the reason, to release education from the

hands of the missionaries other professions and skills were to be regarded as less important to the evangelistic task. Dr. David Livingstone (1813-1873) is a typical example of the missionary concern for healthcare. Indeed, he seems to have spent more time addressing people's health issues than in the preaching of the Christian gospel.[120]

Since evangelistic work was so interlinked with the colonization of African people, their matters of commerce and land ownership gave rise to practices of exploitation, slavery and competition for ownership by colonialists. The evangelical task of the missionaries became very difficult or almost indistinguishable from the rest. This made the missionary task very complex. The missionaries were always regarded as the instruments of the colonial government and were therefore seen by the indigenous population as a vehicle towards obtaining material possessions, armaments and education. Josiah Tlou, a beneficiary of missionary education, tells the story of his family's association with missionaries in which his father was not very interested in the church except for the education it provided (Tlou 1975:187).

For this reason, the missionaries always had to devise ways to gain the confidence of the local people whom they came to evangelise to assist them in achieving their purpose. An illustration of this is with the LMS strategies which were used to infiltrate the way of life of the local people in Bechuanaland which was quite beneficial for the missionaries. They established a partnership between themselves and local leaders.[121] For example, Livingstone worked closely with the local evangelists Thomas Mebalwe and Paul Molefane in establishing the first church among the Bakwena. He also had a close friendship with Sechele, chief of the Bakwena. Jones (1999:48-49) points to the structure of Districts that was adopted by the LMS in their work with the local people. Each district had a superintendent missionary and a staff of associate missionaries and evangelists. These were working with the deaconate of each congregation. Accounts are also told of how the missionaries in some cases first provided education to the family of the *dikgosi* in an

[120] Serara Selelo-Kupe (1993:8) provides correspondence between Livingstone and the Directors of LMS on his role as missionary which they thought brought a conflict of interest with his medical profession.

[121] Jones, an LMS missionary relates how Moffat first sought the Chief's attention in Botswana as the Chief was head of the communal structure (1999:48-49)

attempt to get access to and 'convert' the entire clan. According to Mgadla (1989:12), Price and Mackenzie lured the people of Kgosi Sekgoma by offering education to his two sons with the hope that others might follow.

3.4. The Philosophy that Guided the Western Missionaries

The relations of the missionaries with the local people revealed the attitude and approaches upheld in their teachings. One could almost say that the attitude of the missionaries to the locals was indicative of their own perceptions they upheld about the people they came to evangelise as whether they saw themselves on an equal footing with or superior to the local people. Mzilethi holds the view that the missionaries were condescending in their behaviour towards the local people. He recalls that one of the weaknesses of the LMS in Zimbabwe was that missionaries maintained a rather paternalistic approach to the emerging church. It did not foster a spirit of self-reliance and responsibility, and failed to teach people not to be dependent upon expatriate staff and financial resources. Mzilethi feels that there was an element of racial and colonial superior mentality in their approach. He also states that there was very little, if any participation of the local church in the initiating, planning and decision-making processes (Mzilethi 1999:67).[122]

While these attitudes of the missionaries cannot be seen to be inclusive of them all, they nevertheless need to be understood in relation to their close allegiance with their home governments and the belief in the 'inferiority of the African'. This however does not mean that all missionaries necessarily upheld these beliefs in their work with local people. A case in point is that of Theodorus van der Kemp and John Philip who were firm believers in fighting for the rights of the slaves and the local people. Philip was successful in his struggle against slavery, with the passing of Ordinance 50 in 1929**.** He was also instrumental in ensuring that the rights and the liberties of the San and the Khoi were recognised and protected by law (Johnson 1999:21). Van der Kemp on the other hand had to run away for allowing the indigenous people to worship with White people (Constabble 1999:24). Those missionaries who did have the heart to fight against injustice and defend human rights seem to have done so on

[122] Johnson (1999:22) shares the same view. Butler (1999:44) also too refers to Robert Moffat's dominance and who became known as the 'Apostle of Bechuanaland'.

behalf of the people, rather than with the people. It was only indirectly that the local people were made aware of there supposed inferiority, yet they were not empowered to fight against the systems that regarded them as such.

Many writers pay tribute to the missionaries for the fact that it was as a result of the exposure that they offered to indigenous people in the fields of teaching, medicine, ministry and other professions that local people managed to attain such qualifications themselves. His Excellency Quett Masire, a past President of Botswana and alumni of Tiger Kloof in a paper to the 2009 Assembly of the UCCSA reminded and expressed his gratitude for the missionary education that he received.[123] This of course was not a view that was held by all, since there were opportunities for only a very few local people to get academic training. At the same time, others criticize this. They believe that even though this was so, the original idea was not for locals to receive this kind of education.[124]

This is the ambivalent picture that emerges of the missionaries. At times, some were very considerate and tactful people, while at other times, they were very paternalistic in their dealings with people. One does not generally get the idea that in their assisting people to accept the Christian faith and increase their knowledge of God, the missionaries used approaches, which were participatory. This again is evident of the British replica of education[125] that they came to establish which was at the time modelled on the Joseph Lancaster's monitorial system.

3.5. The Theology behind the Education Provided by Western Missionaries

The ultimate aim of this study is to evaluate the learning ethos that currently guides the programmes and beliefs in the church and hence the WAs of the UCCSA. In order to correctly evaluate the impact that the missionaries' had on the local population it is

[123] Masire, UCCSA Assembly, 2009.
[124] See Serara Selelo-Kupe (1993:9) who shares this view in the nursing profession. Hambira (1999:221) also shares this same view with regard to education and the missionaries.
[125] Van der Zee explains that under the reviews of education in Britain there were those that were named the de-schoolers. They held the view that "little by little, a colossal learning factory has been created from which everything resembling education in the original meaning of the word has disappeared. Our schools have become instruments of repression: they reinforce social inequality, keep people dependent, stub out initiative and creativity, and impede action" (1996:164).
Ludlow (1999:112-113) explains how this educational system functioned at the time.

important to be familiar with their theological beliefs. The philosophy which undergirded the types of education and approaches employed by the missionaries has led to a number of questions about how the missionaries interpreted the Bible, or understood the Christ that they brought to Africa, and the theology that drove them.

The late Mphahlele**,** a South African Educator, had the following view of the ideology that underpinned the missionary approach to education. He states:

> Missionary schooling with its emphasis on individual salvation, ambitions, expectations, achievement and gratification deriving from biblical authority, tended to twist the Graeco-Judaic morality about education for its own ends (1988:vii).

Theologians also give diverse understandings of how the missionaries' educational ethos was informed by their understanding of Christ and the Bible. Musa Dube therefore questions the theology of the missionaries and the deliberate role they played in the colonisation of Africa:

> Christian Missionaries, scientists and explorers, with their followers, property and collections, shall likewise be objects of especial protections (2000:4).

This was one of the decisions taken by the Berlin conference of 1884 where the Europeans met to discuss strategies around colonizing Africa. The implication for Dube is that the phrase "especial protections" meant that there was no conflict between their allegiance to the British Crown, their culture and the English language on the one side, and their allegiance to Christ as missionaries and their interpretation of the biblical text on the other. Dube uses Josiah Strong, a Congregationalist Missionary to support her argument.[126]

Another such example for Dube is David Livingstone who openly defended the colonisation of Africa. He is quoted to have said:

[126] See "Josiah Strong on the Anglo-Saxon Destiny, 1885's comments," in *The Imperialism Reader*, 122-123 (ed.) Louise L. Snyder.

> I beg to direct your attention to Africa… I go back to try to make an open path for commerce and Christianity; to carry out the work which I have begun (Dube 2000:6).

The African feminist theologian Teresa Hinga believes the missionaries' interpretation of the image of Christ was that of:

> Christ the conqueror, Jesus was the warrior king, in whose name and banner (the cross) new territories, both physical and spiritual, would be fought for, annexed and subjugated (1994:263).

Hinga thinks that an Imperial Christianity had an Imperial Christ to match. One can therefore presume that this imperialism resulted in an imperial educational system and approach. Hinga further states that this imperial approach implied that in their battle for Africa on behalf of Christ, the missionaries needed to save Africans from everything that they perceived as evil or barbarian. By so doing, they were upholding the New Testament passage, which says "proclaim liberty to the captives.' Their zeal for the abolition of the slave trade, the freeing of captured slaves, and their rehabilitation are further examples in which Hinga demonstrates their perception of Christ who both conquers and liberates (Hinga 1994:264-265).[127]

Other examples are used by theologians such as the Ghanaian Kwesi Abotsia Dickson (1929-2005) to confirm this imposing attitude, which led to the theological beliefs of the missionaries at the time. He calls this an exclusivist perspective. Dickson does not believe that this theory necessarily stems from the missionaries, but that it has been practiced throughout the Christian era. He mentions the long line of influences stemming first from the roots of the Hebrew Bible, then the New Testament, through to the Protestant Reformation doctrines to the Western Christian Missions (Dickson 1991:5).[128] According to Dickson (1991:69), they

[127] Hinga argues that these beliefs manifested themselves in local initiatives began by the missionaries.
[128] Dickson (1991:68-69) also relates how in the Gentile missions this exclusivist notion was practiced, through to the doctrines of the Reformation and later by in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by the missionaries.

believed that non-Western inquirers would have to leave their cultures behind in order to appreciate the Christian faith.[129]

In summary, throughout the reading on the work of the missionaries there seems a dominant picture that reflects superiority. Missionaries are the ones that possess superiority of culture, civilisation, knowledge and education. The missionaries used an educational approach which is sometimes referred to as the "teacher-tell approach," or the "banking approach" according to Freire (1996:54). It is content-centred and very authoritative. The instructor knows the facts and s/he is the one that passes on the acquired knowledge. The learning ends when all the facts have been transmitted. Akinpelu (1981:196) describes this approach as a one-sided activity in which the instructor is active and the learner is passive. It expresses the superiority of the one party over the other party.

4. The Apartheid Educational System in South Africa

4.1. A Historical Overview

Apartheid education followed closely on the heels of missionary education which then resulted in a double impact on the lives of women. Mphahlele's stance on the notion of Apartheid education is well-documented in his foreword to his (1988) book of conference papers, *Education for Affirmation*, in which he is very graphic and extremely articulate in defining education from his experiences from within the South African context. In his reference to the South African Apartheid Educational system, he names it as "a creature that can be prostituted" (1988:vii). In other words, education can be abused for whatever purpose suits the person that is in control. A perfect example of this is the philosophy of Dr. H. F. Verwoerd, one of the architects of Apartheid who said:

> When I have control of native education, I will reform it so that the natives will be taught from childhood to realise that equality with Europeans is not for them (Sebidi 1988:51).

[129] Interesting reflections of this superior, exclusivist nature of the missionaries with locals are also recorded by Gerald West amongst the BaTlhaping and particularly their use of the Bible as a superior book (2004:251-281).

Ndugu Ssali, a historian who has investigated the history of the film industry in South Africa, locates the beginnings of Apartheid to the arrival of the Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie (VOC) in 1652 at the Cape of Good Hope to set up a way-station for the VOC spice trade route between the Netherlands and the East Indies. Established by Jan Van Riebeeck, this marked the beginnings of White hegemony over Southern Africa (Alverson 1978:16). Piet Meiring (2004:119) explains that the Nederduits Gereformeerde Kerk (NGK) in South Africa came into being about the same time as the VOC who managed the affairs of the Dutch settlers at the time. Gestetner relates how the VOC was interested in unified colonial ventures and yet at the same time seemed threatened by various missionary bodies at the frontier that had differing views. The Roman Catholic Church, for example, was regarded as being "Antichristian, Papist and Babylon" by Rev. Johannes Appeldorn of Stellenbosch (Gerstner 1997:21).

With the arrival of the LMS missionaries to the Cape, relations soon soured between the British and the Dutch as the former took over the colony. In 1795, and again in 1806, the British ousted the Dutch at the Cape. They then took formal charge over the Cape in 1914. The Dutch took on a nomadic lifestyle and called themselves 'Voortrekkers' in their search to occupy new farmland.

This new line of attack was taken on in 1836 -1838 when the Boers (another name for the Dutch colonists), embarked on what they called the 'Great Trek' (Ssali 1983:105). Through this venture, they journeyed from region to region to take control of the territories of the indigenous peoples. These travels ruined their relations with the indigenous peoples and resulted in violent clashes since the African tribal lands were in jeopardy (Ssali 1983:105).[130]

These sporadic attacks carried out by the Dutch colonists were known as the *Difaqane* (Hemham and Poewe 1997:121). Meiring (2004:119) does not differ with the historical background given by Ssali but correlates and puts emphasis on the NGK as the instrument of implementation of the ideology of "taking control over" which ultimately developed in the idea of Apartheid. The NGK became a pillar for the Dutch

[130] Ssali (1983:105) relates several events of how the Dutch colonists during the Great Trek engaged in feuds and bloody battles with local groups.

colonists. It remained the church that kept the Dutch farmers and colonists together. It was a place that safeguarded their culture and their spirituality.

Jonathan N. Gerstner links the origins of the history of the NGK in South Africa to the work of the Gereformeerde Kerk in the Netherlands. The VOC, together with the Amsterdam Classis or Regional Assembly of the Gereformeerde Kerk in the Netherlands was responsible for the flow of church workers to Southern Africa (Gerstner 1997:16). Davenport also acknowledges the existence of this relationship. Having been the dominant church in the Colony, the NGK accepted financial assistance for clerical salaries and capital expenditure and surrendered power to the Colonial government over the regulations of public worship. The NGK in turn had to open up their meeting of elders to a government official who was the political commissioner. The political commissioner controlled the funds of the NGK (Davenport 1997:51).

The NGK depended on the Gereformeerde Kerk in the Netherlands for guidance for several reasons. They had adopted a similar structure and doctrines which were endorsed by the Gereformeerde Kerk. The only difference between the two was that the VOC who was the colonial government, had more control over the NGK. This was not the case with the Gereformeerde Kerk in the Netherlands (Gerstner 1997:20).

The NGK in South Africa saw themselves as part of the Protestant Reformation movement just like the Gereformeerde Kerk in the Netherlands and therefore embraced doctrines that were in line with this school of thought.[131] Johann Kinghorn (1997:136) , in recounting the background of the NGK show how even though it split into several groups because of cultural and other differences, they had two things in common: They believed and set themselves apart from other churches because of their particular historical roots in the Continental European traditions of Protestant theology and piety, particularly Dutch German Calvinism; they also located their own

[131] These doctrinal beliefs around what it means to be Reformed have been brought into question by various scholars in South Africa. This concern was born out of the NGK history and beliefs. Dirkie Smit has researched the ambiguity of these Reformed beliefs, where he makes reference to several others who have struggled with the understanding of what it means to be Reformed in South Africa particularly with the NGK and its political ideology which was supposedly based on being Reformed. See also, Coetzen (2002); Botman (2001); Boesak and Fourie (1988).

histories in the history of the Afrikaners. As with other movements, doctrines, particularly those linked to historical events, are open to several interpretations. The leaders in the NGK in South Africa were often faced with various ideologies.[132] The church did however often decide to embrace certain doctrines and practices born out of the creeds and decisions that were taken at the various decisive Conferences in the life of the Church in Europe.[133]

4.2. Apartheid Theology

One of the beliefs adopted by the NGK was the principle that those who govern were God ordained. Unlike in the Netherlands in which the church managed its own affairs, the Governor in the Cape had direct control over church affairs. Simon van der Stel (1639-1712), when he handed over the position of Governorship of the Cape Colony in 1699 to his son, Willem Adriaan van der Stel (1664-1733), the latter is recorded to have said that he summoned God's grace "for the directing of church and politics to the benefit of the Company's profit and interest here which shall extend to the glorifying of the all holy name of God" (Gerstner 1997:20). The VOC on the other hand, held an unreserved opinion that they were set aside by God to take charge of the colony and the church.

Another Reformed doctrine was the Sovereignty of God. This, together with the above understanding that those who rule were ordained by God, reinforced the belief that they were governing in a way that was fitting for themselves and the people around them. This belief also gave them the assurance that they would face everything, all uncertainties in the new colony with their God (Gerstner 1997:17). Villa-Vicencio explains that the traditional self-perception of the Afrikaner people was based on a deeply religious, God-fearing, Christian and Calvinist understanding. Villa-Vicencio (1988:138) calls them a nation who was obsessed with Puritan beliefs that they were instruments in the hands of the divine Architect. One can therefore presume that the Dutch colonist attitude toward others, including frontier wars,

[132] One of these obvious differences came about when the Dutch settlers went on their Great Trek around 1836. The NGK did not support this move. This, as explained by Charles Villa-Vicencio (1988:22), resulted in the church dividing into three: the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk, Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk and the ultra-Calvinist Gereformeerde Kerk.

[133] Gerstner (1997:17) gives information of the various doctrinal gatherings that the NGK embraced.

confrontation with other missionary bodies and the ill-treatment of the indigenous people were done under what they believed was God's guidance. With the establishment of the South African Republic in 1961, H. F. Verwoerd is recorded to have said:

> Perhaps it was intended that we should be planted here at the southern point within the crisis area so that from this resistance might emanate the victory whereby all that has been built up since the days of Christ may be maintained for the good of mankind. May you have strength, people of South Africa, to serve the purpose for which you have been planted here (Villa-Vicencio 1988:140).

The NGK also firmly upheld a view that recognised a Covenant Theology. Covenant Theology was interpreted by the Dutch colonists as their enjoying (and on occasion all Europeans), a special covenantal relationship with God. The relationship they had with God was believed to have created a connection between the Israelites of the Old Testament and the Dutch colonists in South Africa. Another form through which this Covenant relationship was upheld was in the Old Testament texts which explained the reception of children of believers through circumcision. The Dutch colonists continued this relationship with the New Testament's practice of infant baptism. Yet another example of this exclusive covenant relationship was when Rev. Petrus van der Spuy is quoted to have read from the Book of Psalms at the centenary of the founding of the colony. He was reported to have said, "How blessed is the people whose God is the Lord." Gerstner (1997:19) says that van der Spuy in his reading of this Psalm understood the *people* in the Psalm to be referring to the VOC and the settlers.[134]

Yet another idea around Covenant Theology was that of being 'internally holy'. This referred to children who were said to be redeemed from birth because they were born into a family of believers. This belief was incorporated in a prayer of the baptism liturgy in which the Dutch colonists gave thanks to God "for forgiving us and our children all our sins" (Gerstner 1997:19). The concept of being 'internally holy' or already redeemed was also regarded as synonymous with European civilisation. This

[134] Villa-Vicencio (1988:140-141) explains how Covenant Theology-inspired Afrikaner theological patriotism was confirmed in reports commissioned by the Apartheid Government on the churches role in the 1980s..

'internally holy' doctrine brought about an opinion of spiritual superiority. This feeling of superiority was one of the many forms of racist superiority that were already held by the European nations.

This separatist view of the Dutch colonists which they named Covenant Theology was later adopted by the Afrikaner Government in order to preserve what they believed was the 'purity of the White nation.' Xolile Keteyi marks this as one of the main reasons for the racial divisions that were set in place by the Apartheid Regime. Those who were not White were regarded as unclean. Purity meant a White race with a White culture and a White faith. This concept of 'purity' is poignantly captured by the then Minister of Interior when he stated:

> The paramouncy of the White man and of Western civilization in South Africa must be ensured in the interests of the material, cultural and spiritual development of all races (Keteyi 1998:17).

This false sense of purity can also be seen as equivalent to the exclusivist perspective that we discussed earlier with regard to Western missionary education. This was a perspective that held the view that the White culture, faith and people are superior to any other culture, people or faith. The idea of purity of the White race meant that anything other than White was seen as being uncivilised and non-Christian.

Christianity was seen as the birthright of all Europeans. Another view was the Sacrament of Baptism in the NGK, which was adopted from the seventeenth century Reformed European view of the 'thousand generation Covenant.' This Covenant allowed those who had descendants who were believers over the past thousand generations within their lineage to become part of the Covenant. They could be brought for baptism. All Europeans were automatically accepted. The NGK did not accept the Jews, Muslims and those whom they called the 'heathens,' referring to indigenous people (Gerstner 1997: 25). Over time, perspectives changed as different church ministers came on board. Some of the new ministers accepted the baptism of slaves and the Khoikhoi, especially those who worked in the households of the 'Christians.' There was however a clear opposition to sharing the Communion Table. A practice of separation was maintained when it came to sitting at the same

Communion Table with these new Christians. For some scholars, this unofficially marked the beginning of Apartheid ideology in church (Gerstner 1997:25)

Meiring also provides a view of the beginnings of Apartheid ideology. He records a formal decision which was taken in the NGK Synod in 1857. Meiring thinks that Apartheid arrangements such as these were created long before the policies that came into existence in 1948. The members defended this as a way of easing the practical and pastoral organisation of the church. The resolution read:

> It is indeed desirable and biblically correct that our members from the ranks of the heathen should, wherever possible, be incorporated in existing congregations; but where this measure as a result of the weakness of some members would hamper the promotion of the cause of Christ, congregations built from the ranks of heathens, or still to be built from these ranks, may enjoy its Christian privileges in a separate building or establishment (Meiring 2004:119).

They believed that their values were biblically based because they depended much on their own version of the Bible which was a State Bible (Gerstetner 1997:22).

4.3. Apartheid Ideology and Practice

The theories of Apartheid Theology which were formulated at Synod Conferences and in Creeds and Liturgies, became real in the lives of ordinary South Africans. Amanda Gouws admits to the NGK as a body that wielded tremendous power in the minds of people.[135] What seems apparent was that the Dutch colonists were driven by a mentality of superiority. This superiority fuelled an urge to conquer and take control. Josiah Tlou recalls an incident of how this manifested itself in his own life as a student of the system. During his study in Zimbabwe in 1955, the Lutheran Church had an agreement with the NGK in which it was possible for some Lutheran students to attend a Dutch language Teacher Training Institution. Tlou recalls an incident in which he and a friend infringed against the segregational rules of the NGK by sitting on the 'wrong' side of the church. On being told that they were Lutheran students on

[135] Amanda Gouws' contributions (2000:69) are made in a report by Stephen Martin compiled and edited reports with inputs from Juan Garces, Gillian Walters, Yusif Mataar, Sam Silungwe and Eliza Getman; Religion , Liberation and Transformation through the South African Experience, (April 2000).

an exchange programme, the Chairman of the NGK immediately excused them and asked them not to do the same thing again (Tlou 1975:194). It appears to have been easier for the Dutch to fight against the indigenous people than with other colonialists or missionary bodies since they often formed allegiances with these bodies, as Tlou explains.

Another example of these close ties with other colonial bodies is the case of Johannes van der Kemp who was of Dutch origin but served a British Missionary Society. These same ties were not forged with the local people. The Dutch felt no affinity to them and therefore took control of and even spilled blood to achieve their aim without considering the pain and hurt that was caused in the process.

Denemark and Lehman are of the opinion that Apartheid came into being due to the political and economic climate that existed at the time. The political and economic prospects caused a lot of competition amongst several colonial bodies that arrived in Southern Africa:

> The need for non-White labour in the fields, the mines and the factories underpins the South African social structure and the vast system of racial separation known as Apartheid (Denemark and Lehman 1983:6).

Apartheid is therefore regarded by (Denemark and Lehman not as the cause but rather the effect of this prevailing competition. The Dutch colonists hungered for control over everything and used ever means to achieve it.

The purposeful conviction to conquer and suppress Black people took root throughout Southern Africa. The expression “to make them feel and know that they are not equal to Whites” which was designed by Verwoerd and his colleagues became known throughout South African society. Every Black and White person was taught from early childhood that they were not equal. Livingstone Ngwewu (1998:248) names this process which was devised to dehumanise Blacks as an attack. He describes the attack that was launched as psychological and physical in nature.

Various tools were used to make these educational processes an actuality in the psyche of the people. Ngwewu's analysis of 'Apartheid and Blacks' clearly explains the processes that were used to bring about this oppressive mindset in the people of Southern Africa.[136] Here we will focus on Ngwewu's explorations of the psychological impact that Apartheid has had on Black South Africans. He explains that Blacks were made to feel inferior to Whites. One of the methods through which this was implemented was the erasing and twisting of Black people's history (Ngwewu 1998:249). White history, particularly Dutch and British history was told, published and taught. The researcher's own personal recollection of history at school was about the arrival of Jan van Riebeeck, a Dutch Settler to the Cape. One also recognises this in the names of towns and streets throughout South Africa. They are evidence of how entrenched 'White' history became.

The history of the Black peoples of South Africa were also clouded by the racial divisions which were planned with the political classifications of 'Indian', 'Bantu' and 'Coloured' to bring about resentment and further division among Black people. This caused great confusion since these divisions were mostly brought about through forced removals. Families were divided and removed from their ancestral lands and birthright memories.[137]

Another mental attack as per Ngwewu's reflection is the way in which Black people were disowned of their human rights (1998:249). South Africans were not only separated but we were drilled into believing that we were unequal: unequal in the sight of God, unequal in ability and intelligence, and unequal in authority. All White people were seen as subjects and Black people as objects. Blacks for this reason

[136] I am using Ngwewu's work here because I find value in some of his writings. I have to acknowledge however that I do think Ngwewu has a very odd way of exploring issues of reconciliation, justice and peace work in South Africa, which was his reason for writing. He does not seem to have been liberated from the psychological oppression of Apartheid himself. He has used the very same Apartheid racial classifications and even named them as such. He has made these neat boxes in which he has classified people racially, but also conspicuously excluded some people. Obvious to me were those people who hail from Asian descent. It is clear that he does not regard all who are not White as Black. I also find his conclusions in which he makes huge generalisations of groups of people as further proof of his own racial captivity and therefore doubt whether he is the right person to consider issues of reconciliation and peace.

[137] The present researcher's own ancestry as a Black person whose roots are of mixed ethnic lineage is almost impossible to trace since those who came from this background, have almost always had their history totally erased or confused.

aspired to be like Whites. Stories abound of how when the Group Areas Act was implemented, some people moved from one racial group up the mythical hierarchical ladder to another in order to be accepted within what they hoped was a 'superior' 'population group' with better opportunities than their own.[138] The psychological effect had a huge impact on the behaviour of all people. It affected one's opinion of another racial group; the stereotypes adopted, generalisations of people, how one related to people because of their cultural group; either in great awe and with much respect or with less or no respect and sometimes fear based on how people have been labelled. This mental subjugation was so deeply ingrained that people lost their own humanity in the process.

Biko regarded psychological oppression as the root cause of all oppression in the system of Apartheid. He gauges the mental damage that has been done to Black people thus:

> All in all the Black man has become a shell, a shadow of man, completely defeated, drowning in his own misery, a slave, an ox, bearing the yoke of oppression with sheepish timidity (1986:29).

What made the psychological domination harsher was the physical suppression that was perpetrated alongside it. This was exercised economically, socially, politically and legally. As with Denemark and Lehman, Neville Alexander believes that the beginnings of Apartheid can be linked to the urge to amass wealth. The capitalist system was built on Black cheap labour. Denemark and Lehman explain how "attempts at the creation of a modern industrial economy co-exist with a mode of labour appropriation which resembles slavery more fully than any sort of 'free market'" (1983:19). This economic separation was the beginning of physical and psychological oppression of poor, unemployed and mostly semi-schooled or illiterate Blacks against the advantaged, schooled, well-off or rich Whites.

[138] A strong personal childhood reminder of this mental imprisonment to lighter colour was how those family members who had a lighter skin tone, with straight long hair were always marvelled at as the beauties in the family. The closest many young girls could get to this image was having their hair straightened or in having a little White doll to play with its hair. This left deep scars in which people disowned their own being, their family names and even their families to become like others.

The outcome of this racist capitalist system was the creation of what are called informal settlements or poor quality housing, below par health and education for Blacks. Divisions were created among Blacks so as to abate the resistance. The Apartheid system was strengthened with the implementation of various laws. The Additional divisions came about through the creation of 'homelands' or 'Bantustans' through which 'homeland leaders' were used as pawns of the Apartheid Government and benefited materially from the system.

Further division of the system that created disagreement among Black people were those who were seen as the 'privileged ones.' They became enemies of their own people since they were seen as part of the Apartheid schema. Among these were police officers, school teachers and church ministers.[139]

Clear boundaries were set socially between Blacks and Whites. All amenities were separated along racial lines. Facilities were divided with posters reading: 'Whites' and 'Non-Whites'. Then there were forced removals often to the outskirts of towns. This was one of the physical ways among several methods through which mental and physical domination was imposed. Laws were put in place, violence and military force was used, banning orders were enforced to make this Apartheid viewpoint a reality. Amongst these was the Suppression of the Communism Act of 1950 in which the South Africa Communist Party (SACP) was dissolved and the passbook system and influx control systems were introduced which controlled the movement of people (Denemark and Lehman 1983:7). Anything that threatened the absolute control of the Apartheid Government was contested by imprisonments, torture and exile.

Besides the designers of Apartheid such as Verwoerd, Malan or even the NGK, and the discriminatory laws enacted at the time, a Government circular published in 1967 explained the separation philosophy that was held by the Afrikaners:

> It is accepted Government policy that the Bantus are only temporarily resident in the European areas of the Republic, for as long as they offer their labour there. As soon as they become, for some reason or another, no longer fit for work or superfluous in the labour market,

[139] Alexander (1988:22) relates a case of how school principles were viewed in the 1980s.

> they are expected to return to their country of origin or the territory of their national unit where they fit in ethnically if they were not born or bred in the homeland (Harsch 1980:77).

In spite of the firm psychological and physical control that was exercised against the Black people, strong resistance movements gained momentum. These were in the form of the African National Congress (ANC), the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) and the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM). Even though these movements had the same aim in mind, namely, to resist the Apartheid control, they had different beliefs of how to achieve these aims. Their struggle gave rise to some significant protest events as well as the Rivionia trial between 1963-1964 in which the leaders of the ANC were tried and convicted and the anti-pass laws demonstrations of the PAC that gave rise to the Sharpeville bloodbath of people in 1960 (Denemark and Lehman 1983:14).

4.4. Apartheid Education

Among all the service areas such as labour and health there was a Government Act adopted that directed education policy. The educational system was just another mental mechanism which was used among others to enforce the ideology of separation. In 1953, the Bantu Education Act was adopted. Schooling became controlled by curricula that favoured those who were in control, their dominance and values. These values are well spelt out by a statement made by Verwoerd when he declared that:

> Education must train and teach people in accordance with their opportunities in life, according to the sphere in which they live… Education should have its roots entirely in the Native areas and in the Native environment and Native Community…The Bantu must be guided to serve his own community in all respects. There is no place for him in the European community above the level of certain forms of labour (cited in Karis and Carter 1988:95).

There were a number of commonalities between the education provided by the Western missionaries and that instituted by the Apartheid Government. In fact one tends to believe that in some way there was a continuation of some aspects of education when it passed hands from the Missionaries to the 1948 National Party. It

can be argued that the already created educational structure which was left in place by the missionaries as referred to by Ludlow (1999:113) which made one teacher responsible for as many as seventy children was the very same structure which was used by the Apartheid Government. This kind of structure is also referred to by Alexander when he mentions that Apartheid Education amongst Blacks was such that it was "deliberately designed to mass produce Eiselen men and women" (1988:20). The difference here is that this adopted structure was informed by an ideology of separation and its content was one of misinformation about White people and about Black people; misinformation about their history and their existence. This was named 'Bantu' education since its quality was different from White education as Verwoerd's words above show.

Villa-Vicencio also believes that Apartheid education was "not in complete discontinuity" with the mission education that was in place. He names the latter as one that was "heavy-handed and paternalistic" in approach while the other ensured "mental control and manipulation of the masses" (1988:95). Villa-Vicencio refers to a statement made by Professor Jabavu to verify his line of reasoning that in fact the Government's Education system could have been regarded as an uninterrupted progression from missionary education to Apartheid education. As Jabavu is reported to have stated:

> What the Bantu Education Act did was to entrench these (Missionary) traditional values in law (cited in Villa-Vicencio 1988:96).

Along the same lines, Mphahlele also makes no clear cut distinction between the two systems. He states that the content of the oppressed education in South Africa has always been for the purposes of the ruling class. It trained to obey White authority, to accept the submissive role while the White race was trained to do the opposite; to feel superior (1988:vii).

Another common general view that is observed amongst the literature with regard to the education of the missionary era and Apartheid Education was that the economic system envisaged required unskilled Blacks. This, together with the idea that Black people were incapable of anything other, was the same view held by Verwoerd when

he stated: “there were simply no opportunities in the racially defined industrial sector for skilled Black workers.” Verwoerd strengthened his assertion further, when he stated: “The State is taking over from the churches to prosecute the same work more efficiently” (Cited in Villa-Vicencio 1988:97). The one difference with which the Apartheid Government prided itself was that Bantu Education was an opportunity for all Black children to receive education and not simply a select few as was the case with the mission-based education.

The introduction of the Bantu education system created much controversy in church and community circles in which discussions were pursued on whether to resume with missionary education or not. Due to financial struggles, the mission churches were not left with much choice and many were forced to relinquish their administration to the Government.

The system however was often challenged by the ongoing boycotts. A peak was reached on June 16, 1976 in Soweto when young people openly fought not only the educational system but the psychological and physical oppression that was related to it. This resistance became another massacre. Alexander believes that after 1976 the educational system was in a state of permanent disruption up until 1985 when many parts of it simply collapsed. This brought into question the value and authenticity of secondary schooling for many young people (Alexander 1988:13).

This intentional Apartheid approach which was set in motion in the 1940s by the then National Party worked well for the White ruling classes because its negative effects became rooted in the lives of every racial group up until today. Its results did not only become apparent in South Africa, but were felt throughout the entire Southern African region and internationally.

Such a deliberate educational system which was perpetrated through the Apartheid system can be summarised as an approach of ‘indoctrination.’ This is an educational system that brainwashes people to obey the rules. A definition put forward for this kind of educational approach is termed as a process which makes a “person accept

certain types of beliefs (doctrines and dogmas) in a way that shuts out the learner's ability to ask questions or raise doubts about it" (Akinpelu 1981:198).

4.5. Women and the Legacy of Apartheid

Similar to the missionary materials and indeed somewhat worse, in the case of Apartheid Education documentation, is the scarce information on the position of women in society. Jonathan Gerstner offers some insights on the position of women made by Heinrich Lichtenstein in his observation of the Dutch during his travels. He states:

> Evenings...the whole family assembled again in the house...A table is put in the middle, and all who are Christian sit down; slaves and Hottentots were again, just like in the morning to sit on their haunches on the ground next to walls. The father read aloud a worshipful meditation out of one of the old books of sermons, followed again by the singing of a psalm and the evening blessing (1997:23).

Lichtenstein's statement is an implicit picture in which women did not play a leadership role in the Dutch family and hence one can conclude that this is the same in the community. The opposite picture seems true of the leadership roles as they were performed by men. The Lichtenstein statement not only gives light with regard to the position of Dutch women but also clearly shows the position of the enslaved and 'Hottentot' *Khoikhoi* women of the time. Kinghorn records how in the early 1900s the Afrikaner community battled with modernism. This was so because they had for centuries accentuated values of "self-determination, a patriarchal concept of authority structures and literal adherence to the Reformed confessions of the seventeenth century" (Kinghorn 1997:136). Dube also mentions the conspicuous absence of women in historical records. She believes that "the story of imperialism speaks of White males versus 'we' the Africans" (2000:20). Dube believes that in both cases, the Whites representing colonialism, and the Africans represented by women's presence, are either subsumed or absent.

This is exactly what the architects of Apartheid intended and also succeeded with as people today in South Africa believe that we are a nation of hierarchy according to the

colour of one's skin as well as a hierarchy of male above female. The depth of mental damage realised through such an education system is visible among the WAs in the UCCSA as well.

4.6. The Impact of the Missionary and Apartheid Educational Systems on the Women's Associations of the UCCSA

Chapter one of this study postulated that the WAs of the UCCSA lack of a culture of critical learning was because of their educational heritages. This was followed with detailed information of the culture that buttressed the theology and work of the missionaries and the Dutch colonists to Southern Africa and the philosophy that steered them. The challenge now is validate this assertion by relating a series of discussions within the UCCSA that have been monitored over the last four years. They involve specifically chosen minutes of meetings to show how the discussions around particular issues within the UCCSA through which the WAs were affected evolved. This section demonstrates and further substantiates the thesis of this present study concerning the enslaving ethos which has been brought about through the missionary and Apartheid educational legacies and the negative impact that these legacies have had on the WAs capacity to enable the empowerment of its members. For the purposes of this present study, these recordings of minutes are called conversations. Every conversation sets out a particular stage of the progression that took place from the beginning of the discussions.

5. Presentation of Conversations

5.1. Conversation #1

In August 2006, the UCCSA held a Vision Workshop.[140] During this event a conversation emerged between the leaders of the IMB and the WWC at which they decided to make a deliberate effort to work together. The idea was for the two bodies who first worked one under the jurisdiction of the other and then parallel to each other

[140] The present researcher was a participant at this workshop as indicated in chapter three.

for many years to establish a Women's Desk in the UCCSA. The concept of a Women's Desk was for them to initiate a joint ministry for all women in the UCCSA.

5.2. Conversation #2

The first official conversation that took place on the matter by the wider church body was at the denominational Assembly in September 2007. The two WAs presented their idea of a joint women's ministry to the widest and most representative body of the UCCSA. The following resolution was taken:

> That the women of the UCCSA be allowed and assisted to establish a desk for Women's work at the denominational office (UCCSA 2007c:19).

5.3. Conversation #3

In March 2008, the Executive Committee of the UCCSA met and the WAs presented their thoughts of consequent discussions that had taken place. The Executive Committee is a management committee of the denomination that meets in lieu of the Assembly. The following are reports of the two WAs to the Executive Committee Meeting:

i. The IMB Report to the Executive Committee Meeting in March 2008. The report read as follows:

> Common Project
>
> The IMB and WWC are working together in fundraising for the Women's Desk that will cater for all UCCSA women. The following are highlights of the outcomes of the meeting:
>
> - Both WWC and IMB will each contribute R75, 000.00 in order for the desk to start operating. Each group has to work on a fundraising strategy.
>
> - Both groups will go back and report through their Synod Committees in order to ensure that people are updated and give

them a chance to voice their concerns and ideas about this project.

- The IMB has nominated its Denominational Officers and the past immediate President to form part of the Technical Committee that will manage the process towards the establishment of the desk (UCCSA 2008a).

ii. At the same meeting, the UCCSA Women's Work Committee also reported to the March 2008, Executive Committee Meeting. The report read as follows:

Both the WWC and IMB groups were present. The advantage of such a desk was brought to our attention. WWC had the following concerns:

Why should the desk be in the Joseph Wing Centre in Johannesburg. By having it there, it only caters for women in Gauteng or else for young, unmarried women as well as women who won't need a working permit for South Africa—only they can apply for the post of the co-ordinator, while so many will be excluded.

- After being led through the proposed budget, we learnt that the amount of R230, 000.00 will be needed for the first year and that the two groups; WWC and IMB should take responsibility for the funding. The amount of R75, 000.00 should be paid in by each group by March 2009 in order for the desk to operate from June 2009. The WWC emphasised the fact that we don't have money at this stage, therefore we don't want to commit ourselves now.

- Each group had to appoint four members to serve on the Technical Committee that is assigned to put the Women's Desk in place by June 2009

(UCCSA 2008e).

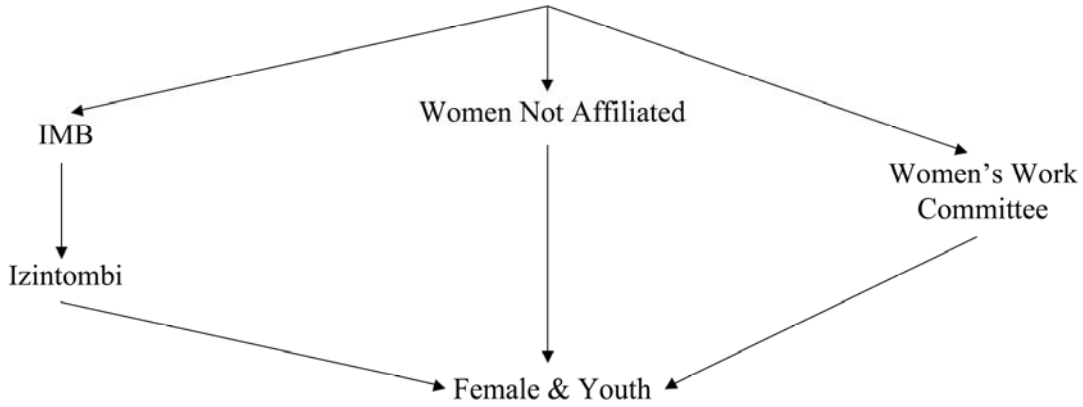
5.4. Conversation #4

One of the first separate conversations that took place on the new idea that materialised was the South African IMB Conference which records the number of representatives as approximately 180 women. The UCCCSA Secretary of the IMB presented a report on the vision, setting out her views on the new joint ministry for women.

Below is an excerpt from the minutes of the 3rd Annual IMB SA Conference which was held in Bloemfontein, June 26-29, 2008. The IMB Secretary first made a presentation to the meeting. Following the presentation of the IMB Secretary are the discussions and concerns of the IMB women as well as the male ministers who were present. The presentation was given the beginning of the consultation that IMB had as part of their discussions in terms of the Women's Desk Organisation:

UCCSA Women's Desk Structure

Desk co-coordinator—fulltime worker, will not interfere with IMB and Women's Work Committee



Campaigns/project as women of UCCSA

- Women and children abuse
- Prayer days/mother's day
- Press statements
- Xenophobia and crime
- Abortion—mothers of the church, world and community

Concerns

Rev. Makhuzeni was touched by the issue because our church was the first to train women in leadership but sadly women are not recognised.
This is a powerful project for us women and we must not leave the ministers behind.
Many years ago IMB was under the umbrella of Women's Committee which was not recognised as the living or working organisation.
The unity did not work for long time until IMB pulled out of the Women's Work Committee.

IMB Views

- IMB is organised with high aims
- Women's desk is a good proposal, we like our uniform because it says who we are.
- Our minds must not be cluttered when going through the changes and be aware that we don't repeat what happened in the past.
- As Black women we're not united and this will raise difficulties when trying to unite with other organisations from different races.
- We do not have to lose our status and identity
- We must go back to our regions and hear what other women have say

The issue was taken to the resolution committee joined by the Denominational Committee, which is made up of the following people: Mam'nkosikazi Luvuno, Mam'nkosikazi Shangase, all Ministers, Mam'nkosikazi Nxumalo and Denominational Mission Council Convener Rev. Dr I. O. Gasenewe.

Resolution committee women desk—Mam'nkosikazi Shangase reports.

Views

- People are cautious about the change
- People need change
- Each group will maintain their identity
- Ultimately will not affect IMB/WWC
- Women's desk is the project

Recommendations—Rev. Zazaza

Appreciated the idea of the women's desk and see the initiative as a step forward
The concerns by conference are understandable and need not be taken lightly
The conference was the beginning of an honest prayerful process of consultation that needs to go down to local churches
Women's desk is only a project to look at the common goal/interest of all women
Women's desk will not affect or replace IMB or Women Work committee, and the autonomy and identity of the organisations
The workshop be encouraged at the local church and regional conference especially with the feedback from the UCCSA, be set for the May 30, 2009
Men all organisation is on process

SA Synod—Denomination Committee is discussing about the project
Local churches, regions must give the feedback before the set date

Mam'nkosikazi Mahlinza thanked Mam'nkosikazi Shangase and Mam'nkosikazi Luvuno for the reports.

Word of encouragement: if this project is lifted, we must not undermine ourselves but be strong and lift our church high

(UCCSA 2008f).

5.5. Conversation #5

Another conversation was recorded in the Minutes of the Ministers' Wives Convention of the IMB, held August 15-17, 2008 at St Benedict's House, Rosettenville, Johannesburg. Ministers' wives play a very significant role in the IMB. Decisions often carry much more weight if they have been approved by the Ministers' wives in the IMB. The IMB therefore thought it important for conversations about the joint ministry to be discussed at this meeting.

Women of the UCCSA

Background:

Mrs Eunah Ndlovu gave a brief background on how did the idea of the women's desk came about. It all started in Kuruman when drawing a UCCSA vision plan. The name changed from Women's desk to women's ministries. It shall exist to cater for: IMB, WC, YWO; unbloused and non-affiliating female members of the UCCSA

Discussions:

Opportunities: inclusive platform, unity and development of church leadership;

Challenges:

- Funding—Isililo has monies that are there to cater for Isililo members. It will not be appropriate to use such monies to start a desk.
- Loss of IMB identity—Isililo comes far away in terms of its history. This organisation was misinterpreted as a result, some of the leaders (some are still alive) tried to sabotage it, but we

fought; now whilst we are trying to find our feet, there comes the idea of a desk. There is a hidden agenda on this.

- Nepotism: there are rumours that this is a position placed especially for someone, and Isililo is just there to pass the whole thing through. How are we going to be sure that the person that is hired for this- is rightfully competent for it?
- Communication breakdown: we have had suspicions regarding this matter, by the fact that it came from the top, and already there were people that were nominated to push it through. We have the right to choose the people that we feel will not be naïve on the whole situation. For example, this is handled by Nokuthula and Nomfundo as representatives of the IMB. Yah that is fine, but, both are young, whilst one of them is not of the UCCSA background, that will make it difficult for us to trust their representation. They do not the history of the IMB clearly, and they don't know the challenges that we had to go through in order for this ISILILO to be a recognised organisation in the UCCSA.
- Strengths: Women have same struggles regardless of age, race, ethnicity, membership, etc. Coordinator shall put up a programme that will address women. The existence of a technical committee that shall facilitate the employment process

(UCCSA 2008g).

5.6. Conversation #6

Another Committee that the Women's Associations relate to and work under structurally had discussions on the decisions that the Women Associations took. The input of this Committee, the Denominational Mission Council Meeting on the matter was as follows:

Women's Desk

It was resolved that:

A technical team that would be made up of not more than 5 people, one person from IMB, Women's Work Committee, Clergy, Young woman to represent the broader church, one member from a White church and the mission council convenor. It was agreed that the time frame would be at least till the upcoming assembly

(UCCSA 2008h).

5.7. Conversation #7

The Denominational WWC unlike the IMB does not have the same operational structures. Unlike a large conference where there is a wide representation, they meet yearly at a consultation at which they make decisions about the life of the Women's Work Committee. This consultation is only representative of a small number which make up the leadership of the Synods in which the WWC operate. Below are the Women's Work Committee members' remarks and questions that were raised during their conversations of their February 2009 Consultation:

> "Where, when and by whom was this decision taken? We all know that in our church, decisions like this one, should be thoroughly discussed on grass root level. We, the local churches, heard about it for the first time at Assembly in Oudtshoorn. That is not how we operate in the UCCSA. We start in our local church, then to the Region, then to the Synod and then to the Assembly. And at Assembly, the Secretary. of the IMB gave the impression that funding was not a problem! Were we left out, Did we miss something?
>
> Since when do we take the outcomes of a workshop to Assembly and treat it as a decision taken by all women of the Committee?
>
> If my mind serves me well, all activities pertaining to the Vision Plan, is budgeted for – money is allocated for every activity. My question: If this idea came up at the Vision Plan workshop in Kuruman, like you said, why do we have to provide funding? Why is this one an exception?
>
> I want to know: Is this women's desk a CWM project or a UCCSA one?
>
> We are not prepared to form one body with the IMB. Each body has its own strategies, concerns and interests though we have the same goal. In the past efforts were made for amalgamation and it did not work out and if the women's desk will be used to serve as a tool for amalgamation, then we are not interested, we want to retain our identity.
>
> I would like this to be put straight: The fact that we, the women of the UCCSA operate in two sections, has nothing to do with apartheid. (I refer to a remark passed when the women from Zimbabwe introduced themselves as the newly formed Women's Committee in Zimbabwe) All women in our churches are not robed – they do not wear the uniform. If we do away with our Committee, it means that no provision is made for them! Can you imagine the manpower in our churches that get lost? And nobody has the right to force me to wear a uniform!
>
> All the women in our local churches do not belong to these two bodies— actually, the minority belong to them. And, each body has its own financial

> commitments towards our churches, regions, Synods as well as the Denomination. As a fact, in most cases, the local churches depend on us as organizations within the church. Now why do we want to put an extra burden on these few women, by expecting from them to finance this desk with such an amount of money – imagine R125 000 per year for the rest of our existence! That is ridiculous – actually chasing our members away.
>
> It is very clear to me that this women's desk has a hidden agenda: This is a job creation action for somebody – everything is worked out thoroughly and we as the IMB and WC must provide the funding."
>
> (Minutes of the WC Consultation, February 2009)

5.8. Conversation #8

Of great value for this discussion was a conversation that took place at a Synodical Committee of the South African Synod. Each Synod operates autonomously and yet is interdependent upon other Synods and therefore part of the larger decision-making processes of the UCCSA. The following resolution was taken with regard to the UCCSA Women's Desk at this meeting:

> It was noted that the UCCSA decided to allow the women to oversee their own Women's Desk—this in spite of the fact that the SA Synod Women's Ministry, both the Women's Work Committee and the Isililo/Manyano/Bomme, preferred not to support a Women's Desk
>
> (UCCSA 2009b)

5.9. Conversation #9

The latest conversation is the report of the UCCSA Mission Council Committee which for a brief time exercised oversight over the Joint Women's Ministry Project. The Mission Council Committee that takes responsibility for the wellbeing of all ministries, namely children, youth and men's ministry groups was given the responsibility of facilitating the process of setting up the Desk. The report was presented in the following way:

UCCSA Women's Desk:

The formation of a Women's Desk was introduced at the Oudtshoorn Assembly. This is also a work in progress. In the process of introducing the Women's Desk to our women, we were confronted with the following issues:

Both existing women bodies—Women's Committee and IMB—want to retain their identity. Therefore we have to stress the point that Women's Desk is not an amalgamation of the two bodies but to empower all women in the UCCSA.

Both bodies are agreeable to the empowerment programmes that will focus on; building capacity for women in the UCCSA, Leadership training and advocacy on socio-economic and political issues that are against women.

Both bodies are not in a position to fund the Women's Desk from their own coffers. However the two bodies are going to maintain a mutual relationship that exist between them.

The Mission Council feel that the need exist for this process to be speeded up. In doing so, we suggest that:

a) The Women's Committee and the Isililo be allowed to drive the process of establishing the Women's Desk and that they report on progress made through the Mission Council.

b) That the Women of the UCCSA be allowed to form their own technical Committee to oversee the formation and implementation of the Women's Desk.

c) That the financial implication for the process leading towards the establishment of the Women' Desk be included in the Mission Council budget.

(UCCSA 2009c)

5.10. An Analysis of the Conversations

5.10.1. The IMB

Most of the emotive discussions pursued among the IMB on the matter are those undertaken by members of the South African Synod. One could probably understand this as South Africa is the hub of continual racial division. There seems to be a genuine apprehension among the IMB members on the idea of a combined women's

ministry based on their past bad experiences. The IMB women seem to base their feelings of insecurity on the oppression that they have experienced but also on the great struggle they had in being recognised as an independent constituent body of the UCCSA. This anxiety is much more felt and expressed by the older women of the IMB, those who were part of the committees at the time, rather than the younger members who appear to look forward to the change as can be noted in the excerpt of one meeting below. Another significant issue for the IMB is their identity which is expressed through the uniforms they wear, the inheritance of their particular history and their traditions. These things they regard as dear to them and uniquely theirs.

Another statement which emphasises where the WAs have come from is articulated in conversations minuted about the current IMB Secretary and Treasurer at the 2008 IMB Synod Conference, where it was noted:

> …both are young, whilst one of them is not of the UCCSA background; that will make it difficult for us to trust their representation. They do not know the history of the IMB clearly, and they don't know the challenges that we had to go through in order for this ISILILO to be a recognised organisation in the UCCSA (UCCSA 2008f).

In spite of this fear, it is evident from the IMB conversations that one recognises throughout their discussions positive comments concerning the possibility of establishing a combined women's ministry even though they had their suspicions. They have acknowledged that unity is important and that all women face the same challenges regardless of race, age, ethnicity or church membership. The IMB have through their discussions come to own the process for themselves. This is evident in the language they use in presenting their reports. The complaints that did surface in the discussions were the way the discussion was handled, there being the feeling that it was from the top down. Another thought was that a job was being created for someone. This reflects a lot of distrust in the process. In spite of these concerns, the IMB gave the process their blessing. This was manifest in the word of encouragement that was extended towards the conference participants at the end of their discussion on the subject:

> If this project is lifted, we must not undermine ourselves but be strong and lift our church high (UCCSA 2008c).

5.10.2. The Women's Work Committee

The impression one gets in reading the records of the discussions that have taken place amongst the Women's Work Committee feels very different from that which is expressed in the IMB. One can almost sense that there was opposition rather than support for the new vision of the women's ministry. This was clearly spelt out in the minutes:

> We are not prepared to form one body with the IMB. Each body has its own strategies, concerns and interests though we have the same goal (UCCSA 2009i).

One also senses an aggressive tone in the questions that were posed.

Another feeling that one gets is that the members' reports to the other committees such as to the Executive Committee are as if they were not been part of the process at all:

> The advantage of such a desk was brought to our attention…After being led through the proposed budget, we learnt that the… (UCCSA 2009a).

These discussions took place among the leadership of the WWC only, since the Denominational WWC does not meet in the form of large conferences as is the case with the IMB. One or two people's viewpoints can therefore carry a lot of weight and influence as they can decide on a matter on behalf of the membership of the WWC. The comments made above could therefore well be those of just a few people.

5.10.3. The Wider Church

There seems to be an overwhelming support by the wider church for the new ministry for women. This is evidenced by the fact that the Assembly supported the initiative. The South African Synod in its July 2009 meeting, contrary to the Denominational

bodies seems to be against the new ministry. A significant fact that needs to be considered in this decision is that it was taken at a time when the IMB representative was absent and therefore not part of the decision. One also needs to note that this decision was taken after the Executive Committee and the Assembly had already agreed to the ministry. Because these bodies are often regarded as the highest decision making bodies of the church their decision to form a joint ministry cannot simply be annulled by a Synod decision.

Both groups tend to have a very individualistic understanding of the operations that their money belongs only to themselves and is not to be shared. This represents a very narrow understanding of the cause of the WAs vision for themselves and society. There does not seem to be a vision of true humanity at the heart of their existence. There is also great distrust among the WAs of the UCCSA. This should also be seen in relation to the racial historical tensions which exist between the two groups. Another important aspect to take note of is the influence of men in both bodies. The IMB's male voices are more explicit than the WWC, since male ministers often take part in IMB discussions. The Synod of South Africa's decision is one overt example of the involvement of men since such Synod meetings have an overwhelming representation of men. At this meeting, the representation of women was recorded as 12 out of the 44 members that were present. This was clear evidence of the patriarchal nature of the church in which decisions are continued to be taken by men.

6. Summary: Some Conclusions Drawn from the Impact of the Missionary and Apartheid Educational Systems on the Women's Associations of the UCCSA

This chapter has sought to explore the reasons behind the absence of a liberatory ethos of learning among the WAs of the UCCSA and has argued that the lack of a critical and deliberate action for transformation in the WAs can be attributed to the two-fold educational legacies which the women have inherited. Women are mentally, structurally and socially imprisoned, by these educational legacies. The patriarchal content amongst other contents of racism and colonialism in both educational systems have added to the oppressive state of women. Women can almost be regarded as

having taken on a schizophrenic personality in upholding these various philosophies, particularly that we are also African and have a cultural framework within which they exist.

The residues of Apartheid and missionary teaching are still part of the organisational life of the WAs of the UCCSA. This comes across with particular vigour in their narrow individual understanding of Christian mission and their "personal salvation theory" as observed by Mphahlele (1988:vii-viii). They have continuously imitated many missionary programmes such as the charitable way of reaching out to those who are disadvantaged and have carried on with the sacrificial component of their ministry in which women believe that it is their role to take care of the preparations of refreshments and the cleaning of the church. These understandings of themselves, their interpretation of scripture and their role as women in the church and society have continued virtually unchallenged throughout the years. They have not moved away from seeing themselves as segregated and different from each other as Associations. Even the fundraising and the adoption of the naming of the 'Women's gift' without question proves the theory that women have been 'filled up' with a particular way of operating. In addition to the patriarchy, other inherited influences found among the women in the church today are the continued racial and ethnic divisions and mentality re-enforced by the previous Apartheid education system. Added to these are the continued domesticated programmes which were introduced through the Apartheid and missionary approaches. This is due to the common belief and practice that was upheld by all systems that the traditional role of the woman was to be found in the home.

Further to this content are the approaches that have been adopted. These are approaches through which we in the church have either re-enforced belief systems by 'preaching to' or even unconsciously followed traditional customs in the Associations. This does not only prove the deep-rooted learnt behaviours and practices that women have accepted, but more so how these have continued to have an effect on how women live out their Christian faith today. The educational 'heritage' of women has been a huge inhibiting factor in women's pursuit of issues of gender justice. These

legacies prevent the UCCSA women from engaging in transformation and justice through an ethos of liberatory learning.

In order for us to grasp the logic of this argument one needs to recognise that views on race, class and gender and the learning methods that theWAs of the UCCSA have adopted are products of socialisation. This means that our previous colonial and Apartheid masters have over time put together systems of how we relate to each other as male and female, as Black and White, as rich and poor, and even constructed the types of learning approaches that we engage in. It is these systems that have maintained the status quo. These societal creations around ideologies have been built on cultural, social, economical and political grounds.

Kelebogile Matongo well-understands the impact such educational heritages have had on the psyche of women in the WAs in the UCCSA and the current repressive ethos of learning. These influences on women he summarises in his (2001) essay entitled, "Knowledge Construction as a Gendered Practice," where he maintains that "the dominant forms of knowledge were the outcomes of the society's gendered practice" (2001:227).

6.1. The Western Influences on the Understanding of Knowledge

As we have seen from the WAs of the UCCSA, the theories of knowledge construction that they have taken on as their own today have a historic legacy that they continue to struggle with. First and foremost amongst these legacies is the dominant Western understanding of knowledge that the WAs have continued to employ. According to many educationists and philosophers, the Ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle has been the name which towers above all in the thinking around concepts of knowledge. Matongo intentionally seems to review the educational theories put forth by Aristotle in order to trace the gender differentiations around knowledge construction that we experience today due to such historic perceptions. Matongo explains the significance of Aristotle's theory on knowledge formation was that of logical thought and objectivity. Aristotle also believed in theoretical knowledge as the central feature of good knowledge construction.

Theoretical knowledge with reason was regarded as an engagement in abstract thought. Arguments or debates were encouraged (Matongo 2001:231). There can be no doubt that this has had a lasting effect on the understanding of intelligence and the academic criteria of today. Instead of understanding literacy as different, it has been classed as being of less quality if it does not conform to what have become 'regular' standards. These norms have excluded many young people, including the majority of young African women and girl children who end up being regarded as 'school drop outs' because they do not adhere to the standards set. Working amongst out-of-school youth in Botswana reveals that this Western understanding of knowledge has deprived huge numbers of young people who cannot cope with the theoretical knowledge curricula that has been enforced in schools. The oral nature of the communities in Southern Africa and the content of the discussions are proof that not only is Aristotle's view underpinned in an orientation that is patriarchal but also Western. More of the impact of this understanding of knowledge construction on people's lives and their Christian faith in Southern Africa comes through in this study. Indeed, as this chapter has sought to show, the WAs of the UCCSA have adopted the rationale of the Western missionary and Apartheid education systems almost in their entirety, including their programmes, content, and approaches, even to the extent of culturally embracing the uniforms and nineteenth-century Western standards of domesticity for women.

6.2. Knowledge and Power

The second accepted element of knowledge creation is its patriarchal character and the superior way in which knowledge formation is judged. Knowledge is a form of power. Matongo associates men with a history of having possessed power over all spheres of life. He goes on to say that knowledge cannot be disassociated from other forms of power in society. Men have viewed themselves as producers of knowledge (2001:228). The conclusion from this supposition made by Matongo is that women, due to the power that has been appropriated by men, have been made silent, voiceless and incompetent in the process.

This debate on power can also be linked to Aristotle's denigrating beliefs about women and their supposed lack of reason. Women have by and large are believed to have opposite qualities to Aristotle's scale on knowledge creation which therefore makes them "imperfect copies of everyman" (Stefano 1990:67). These qualities have had a lasting and negative impact on women's learning and as transferors of knowledge, particularly for women in the Global South.[141] Women in Southern Africa often possess distorted images of themselves and at times these manifest in women assuming male characteristics as a way by which to measure their ability.

Gaitskell also mentions this component in the dynamics of the WAs. WAs in an attempt to empower themselves, draw on male models of church leadership in their own organisations. For White women, this has meant efficiency in business and organisational procedures. They needed to be proficient in running meetings 'properly' and their financial status together with their fundraising activities were also done to indicate their business acumen. For African women, this male model of leadership is seen in their ability to prove that they were eloquent and charismatic with impromptu prayer and preaching and in their leadership (Gaitskell 1997:263).[142]

The 'power' prevalent in knowledge construction is commonly one in which those women in male-dominated fields take on the masculine traits which make them assume the yardstick of what is means to be 'intelligent' according to the male model of being. This urge to become a 'perfect copy of man' is not only the male replica of 'intelligence' but also the adoption of the Western model of knowledge construction as put forth by Aristotle. This phenomenon is particularly visible among those women who are regarded as 'successful.' In order to measure up to the traditional cultures they have often assumed those male-associated characteristics and behaviours of assertiveness, authority, rationality, objectivity and every attribute related to men. This, they believe, sets them on an equal footing to their male colleagues. These arguments about male qualities are also applicable to the way some women have taken on writing skills and how they construct knowledge. Maluleke and Nadar qualify this point when they refer to a quotation which reads:

[141] Reskin and Pavadic (1994:82) specifically blame the media for presenting a distorted image of women.
[142] Modukanele (1999:255) also found this to be true among ordained female ministers in the church.

> A woman theoretician is already an exile; expatriated from her *langue maternelle*, she speaks a paternal language; she presumes a fraudulent power (2004:5).

The answer therefore for women is not to further alienate their feminine instincts by adopting a male persona. Women can only be truly successful if they remain true to themselves. This is not a success that is in competition with the standards determined by the world but a success rooted in being a woman. This again provides information of what the WAs ethos is determined by.

6.3. Individualistic Forms of Knowledge Construction

These standards have also had a negative impact on women as Africans. Aristotle's concept of knowledge production is individualistic in nature; theories are developed by individuals who then own those theories and those individuals are thus regarded as influential. There is a general ethos in the Global South that holds a different view which is contrary to that individualistic idea of knowledge creation. As Julius Nyerere explains :

> Our education must foster the social goals of living together and working together for the common good. It should encourage co-operative effort rather than individualistic competition. Our education must inculcate a sense of commitment to the total community and help the pupils to accept the value appropriate to our kind of future, not those appropriate to our colonial past. It must encourage co-operative endeavour and not individual advancement….Our education must counteract the temptation to intellectual arrogance for this leads to the well-educated despising those whose abilities are non-academic... Such arrogance has no place in a society of equal citizens (1976:14).

It is this sharing of knowledge, according to Matongo that makes the constructed knowledge socially developed and socially situated. This means that the community as a whole ought to be involved in the formation of knowledge systems. "The product of such activities is free from the attitudes and practices of scholars that reflect an oppressive society" (Matongo 2001:229). No one can claim to be more superior in knowledge to others; rather, all participants must come on an equal footing to the discussion to learn from one another.

A pertinent question posed by Matongo which seems appropriate to this research is that there is a need for principles of learning for liberation in the content and approaches of WAs of the UCCSA. Matongo refers to the preservation of historical power and the norms for knowledge creation referred to above when he asks:

> Did this suppress women's independence, development, self-reliance that resulted into lack of self-esteem in the construction of knowledge? (2001:228)

The WAs of the UCCSA seem to have absorbed this sexist, racist and colonialist ethos of learning without question as the only form available. This is why the nature of the WAs of the UCCSA has not changed over the years.

6.4. Knowledge as a Social Construct

The final aspect which can be drawn from Matongo's writings is that these inherited understandings around knowledge construction should not be seen as absolute. Learning content and approaches as with sexism, racism and classism, are a human creation. Undoing such understandings is possible. Matongo (2001:230) believes that the idea of feminism is precisely to advocate for a redefining or deconstruction of traditional philosophy. The idea is not to reconstruct but to deconstruct knowledge systems. We can therefore deduce from the arguments put forward by Matongo that it is possible to nullify previous ideologies of knowledge formation. This might not be achievable immediately, but possible over a process of interventions. Vivi Akakpo in her presentation at a Women's Conference in Madagascar confirmed that an alternative learning ethos is possible when she reminded the delegates present that:

> Women are the guarantee of the sustainability of life within families, communities, societies and the Church. [They are] depositories of community assets, perceived not only as material assets but more importantly even as the traditional knowledge base that has preserved faith and culture as wealth to sustain humankind and therefore peace and development.[143]

[143] Akakpo (2010), Unpublished paper.

From the above, we can conclude that the WAs of the UCCSA do indeed provide potential sites for liberation and empowerment. They are able to do this provided that they are able to critically self-reflect on that which prevents them from taking deliberate action on current issues. Among such issues is the concern why after some forty-three years of existence they still remain divided racially and otherwise.[144] The question therefore is what is needed in order for the WAs of the UCCSA to exploit their potential within to become catalysts in the creation of an ethos of liberatory learning that will be empowering towards women? In the next chapter, the various theological and cultural tools required by the WAs of the UCCSA to bring about such an anti-oppressive ethos will be explored. African culture and theological resources exist in Southern Africa as well as within the Christian church can provide the very tools vital to crafting such a liberatory learning ethos.

[144] Neil Thompson tells us that "only an understanding of internalisations makes sense of the incredible fact that most external controls work most of the time for most of the people in society. Society not only controls our movements, but shapes our identity, our thoughts and our emotions. The structures of society become the structure of our own consciousness. Society does not stop at the surface of our skins" (Thompson, 1997:20).

CHAPTER SIX

CULTURAL AND THEOLOGICAL RESOURCES FOR A LIBERATORY LEARNING ETHOS

1. Introduction

The previous chapter explored the historical educational legacies that women in Southern Africa have been subjected to and suggested that this is one of the reasons why women in have not been able to critically reflect on their oppression nor act to change their situations of oppression. Nevertheless, the conclusion was that the WAs of the UCCSA remain potential catalysts to enable individual and communal empowerment of its members. What then is needed for the WAs of the UCCSA in order to change the current learning ethos to be liberatory? In this final chapter, tools will be suggested that can assist the crafting a liberatory learning ethos for the WAs of the UCCSA.

Chapter two presented the numerous challenges that women experience in society ranging from HIV&AIDS, poverty, and domestic violence and how these have had ripple affects in the church, community, and in the home. The previous chapter revealed why the WAs of the UCCSA have been unable to engage with the numerous challenges faced by women and demonstrated that it was because of the legacies of previously imposed Colonial Western missionary and Apartheid educational systems that did not allow them to think and act critically to change their life situations. Nevertheless, the question remains as to what is needed in order for WAs of the UCCSA to become catalysts of change. As Matongo (2001:230) has argued, the first step is a process of "unlearning" that which has been inherited from past oppressive

systems.[145] Through an examination of missionary and Apartheid education systems it has been demonstrated how even oppressive values are undergirded by theological beliefs. It is these values and beliefs which have been learnt, which need to be disengaged.

To deconstruct the existing ethos, new cultural and theological lenses different from the lenses that were provided by the missionary and Apartheid educational systems are needed. In other words, how can cultural and theological resources become resources for the WAs of the UCCSA? Or do cultural and the theological resources remain oppressive tools which aid the reality of oppression in church and society? This chapter will explore the extent African to which cultural and theological resources developed in Southern Africa can assist in building a liberatory ethos of learning in the WAs of the UCCSA. The tools are suggested here should not be seen as being flawless since African cultures and theological resources are not without imperfections, as they have been open to people's interpretation. This however does mean that those aspects which are of value need to be (re)claimed in order to construct a new liberatory learning ethos.[146] The resources of culture and theology are invaluable and cannot be ignored; they are what make us African, Christian and being a woman in the context of Southern Africa. These are all inseparable from the creation of a different ethos.[147]

[145] As Nyambura Jane Njoroge can assert, "the greatest challenge facing African women is unlearning internalised sexist practices, attitudes: beliefs and patterns" (1997:82). All these encompass the 'ethos' referred to throughout this present study.

[146] Kanyoro (2002) has termed this process "feminist cultural hermeneutics." Phiri and Nadar (2006:13) assert that "the focus in feminist cultural hermeneutics is on retaining those aspects of African culture which are liberative, while rejecting those which are oppressive." In other words, it is bringing culture under scrutiny in order to test its liberative potential.

[147] For Kanyoro, the tools of theological resources and culture are inseparable. As she can state, "Even the Bible is read through the lens of culture. Our cultural heritage was indeed the basis for our common understanding about who we are and what that means…if change were to be viable for anything, it must address first and foremost cultural issues….Biblical hermeneutics, as a theological subject, permits people from one generation to another to reinterpret scriptural texts in the light of their times and culture" (2002:9). Oduyoye (1986:73) has also asked important questions around inculturation: "How can we be African and Christian at the same time." Here, she refers to an incorporation of African social structures and religious practices into Christianity. For the present researcher, it seems that African culture and Christianity as advocated for by the Jesus movement does not need 'incorporation' but instead at their very soul resemble each other.

African culture[148]as well as different theological resources already in existence within the Southern African context as tools can contribute to a new ethos vital for the creation of a liberatory ethos of learning and enable the empowerment of women. Such resources are African, Black and Feminist theologies, the Bible and the Jesus Movement. The articulation of these theological resources should become an essential part of faith and witness of the WAs of the UCCSA.[149] These tools contribute an important starting point because the majority of women in the WAs are devoted to their culture, prayer life, Christian service and obedience to the Bible. These realities could in fact become an important basis to bring about a new ethos of liberatory learning that would radicalise the spiritual outlook of the WAs and assist in narrowing the gap between spiritual piety and praxis.

2. The Tool of African Traditional Culture

2.1. Tswana Traditional Learning Strategies

African culture and its application for creating an ethos of liberatory learning has been identified as one of the tools that the WAs of the UCCSA need to draw on. Since African culture is so vast and diverse, the scope here will be limited to the Tswana culture as a case study.[150] The value of the case study approach is that it illuminates the larger context. So while these examples are exclusive to one country, they do shed light on the nature of African culture in other contexts in Southern Africa in which many similarities can be found. Almost all the examples will concentrate on the Batswana living in Botswana except for those examples drawn from the writings of Isaac Schapera and Gabriel Setiloane which are more focussed on broad-spectrum examples from Tswana culture.

[148] African culture is not monolithic. There are a variety of cultures and traditions within Africa. This said, there are many fundamental and core values that most African cultures, irrespective of their language or religious difference, share. It is these values that will be drawn upon in this chapter.
[149]Oduyoye (1994:371) says to explore the spirituality of a community one must take into account every facet of its worship and ethical life. This captures the idea of faith that is being posited here.
[150] Denscombe (1998:30) describes the case study approach as one with a "focus on just one instance of the thing that is to be investigated."

2.2. Historical Background of the Batswana

To adequately understand the ethos of learning within the context of the Batswana, some background information about the Tswana people must be given. Such an exercise will expose the traditional learning systems that have been in place since before the arrival of the Western missionaries. Biko (1986:41), even though he referred to modern African culture, did not believe that African culture can be time-bound and labelled as pre-colonial or modern African culture. Instead, he believed that while African culture has been knocked about and dented by other cultures, its core values and meaning systems remained intact. Therefore, reference will be made to African traditional culture or African traditional learning and not to present or past practices since African traditional cultural practices form a natural part of Batswana life. Discussion will draw on the writings of scholars such as Isaac Schapera and Gabriel Setiloane, as well as a few Batswana educators and others who have reflected on the existence of the Batswana.

While Schapera focuses his attention on the Tswana people, Setiloane looks at the Sotho-Tswana people. This however ought not to hamper our discourse here since the Sotho and the Batswana are closely related.[151]

Much scholarly debate has been centred on genealogical studies about the movements and time period in which the Sotho-Tswana people settled into their ancestral habitat.[152] Irrespective of when the Tswana people actually occupied their specific lands, the important point that that both Setiloane and Alverson make is that unlike the common assertion portrayed by historians that the Tswana people's existence only came about after the arrival of the Whites, the Tswana people had settled communities long before then where "they conducted their affairs in a manner to them 'orderly' and even 'civilised" (Setiloane 1975:19). It is that life that we seek to understand in this present study.

[151] Schapera (1984:19) tracks the origin of the Tswana to the Sotho group of people in Southern Africa and Setiloane (1975:24) classes the Sotho-Tswana as people with one bond of origin.
[152] For more information, see the work of the anthropologist Hoyt Alverson (1978:9). Setiloane has also discussed the "way in which the natural peculiarity of the area became associated with and incorporated into their way of life, shaping their trade and occupations" (1975:11-14).

Schapera sets out the location and groupings of the Tswana people in the following way:

> The Tswana are found all over Botswana (previously Bechuanaland Protectorate), as well as in the western and central districts of Transvaal and in the northern districts of the Cape Province. Other offshoots are found in some areas of the Orange Free State, Zimbabwe and in Namibia.[153]

Having established the background of this diverse, yet in many ways homogenous group of people, attention can be given to sketching the organisation of the community structure of the Batswana. These organisational structures are important to map because they show the different locations in which learning was created, developed and implemented.

Perhaps the first thing to take note of is that the Batswana's traditional operational system was built around the concept of kinship. A significant feature that Schapera mentions within the concept of kinship is its patrilineal nature. In other words, family lineage is traced through the descent of the father. Kinship as explained by Schapera (1984:43) is established through the male genealogical connection. Membership to an ethnic group is primarily determined by parentage or more specifically by one's fatherhood. This means that a man belongs to his father's ethnic group who belonged to his father's ethnic group. This however does not mean that every ethnic group exclusively consists of people from the same ancestry, for movement in and out of ethnic groups is a common occurrence.

The second important attribute specific to the life of the Batswana that has important implications for this study and the understanding a liberatory learning ethos is the particular structural system within which the group operates. One can divide the structure into three distinct communal groups of operation. The first grouping has the

[153] These 'offshoots' as they are called by Schapera (1984:19) could well have been caused by the geographical divisions that were later created by the Europeans. Roger Beck (1997:107) attributes the separations to the disruptions in 1820 of the Difaqane and the 1830s Great Trek. Setiloane (1975:11, 18) points to the movements of the Sotho-Tswana people and to the fact that they were a pastoral people and therefore needed to move around. Whatever the causes of the division, Setiloane's belief in the Sotho-Tswana as a people of one bond of origin, a homogenous group consisting of several ethnic groups with different dialects and people who observe diverse cultural practices appears to remain valid.

smallest membership component, namely, the households *(motse).* The father heads this arrangement. The second is made up of several households *(metse)* which comprise a ward *(kgoro/kgotla).* The headman is responsible for leadership at this level. Finally, there is the widest structure which represents several wards *(dikgoro/dikgotla)* which is the chiefdom *(morafe)* where the chief provides leadership (Setiloane 1975:22-23). These structures are the centre of activity for implementing family and community events.

These functioning communal settings: the ethnic groups, wards and households serve within the traditional Tswana system as the locations through which knowledge archived and transferred to future generations. Setiloane explains that these communal settings need to be recognised not as appendages to the system but within the broader spectrum of Batswana life:

> …the parts can be fully understood only in terms of the whole…the group as the primary unit and individuals as measured by it (1975:32).

2.3. The Essence of Tswana Learning

The conversation held with Mr. Mosimakoko[154] from the village of Kanye, Botswana, revealed that the core learning exercise of each Batswana was to get an understanding of the real meaning of humanity. What it means to be a Motswana in community with others is thus at the heart of what it means to be a Motswana.

2.3.1. Gender

This sub-section will focus on gender to show the learning ethos that manifests itself in Tswana culture. Appropriate to male and female relations and obvious in the discussion of Batswana kinship above, is the patriarchal structure and patrilineal ancestry upon which Tswana life has been built. Schapera explains that this structure brought about social expectations that were very different for men as compared to that of women. These differences have been particularly noticeable in the various cultural practices and customary laws which affect the being of Batswana women, such as the

[154] See Chapter 1 of the present study, pp. 38-41.

rights of passage of girl children, from childhood, through to teenage-hood and eventual marriage. These social expectations are especially visible and affect women when they face issues of divorce, death, and inheritance (Schapera, 1984:37).

The legal specialist Athaliah Molokomme, has compiled a summary on the impact of common law and customary law on women. Of particular interest to this study is her analysis of married Batswana women under customary law. Marriage, according to customary law is a reflection of the traditional Setswana culture and attitudes of the Batswana. Molokomme summarises the status of the married woman as it is viewed by Setswana law as follows:

> Once again, this often varies from tribe to tribe and from family to family. Generally, a woman married according to customary law becomes a special "ngwetsi" or daughter in law to her husband's family. She may live in their compound or live in his compound if he has built one. Wherever she is, she must respect her husband, look after him by cooking for him, washing his clothes, bear him children and other duties associated with the household. As in the common law marriage, he is the head of the family and final decision maker. Therefore the usual allegation that the woman married under common law enjoys a higher status in this respect is not accurate. In both systems the woman is subordinate to her husband (1990:61).

This account gives a condensed view of the issues that affect married women and how their role has been understood by Setswana society. Not only does this statement address certain issues related to the set tasks and responsibilities of Batswana women, but it also addresses the relation of husbands and in-laws, as well as the property rights of women.[155] Historians, feminists, anthropologists, educationists, and economists are in one accord that the absence or lack of women in contemporary public life activities can be attributed to the fact that the customary female role seems to have been primarily domestic in nature (Rebera 1994:105-112; Phaladze and Ngwenya 2001:21-36). The role of the male on the other hand has been linked to the public world. Women are therefore associated with caring, feeding and bearing of

[155] The viewpoints held by the community on issues related to women have a counter effect on men as they also place several demands upon them as well. Setiloane summarises the social challenges which are placed on the father is given the role as the 'head of the household'; "He is protector and judge, provider of their needs, their security against the outside world, representing them at 'kgotla', responsible for all their misdeeds. He exerts discipline and is regarded with the respect due to one who is his 'motse is morena': who, to his children at least, is the direct and only link with the 'badimo' of patriline" (1975:28).

children, while men are linked with the roles of protecting, providing, being an adjudicator as well as a disciplinarian. These gender roles have not only become real in the lives of women and men but have become deeply rooted in their psyches. Any person, male or female, that is not able to live within these set parameters is regarded as being odd or uncultured. Mgadla (1989:1) substantiates this tradition when he shows that Batswana children learn practical skills from their parents, whereby girl children associate with their mothers and boy children associate with their fathers. These differential African traditional practices between men and women are not only relevant to the lives of the Batswana but all other African cultures in Southern Africa.[156]

Apart from the responsibilities ascribing household codes or the roles of married women and men, another regulated social code in Tswana culture is that of women and men in the public sphere. One of these is the cultural expectation to sit apart at feasts and other social gatherings and in certain places in the village, such as the *kgotla* (council-place), which was preserved only for men (Schapera 1984:37).[157] In other public domains such as the religious, political, and community, leadership such as that of headman were exclusively male positions.[158]

Another well-defined gendered division was that of manual labour. Certain tasks were assigned to men and others to women. Manual tasks assigned to women include the tilling of the fields; the building and repairing of the walls of huts, the granaries and courtyards; the thatching of roofs with grass, taking care of the chickens, fetching water and firewood, as well as the preparation of food and the beer-making. These were and have remained women's responsibilities. Women also collected wild edible plants and did all the housework which included cooking and taking care of the children as well as taking responsibility for the art of pottery (Schapera 1984:27).

[156] Te former South African State President, Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela (2995:13) relates how in the Xhosa tradition this situation was prevalent.
[157] These traditional seating arrangements at the *kgotla* have recently changed, as well as the protocols concerning the standing of women (*cf.* Molekomme 1990:23).
[158] This has now evolved to the point that in the recent House of Chiefs in Botswana, there are four female Paramount chiefs; one of them being Chairperson of the House of Chiefs a few years ago. Even though this situation has changed, female numbers in these leadership positions are still negligible.

Setiloane qualifies the idea that the women's place customarily was at the centre of the household (*lapa*). For him, the quality of life depends on the mother or wife. He describes the *lapa* as consisting of the hut or group of huts surrounded by a rectangular log fence or stone wall. Domestic tasks such as the provision of food, the rearing and care of children and the cleanliness and maintenance of the *lapa;* as well as everything in and around the *lapa* belonged to the woman. Setiloane's analysis suggests that these labour tasks for women are linked to the care and maintenance of all those within and around the household (Setiloane 1975:28).

Schapera further confirms that the role of men was characterised as herding the cattle, hunting, ploughing, attending to the timberwork for building, clearing new fields, and assisting with weeding and reaping. Since earliest times, each household made their own clothing and ornaments, utensils and implements. Again, here tasks were gender specific with men doing all the skin, wood, metal and bone work (Schapera 1984:27). These divisions of labour were taught to children from an early age so that they could become proficient in their role as men or women and husbands and wives.[159] Children even played games specific for boys or girls.[160]

According to Molokomme, traditional law was also definite on the position of women in relation to their male-counterparts. Women were regarded as minors and under the male guardianship of their husbands, fathers or brothers. This meant women could not speak on their own behalf, they had no economic independence and access to property. This law has since been reversed in 2004.

2.3.2. Tswana Learning Content and Approaches

Communal groups were and still are used as forums to transmit knowledge to the young and old males and females (Mgadla 1989:1-3). Mgadla further shows that

[159] It should be noted that not all of these activities have remained distinctly the individual responsibility of women or men as explained by Schapera. The present researcher has witnessed many events such as funerals and weddings where both men and women help equally in the domestic chores. An example of this is with men and women cooking together. Another example was at a farm where boy and girl children were observed removing weeds together in a field. The collection of water was also done by both men and women. Even though there are these examples of change, this of course does not take away the key observation that some tasks are reserved for women and others for men.
[160] This does not mean that they did not play unisex games as well.

education in the life of the Batswana was divided into formal and informal education. He asserts that the traditional learning system of the Tswana people encompassed more than the Western idea of reading and writing or specialised skills which are referred to as schooling. Through their day-to-day lives, events and ceremonies children and adults were exposed to learning. It is a programme for life. Most of the learning that took place among the Batswana was done orally: around the fireplace, in the kitchen, at the cattle posts, during funerals, at weddings and initiation ceremonies. While Mgadla (1989:2) refers to these being "in the past," it is the observation of the present researcher that this mode of learning is still exercised in this way today.

The communal groups are used to train children in conduct and methods of work. Such learning around roles and the conduct of life which takes place through association with others is categorised by Mgadla as informal learning (1989:1-2). Mothers, with the help of other women for example, are central to the character development of children as their teacher, friend and counsellor. At a certain stage, the custody of boy children passes from the mother to the adult male members of the family so that the child can relate with men and be exposed to what are considered 'manly' responsibilities (Setiloane 1975:29).

The type of learning that is provided through traditional Tswana culture can be described with the term 'life-long learning' since traditional learning was aimed at introducing members into their social roles in society. This meant to a great extent that the cultural heritage not only needed to be preserved, but that community members needed an understanding of their societal norms. 'Life-long learning' is a profound approach to being human. It requires an attitude of being ready to learn from others. Through this prism of life, learning begins in the home where children are taught the basic rubrics of relating to others and surviving in society. Such early tuition becomes ingrained in young minds and becomes a resource for later learning processes.

'Life-long learning' expresses itself through several modes. Firstly, there are the traditional formal, more structured communal activities such as initiation or *mophato* (Mgadla 1989:3). As Setiloane (1975:37) has shown, informal learning processes

through rituals and ceremonies such as marriages, funerals, or rites of passage such as *mophato*, teaching was "direct and overt not by implication" or suggestive. This was an intense period of learning. It was an initiation into adulthood. Young people were prepared physically and mentally for their future roles as responsible community members.

Having explored the concept of learning in Tswana culture, from written sources, attention is given to the present researcher's own experience of being married to someone from the Tswana culture. This story is disclosed in line with the call by African feminist theologians for women to share their stories as part of the theologising process. Narrative is an important and legitimate form of theologising in the African context (See Nadar (2000:15-32; 2002:139-158); Moyo (2005:83-98); Phiri (2002:119-137).

Being married to a Tswana man means that the present researcher has for the past twenty-one years, experienced and witnessed the tutoring provided during marriage ceremonies, at which the bride and groom are coached on how to be a good husband and a good wife. Those older relatives who have experienced marriage themselves usually conduct this. Another example of tutoring is during the birth of a child at which the mother is in confinement. Here, the new mother is taught and guided on how to take care of her baby, how to hold and bathe the baby, how it has to suckle and how the mother must take care of herself. Here, the woman's mother or grandmother serves as tutor. In the absence of a mother or grandmother, any close female relative with children of her own can provide the necessary guidance. The idea is to pass on to inexperienced mother life skills so that she might be ready to teach when needed in the future. Another example is that of a woman who has lost her husband. She would be taken care of by an elderly female person who is also widowed. She would cook and take care of the new widow. 'Life-long learning' is thus a never-ending process for a woman.

'Life-long learning' also takes place through observation. Once a woman becomes old enough, she is invited to join the tutoring party on issues that affect family life, such as funeral gatherings, disputes and so forth. As a new person to the party, she has

to learn how to handle such discussions as an elder and have sufficient knowledge to provide guidance. These learning approaches through observation are not only applicable to Tswana culture, but are an essential part of the rich cultural tapestry of Africa.[161]

Among other approaches commonly used to provide learning are myths, riddles, taboos, stories and legends. Legends are recorded about the origins of humankind, whereas riddles are used to stimulate thinking. In order to keep a child from doing wrong, s/he would be told a taboo. One such example is that "girls should not play with boys for they will have babies." Another is that boys should not associate with girls as it could make them uninventive or dull. A consequence of such mixing would be the giving the nickname *bopharameseseng* meaning "those who hang around the dresses" (Mgadla 1989:1). These taboos are often negative, since the emphasis is on the 'do not' or 'you should not.' Repetition is yet another feature. Here, singing and dancing are used as instruments of tuition (Setiloane 1975:37; Mbiti 1975:24).

Skills were also seen as valuable assets to pass on to future generations. Mbiti (1986:22-24) names traditional music, dancing and poetry, traditional instruments, art and knowledge of medicine as kills that have been passed on from generation to generation. Woodwork, the smithing of iron ore, pottery and the sewing of blankets or karosses and basket weaving are all skills that were taught to children and young people (Mgadla 1989:5).

Through the careful actions, communal consultations and rituals, the community reminds itself of its core values and beliefs. In each process, the well of knowledge is passed on to the younger members of the community. Through this process, the learning method by and large takes place through imitation and repetition.

A critical observation of African traditional learning as a 'life-long learning' approach is that the process of learning is never complete. Conventional education approaches tend to focus on outcomes such as the completion of a course, graduation, certification and getting a good paying job as a reward of the level of education achieved. While

[161] Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela (1995:13) has recalled how important observation was in his own Xhosa culture.

these things are important facets of education, it could be argued that they are not ends in and of themselves. Learning according to traditional African approaches goes beyond a job, a graduation gown or the official recognition by the community. Its primary interest is in relation to oneself and others. It is a process of initiating a person into life in the society, around issues of behaviour, particularly with regard to character building and how to relate to others. It is also focused on responsibilities and tasks. All these lessons of life begin at the earliest stages of life. This was also the reason why those who facilitate learning are those who already have experience about life. This learning approach is not only confined to children but throughout life, one is taught and reminded about one's role within society.

This learning approach addresses life in its totality, which includes beliefs and norms of society, cultural heritage, and the rituals and festivals to initiate these beliefs into one's daily life. Even though there were no written documents, knowledge existed in the minds and practice of people's daily lives. Unlike linear Western education that measures accomplishments through the completion of a course, or the ability to read or write, here failure or success is determined through one's actions and behaviour towards others. This knowledge is not just under-girded by culture, but by religious and theological beliefs.[162]

2.3.3. African Traditional/Tswana Theology

Within this model, all of life is regarded as sacred and therefore be treated with the reverence that it deserves. From birth, children are regarded as gifts from God. This is often expressed in the birth names given to children, such as *Neo* ('gift'), *Goitseone* ('God knows') and *Lorato* ('love'). Other examples regarding God's presence in life is that children are taught from an early age that before one moves into a new home it must be fortified against evil forces and before one plants a field a similar ritual must be undertaken. Other rituals that invoke the power of God include building a new kraal or beginning a long journey. These aspects of Tswana life are passed on from one generation to another, both through the oral tradition as well as through practice (Setiloane 1975:34-35).

[162] In this regard, Oduyoye (2001:24-27) uses the term "religio-culture" to indicate how intertwined religion and culture are in African life.

Another important theological factor is that life is considered cyclical.[163] In other words, there is interrelatedness between the living and the living dead or the ancestors. As Setiloane confirms:

> Babies are the gift of 'badimo'. Throughout childhood they grow until they are initiated as adults. At death they again change their state (1975:64).

It is for this reason that the actions of those that are alive have a bearing on their relationship with the (*badimo)* ancestors. Those who have passed on *(badimo)* are also believed to be part of all living activities, whether festivities, births or deaths. The father *(ramotse)* gets guidance from *badimo*. An example is given in which, at a social gathering at home, the father would spill a little beer on the ground as a sign of the presence and 'offering' to *badimo*. This recognition of *badimo* is practiced throughout the communal groups of Batswana (Setiloane 1975:64-65). It begins with recognition that in each person there are characteristics of God *(Modimo) 'motho ke modimo*.' Human beings are therefore representatives of *Modimo* through '*badimo.'* This is particularly emphasised in the research work of Gabriel Setiloane. He believes what permeates the belief system of the Batswana is much more than the people that preside over systems, but rather that these people are representatives of '*Modimo'* and *badimo.'* According to Setswana theology people possess certain values by which they need to direct their lives. Those who are in leadership also have values by which they lead those around them. Setiloane's research suggests that the same values are expected among the living. This requires a spirit of humanity to exist among society members which is related to *badimo.* Setiloane explains that the essence of a person's humanity is the moral quality by which that person lives:

> This is not something automatically acquired...it grows with age and experience and is shown in wisdom, in care for others and in knowledge of human nature. A true Sotho-Tswana man *[sic]* is one who follows the accepted pattern of social living, who shows equanimity and maturity. He *[sic]* is generous and kind, but also strong; not only physically, but morally and spiritually (1975:40).

According to Setiloane, these are the values by which Batswana are required to live:

[163] Unlike the Judaeo-Christian-Islamic tradition in which human existence is regarded as linear, Tissa Balasuriya (1997:108) has shown that Oriental culture and thinking is also cyclical.

> Because [of] '*motho ke modimo'*, each individual deserves intense respect. But, he *[sic]* exists to be respected only because he himself *[sic]* is in proper relationship with his *[sic]* fellows, with his seniors, with *'badimo'* who are most senior of all (1975:31).

It is clear from this that traditional Setswana learning has both positive and negative characteristics. There are great difficulties with some of the content and approaches as they seem to maintain the stereotypical roles that seem to be in conflict with the theology of justice and equality advocated in this study. Indeed, they appear perpetuate the social expectations and traditional roles of women and men as well as that of boy and girl children. Phaladze and Ngwenya (2001:21) verify that certain Setswana customs and traditions have continued to contribute to the disadvantaged status of women in their quest for social justice and gender equality in contemporary Tswana Society. This is attributed to the contents of learning which seem not to change even though the socio-economic environment has evolved. In addition, it does not uphold a liberatory learning ethos as is embedded in the theology and philosophy of the Batswana peoples.

Another important aspect of African traditional learning is that the cultural heritage is continuously recalled. While it is most important for Africans to maintain their customs amidst the overwhelming dominant Western cultural influences, the dilemma is to uproot those African practices which are unjust. There are mostly no opportunities for new ideas to be introduced in the process of retrieving cultural inheritance. Many of the difficulties that women encounter today have been due to the repeated tutoring contents which are based on the historical cultural expectations of Batswana men and women. One can even conclude that contrary to Setswana theology with its emphasis on understanding the real meaning of humanity, many of the teachings have over time been misinterpreted to further exclude women.

A further concern with regard to the transmitting of information is the approach that is used in traditional Tswana culture. Evident within the learning system is the non-participation of the learner. As with what Freire calls the "banking educational method" (1996:56), the learner has very little to offer and is considered an empty container while the instructor seems to have all the knowledge. This is particularly the case of those learners who are regarded as 'without knowledge' or are regarded as

new to the experience. Such learners are either excluded from the process or are only given a chance to observe.[164]

As an adult who is raising children within the African culture, one can appreciate and acknowledge the wisdom and experiences assumed by elders and therefore understand the intention behind the approach. As one who has acquired experience from childhood towards adulthood, one tends to believe that the adult is the expert and wiser on matters that affect children or teenagers, thereby making the approach justifiable. Yet, as a facilitator of learning who advocates for a society that enables learning which creates critical thinking, the above non-participatory approach is found deliberately limiting. It also ignores the fact that contexts and culture are not static. From generation to generation women are faced with new challenges.

Yet another concern with this learning system is its exclusivity. The exclusion is centred on those who do not have the necessary experience. People might be excluded for the rest of their lives, either because they prefer not to get married or might never have children. An example of this concern is expressed by Mbiti in his description of the meaning of marriage in an African society. As he can state:

> Marriage is one experience without which a person is not considered to be complete, 'perfect,' truly a man or a woman (1986:106).

Another factor mentioned by Mbiti is society's recognition that the bearing of children is seen "as the seal of marriage". This 'incompleteness,' could result in the total exclusion or rejection of some members of the community, particularly those

[164] Julius Nyerere (1976:12) acclaims this mode of learning as one through which the young learnt by doing: "They learnt tribal history and tribal relationships by listening to the stories of elders...Through these means and by the custom of sharing to which young people were taught to conform; the values of the society were transmitted...Every adult was a teacher to a greater or lesser degree." In the same article, Nyerere promotes an educational system of self-reliance. He describes such a system as one which encourages an enquiring mind, a system that has the ability to learn from what others do and reject or adapt it to their own needs and a system that creates the confidence in an individual to have basic confidence as a free and equal member of society. It is however unclear whether such an approach presented by African traditional learning allows for unregimented mindsets as suggested by Nyerere (1976:12).

women who are unable to biologically parent a child, or women and men who have a different sexual orientation.[165]

These challenges within the African traditional learning ethos pose problems for a critical, liberatory learning culture. Not only is its content rooted in a patriarchal system but some of approaches create difficulties since once the content is rooted in the mindset it is very difficult to bring about differing or new insights which are contrary to those which are instilled throughout the years.

The learning forums and the aim of learning, which seem to be about introduction into life, are valuable and worth gaining knowledge from in a society where so little moral learning takes place. It assists the society with values and ethics that have deteriorated due to the overbearing influence of Western values and culture. Another important aspect about Tswana learning is that the entire community makes a contribution in imparting the learning content. There is no individualism within such a system. The core message of Batswana traditional learning is about the fundamental nature of humanity, how people relate to one another. This is core to the system of learning. It is the root of existence for the Batswana. Nothing can be more valuable than this in a society which has become so individualistic and materialistic. Setswana theology affirms the above beliefs encouraged by the learning system since it is a theology based on truth, equality and justice. Another admirable characteristic of Tswana learning are the variety of expressions through which it has been transferred. This too ought to be appreciated in a society that has come to put greater value on academic work. This is the African cultural learning ethos from which the WAs of the UCCSA can benefit.

[165] Oduyoye (2001:33-34) explains that wholeness is core to the values of African Society particularly through principles of harmony and integrity. As a result, there is a religio-cultural obligation in African society towards wholeness.

3. The Resource of Theological Tools

3.1. Liberation Theologies as a Resource

Liberation Theologies are ideal resources that the WAs of the UCCSA can use in order to enable them to become catalysts of liberation. According to Allan Boesak, Liberation Theology has been developed to bring about a new political consciousness. This new awareness was to give people the capacity to begin to ask critical questions about their surroundings and themselves. According to Boesak (1987:267), once a person becomes engaged in Liberation theology one realises that traditional Western theology does not allow the opportunity to ask questions. Traditional theology as referenced by Boesak is no doubt identical in form to be the dominant Western Theology which not only informed missionary and Apartheid theologies, but also which the WAs of the UCCSA. Liberation theology has a number of different expressions. The following are some of the expressions of Liberation theologies that will be explored in order to assess their usefulness in the establishment of a liberatory learning ethos in the WAs of the UCCSA.

3.1.1. African and Black Theology

This study has sought to explore the depth of the effect of Western mission and Apartheid education on the psyche of people. In contrast to the repressive White ideology of the previous Apartheid state, one can appreciate the quest in the writings of African and Black theologians to bring about a changed and liberated state of mind. There can be no doubt that this would be appropriate for the WAs of the UCCSA.

There seem to be common themes that emerge in the search of African and Black Theologians for an alternative theology. The first of these common themes is the recognition that both theologies have been born out of the contextual realities of oppression and suffering. Indeed, a number of theologians refer to the fact that these theologies were born out of a particular environment or history which necessitated their significance (See Boesak (1987:265-271); Pato (1994:152-161); Pityana (1994:173-183). They explain how the need for an African interpretation of theology

became important in order to challenge the dominance of western colonial theology and culture in Southern Africa (Pato 1994:154). This was the same for Black Theology with the emergence of Black Consciousness in the 1960s following the painful experience of the oppression of the Black population living in the White oligarchic State of South Africa (*cf.* Pityana 1994:174).

Another general argument found amongst these scholars is that they call into question the content and approaches used by the 'traditional' theology out of which African and Black Theology came about. In calling for "a radical departure from traditional exegesis," Itumeleng Jerry Mosala believes that traditional exegesis is loaded with ideologies of domination (1989:3-4). This affirms the findings of this study that traditional Western missionary and Apartheid theologies were created with a philosophy of control, over race, culture and gender. Another commonality of these two types of theologies is that they advocate for liberation of the whole person. Characteristically, Boesak named this as a "new way of theologising; a new way of believing" (1978:10). All these factors present positive tools that the WAs of the UCCSA can use in their development of a new liberatory learning ethos. However, amongst the positives there are concerns of the relevance of these theologies in the lives of people in the pew. Pato, in his reflections on African theologies refers to African theologians like Desmond Mpilo Tutu and others who believe that "unless African Theologies are practical, dynamic and based on real life experiences of the people in Africa they will remain alien and alienating" (Pato 1994:157). Another reason which has held theology back from being experienced by the masses is the fixation amongst some academics on the different discourses of Black and African Theology, and the differing views amongst Black or African Theologians respectively. Some believe that African Theology is about retrieving the African heritage whilst others believe that it is about African liberation (Ferm 1987:60). There are also variant views on whether African Theologians and Black Theologians are rivals or not (Tutu 1987:256). In light of the bigger picture of gender justice and social transformation these seem almost inconsequential discussions on the viability and veracity of the underlying methodologies and ideological underpinnings of competing theologies. If we bring about liberation through retrieving the African heritage then there is value in each of them. The Western colonial project and

Apartheid was not only a Black oppression at the hands of Whites, but it included economic and gender oppression as well. Unfortunately, gender oppression rarely features in the discourses around Black Theology and African Theology.

Desmond Mpilo Tutu is correct when he states that both theologies are part of a series of concentric circles. Hence, they ought to complement and not vie against each other (1987:262). Boesak also refers to the relation between the two theologies when he states:

> Black Theology then, must mean a search for a totally new social order, and in this search it will have to drink deep from the well of African Tradition (1987:67).

A final concern for this study with both Black and African Theology is how these theologies seem to have lost their influence. They were once regarded as relevant only for that period of time towards the independence of African countries and the downfall of the Apartheid Regime in South Africa, in spite of the fact that this research has shown that African societies are still mentally, socially and economically captive to the inherited oppressive systems of the West. The ambitions that Black and African Theologians had to change circumstances have waned considerably over time. Black and African Theologies can only become resources to church organisations such as the WAs if they are able to progress beyond the insignificant debates about the differences between Black and African and spend that retrieved energy and time in finding ways to make these very important theologies relevant to people of faith who do not have access to the academy. For example, one of the most powerful contributions of Black theology has been to deconstruct the Whiteness of Jesus. This has been an enormous breakthrough in changing people's mindsets but this has not reached organisations such as the WAs of the UCCSA. While this example might seem insignificant, it can nevertheless become a valuable tool in bringing about a change of mindset to African people through African and Black theologies.

3.1.2. Feminist Theologies

Another expression of liberation theology has been feminist theologies in all of its different forms and expressions (e.g., Womanist, mujerista, African, Asian). Feminist

theologies have made great strides in establishing women's voices in the theological academy. Bam has noted that even liberation theologies excluded women in their theological discourse. She explains that "even the most radical theologies would not go all the way and make real space for women to do and to be" (2005:9). Bam believes that women themselves had to construct their own Theology of liberation. Sister Bernard Ncube makes a concurring point when she says that Black Theology had failed to accommodate feminist theology. There has been a letdown on the part of the advocates to acknowledge that Black Theology "…is also a feminist theology" (1994:181).

In order to consider Feminist Theology in Southern Africa, one has to consider the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians. The Circle's major project according to Isabel Apawo Phiri (1997:69) involved the production of literature for the theological world. Other women theologians share Phiri's views on what the aim of the Circle has been. Nyambura Jane Njoroge explains that Mercy Amba Oduyoye who initiated the concept of the Circle had in mind:

> …all African sisters in Churches and Universities who had undertaken (or were undertaking) theological and religious studies, to initiate a programme of serious study, research and publishing in religion and culture (1997:77).

Sarojini Nadar (2009:4-5) also maps the achievements of African Feminist theologies. She believes that they have challenged and extended traditional and intercultural theologies as well as challenged mainstream and malestream Western and African theological doctrines and concepts. In spite of these strengths put forth by feminist and womanist theologians, Musimbi R. A. Kanyoro, a feminist theologian and member of the Circle, also acknowledged that in "doing theology" with rural women in Kenya she realised how distant her ideological beliefs and understanding on matters of faith were from that of the women (2002:1-5). This ideological distance referred to by Kanyoro is what I found to be the greatest cause of the gap between the majority of people and the existing theologies. It is this that has resulted in liberation theologies and its various expressions such as Black, African and Feminist. Nadar has acknowledged this when she remarked that there needs to be a shift from liberation

discourse to a liberatory pedagogy (2009:384-403).[166] This perhaps is a clear indication that similar to other expressions of liberation theology, Feminist Theology has not been successful in helping the majority of women in the church. This illustrates yet again that it is those who have the means to access to the academy who benefit mostly from the theologies that are in use. It seems that besides challenging patriarchy, oppression, racism and class distinctions, theologies should possess liberatory learning approaches through which the mindsets of people in the church can be transformed. Biko (1986:57) makes a similar point about the church as having been a bureaucratic institution far removed from the concerns of the people. He names the church as "irrelevant and an ivory tower," which has exhibited signs of acceptance of the status quo, having been used to "turning the other cheek'" in spite of the unjust system under which most its people lived and suffered. While Biko's criticism ably describes the theological interpretations held by the church in the 1970s, it remains true of the theology practiced in the church today, which sadly has not evolved, but remains much the same as it did then.

African Feminist Theology generally seems not to have helped women understand that their Christian and African background has shaped who they are as women and that being Christian or African does not mean that they ought to be oppressed. There ought to be deliberate learning opportunities for women in the church especially the WAs to help them critically reflect on their faith so that they may understand themselves as Christian women who stand for gender justice and strive for liberation. Through such occasions they should be granted a chance to seek change and find fullness of life, rather than a temporary tenet of survival. This is what signifies a true liberatory ethos.

There are other benefits from an African Feminist theological approach, by which the WAs of the UCCSA can benefit. Njoroge places much emphasis on the process of "doing theology," for it is about "emphasising the activity that produces theology" (1997:78). She goes on to accentuate terms such as "participation" and "exploration" as effective means to doing of theology. Such pragmatism has been one of the unique and and noticeable features of the Feminist approach to theology (*cf.* Phiri 1997:68-

[166] Other liberation theologians have also commented on this challenge. See Ackermann (1997:67); Pato (1994:157); Phiri (1997:76); Njoroge (1997:83).

76; Njoroge 1997:77-83). This 'doing of theology' among African Feminist theologians is also expressed in the stories they often relate. These too are valuable resources for the WAs of the UCCSA.[167]

The main concern for this present study is to explore the extent to which such theologies developed in Africa and the African Diaspora can assist in the quest to bring about a liberatory learning ethos for the WAs of the UCCSA that enables individual and communal empowerment. One can but conclude that these expressions of theology have not had an impact existentially on women's faith and life, but instead seem to operate mainly outside of their faith. These expressions of liberation theologies can only be authentic and relevant in the lives of people if they employ approaches that include all people.[168] The UCCSA Module, *Introduction to Theology* defines the working concept of theology as "a process of critical conversation about faith in God." The writer of the module further asserts:

> We engage in the process of theologising when we ask and discuss questions of faith. Theology emerges from asking critical questions based on our experience and reflection on life.[169]

Much emphasis seems to me to be on the process employed. Freire is clear on the role of learning as a means to being relevant to the people in his discussion on "Education, liberation and Church to be a Prophetic Church":

> Education must be an instrument of transforming action as a political praxis at the service of permanent human liberation. This does not happen only in the consciousness of people but presupposes a radical change of structures in which consciousness will itself be transformed (1973:106). *[italics added]*.

While the lack of authenticity is a problem, it would be incorrect to assert that Liberation Theologies have not assisted in transforming local situations. As Benjamin

[167] Narrative theologies have been explored by Nadar (2000:15-32); Moyo (2005:83-98); (Nadar (2002:139-158); Phiri (2002: 119-137).
[168] Njoroge (1997:79) regularly refers to this important aspect of 'authenticity.' In suggesting cultural and theological resources, such authenticity is crucial for the WA's since they do not know themselves or their faith authentically. Instead, they live distorted images of themselves and their Christian faith.
[169] Dibeela (2008), UCCSA, *Introduction to Theology*, Module 1/3.

Witbooi (1988:93) has shown, Liberation Theology has brought relevance to many people's situations in South Africa.

3.1.3. Kairos Theologies

With the emergence of African and Black theologies between the 1960s and the 1980's in Southern Africa, there was also what came to be known as Kairos Theology. Kairos Theology was born out of the Kairos Document (KD) that was signed by church leaders, laypeople, activists and theologians on September 25, 1985. In the KD they demanded an end to the political crisis that besieged South Africa at the time (Nolan 1994:212).

The Kairos Theology which developed out of this process seems somewhat different from other contemporary theologies in a number of ways. Albert Nolan identifies the main features of Kairos Theology as a theology that came about through a gathering of people that came together to talk about the crisis that resulted from the imposition of a State of Emergency by the Apartheid Regime. He names Kairos Theology as a "Community theology" initiated by the people. They were ordinary church people who became known as "Kairos theologians," for their academic qualifications or clergy status did not determine their theological input.

Another important feature was the emotion that the discussions created. The 'Kairos theologians' were angered, hurt and frustrated by the "flames in the townships in 1985" (Nolan 1994:213). It was this situation that made them reflect critically on their faith and ask questions about God's presence in what was happening. These were not individual, intellectual and rational theories that were formulated about the crisis; instead, the people who gathered were passionately affected by their situation, they considered their lives and those around them, seeking hope in a time of hopelessness. The discussions were complemented with research by the staff of the Institute for Contextual Theology (ICT) to reinforce their deliberations.

Nolan also names the process of social analysis as core to the discussions during the development of the KD. It was important to admit and name what the injustices were:

the oppressors were White and the oppressed were Black; the Apartheid State was regarded as unlawful and dictatorial. The theme of Christianity was also explored. Members wanted to understand how it was possible for those who were oppressors to profess to be Christian while the oppressed also called themselves Christians. Among the questions of social analysis was the dilemma of the church which so often had lost its prophetic voice for fear of the system. The church was also often divided on matters of what was considered 'evil'. The blame which the church carried was it passivity in preaching, and the formulation of statements and debates about the situation that were prevalent (Nolan 1994:215).

Emphasis in the KD was put on the Bible as the basis for discussion around the Kairos Theology. It was a reading of the Bible from the side of the oppressed. There was no reservation about naming the evil of the time, which was identified as State Theology. It was a moment of truth for those who were involved. It was a risky venture for everyone involved. Members were expected to sign the KD to express their solidarity with the oppressed and against the system.

Kairos Theology was an organic theology. It was genuine in form. There was nothing artificial about it. Nolan ascribes the value of this theology to the opportunity that was created and the method employed by ICT at the time. Like other theologies, the Kairos Theology was one of a kind. Nolan believes that it was not comprehensive enough since it only focussed on the social and political areas of people's lives and not on themes such as sin, values, creation and others (1994:217).[170] Unfortunately, the Kairos Theology was also specific to its time. It fizzled away once it was believed to have 'achieved' what it set out to do. And yet so many other Kairos' are at hand.

The main concern of this theology is to suggest tools for the WAs of the UCCSA that can assist in setting in place a liberatory ethos.

[170] Elsa Tamez indicates that sin is often reduced to moral behaviour rather than structural sin and the Good News of the Christian Gospel cannot be reduced to that (1982:67-68).

3.1.4. The Christian Bible

The faith of the WAs is generally based on the Bible. Therefore, another tool that must be reclaimed particularly because WAs take it so seriously is the Bible.[171] As with Theologies of Liberation, the Bible has also to be freed from meaningless debates which have no impact on people's lives. Instead, the Bible has to be liberated in order to release its liberatory potential. The importance of the Bible as a theological resource cannot be over emphasised in African communities. Unfortunately, the psychological and physical injustices perpetrated against women over many centuries have been justified by obtaining textual and theological support from the Bible. Instead of serving as a resource for liberation, the Bible has added to the political, cultural and economic enslavement of women. The Bible has become a book which has increased the mental and spiritual slavery of women which make them feel guilty when they do not 'obey' its teachings. This so-called 'obeying the Word of God' that has often been taken to mean upholding all of its texts, even those that are clearly oppressive and against the liberatory spirit of the Christian gospel.

Mosala's work on Black Theology explains the hermeneutical dilemma that most Africans have found themselves in when they regard every text of the Bible as the 'Word of God'. In the same way that we in Southern Africa have become mental slaves to and missionary Apartheid systems of education, we have become mental slaves to the "hermeneutics of White theologies". For Mosala (1989:3), it is this which is responsible for the inability of Black theology to become a viable theoretical weapon of struggle in the hands of the exploited masses. He argues that Black theology has served well as a weapon of criticism against White theology and society but is a theory that has not yet been owned by the Black masses. While the theory of Feminist theology has done well in critiquing patriarchal systems, it is a theology that is not owned by the majority of women.

Mosala's comments raise new concerns about the mental slavery women possess in reading and interpreting the Bible. According to Mosala, the Bible having been

[171] An example of such intense faith in the Bible amongst Africans is expressed by Kanyoro (2002:10); Phiri (1997:75). De Gruchy (1997:60) also reflects upon the Bible as a resource for doing theology in Africa.

received as the "Word of God" means that it must not to be questioned. A further consequence of this reading is the inability for people to understand the Bible as "encoded in the text as a struggle representing different positions and groups in the society behind the text" which plays itself off within a particular historical time and amongst variant traditions (Mosala 1989:27). This has resulted in a very elementary reading of the Bible.

The effects to which Mosala refers can be noticed in the relation members have with the Bible in the church today. Members do not have the ability to be at ease, to interact, to be critical about the biblical text and to be able to relate it to their context. Hence, its text has become untouchable and unquestionable for many. The biblical scholar, Marcus Borg, attribute the word-by-word method of interpretation that has been adopted by church to what he calls "earlier paradigms of Christianity." Such a reading Borg explains was grounded in the belief that the Bible was a divine book that comes from God and is guided by the Spirit (2003:7-9). Everything written in the Bible is regarded as factually and literally true. Hence, they are not to be tampered with, reinterpreted or questioned. Borg also describes how Christianity is understood from such an understanding of the biblical text. It is a life that requires one to have faith. Such faith demands total loyalty to Christianity and to the Bible as it is interpreted. The reward of 'keeping the faith' is a life in heaven, a blessed after-life. Borg believes that there is little transformational thinking that takes place with such a philosophy since the Bible is seen to be unchangeable (2003:4). This understanding of the early paradigms of Christianity was brought to Southern Africa through the missionaries and seems to have remained with the church to this day.[172]

3.1.4.1. African Women and the Bible

Mercy Amba Oduyoye recognises that women also use the Bible in very traditional ways. The present researcher's experiences of the way the WAs of the UCCSA use and interpret the Bible confirm this view. Oduyoye recognises that skills for interpretation of the Bible have become a major challenge for women theologians.

[172] This contention was borne out in the present researcher's interaction with church members and ministers.

This is particularly evidence amongst women in the Associations who have not undergone any formal theological training. This means that women should be helped to distinguish and only accept those biblical interpretations that are found to be liberating (Oduyoye 2001:13). This is the liberatory learning ethos that is needed to enable critical faith reflection for the empowerment of the WAs of the UCCSA.

In drawing from her experiences with rural women in home village in Kenya, Kanyoro has sought to explain why women read the text in such a fundamentalist way.[173] She explains that the respect women have for the Bible makes them see the written word as if it is addressed to them directly. This understanding of the Bible does not create a critical consciousness to analyse its texts, but instead simply provides answers to life for the women. Despite the fact that texts are oppressive to the position of women they have the belief that these cannot be changed as they are divinely instituted. Kanyoro uses the example of Ruth in the Old Testament to make this point. The women were faced with a situation in which a young girl became pregnant because of an older man. Discussion was pursued around the young girl's future. The women were confident that the Hebrew Scriptures confirm that it was acceptable for the young girl to marry the old man since Ruth married Boaz who was older. No questions seemed to have been asked about the circumstances under which Ruth married Boaz and perhaps whether Ruth had other options available to her instead of getting married (Kanyoro 2002:6).

As can be seen from the example used in Kanyoro's reflection, the result of this kind of interpretation of the biblical text has had detrimental effects on the lives of African women. Another outcome of such a fundamentalist understanding of the biblical text was illustrated in a debate that ensued around the abolition of the Marital Power Act in Botswana. The abolition of the law which named "the husband as head of the family" meant for some Christians that the process of abolition was going against the predestined "law" of the Bible that "men are the head of households" as per Ephesians 5:21. The consequence of this literal interpretation is meant to imply that since this precept is recorded in the Bible, no human law could reverse it.

[173] Kanyoro (200), names this Feminist cultural hermeneutics.

This interpretation was held in spite of the fact that this law gave the husband the power to have the final say in all affairs in the household which greatly disadvantaged women. No explanation or thought was given to the high number of female-headed households that are prevalent in Botswana and how this relates to the aforementioned passage in the Book of Ephesians. This is only one example of the consequence of an uncritical reading of Bible in the lives of African women. Similar fundamentalist readings of the Bible have convinced abused women to remain in violent and abusive marriages relationship for the sake of being true to the belief that "What God has joined together let no one put asunder."[174]

These inherited knowledge systems have had an enormous impact not only in the reading of the Bible, but on the people's understanding of the Christian faith. It has resulted in the outcome of how theology is done today. One such result is that Christians have become passive recipients of their faith. This seems to have much to do with the approaches and interpretations of the Christian faith that have been employed over the past centuries. These hereditary educational systems have mainly been based on approaches that have denied members the opportunity to engage critically on issues of faith and life and in its place have maintained methods that uphold the status quo even if these uphold structures and beliefs of injustice and oppression.

In spite of these fundamentalist approaches, some biblical scholars who are members of the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians have developed more liberating ways of approaching the Bible.[175] In spite of how academia has attempted to describe new ways of reading the Bible, this has generally not penetrated the life of the church. There remains a dichotomy between what appears to be an idealistic and progressive method of the academic institutions and the traditions of the church. These approaches however do take seriously African women's belief in the Bible as the Word of God and therefore aim not simply to critique the Bible, but to find liberating messages and liberating models from within its text.

[174] Phiri confirms that "the analysis of Biblical beliefs make Christian women stay in abusive relationships" (2002:21).
[175] Nadar has explored the Contextual Bible Study approach to engage women in liberative readings of the Bible (2009:384-403).

3.1.5. The Jesus Movement

Jesus provides a liberatory learning ethos through which individuals and communities can be empowered. Jesus' learning ministry can guide and enable a liberatory learning ethos for the WAs of the UCCSA. His ministry as a facilitator of learning stands out as a ministry that was deliberate in assisting those around him with crossing familiar boundaries, or questioning unfair laws and practices. He raised awareness on political, economic and social injustices in his context. He addressed every life issue that one could imagine so that it would be liberating to those around him. Most important Jesus stood out as one who engaged everyone in approaches that questioned and critiqued the realities of his socio-economic, political and religious context. He thought about these realities in the light of the covenantal principles with which he was raised. This learning culture is based on his understanding and interpretation of his beliefs around equality and directed at challenging and changing mindsets and a way of life that was a quest for justice for those who believed in his words and works. His ministry involves all of life. He therefore used every opportunity and place for learning to take place. His learning was inclusive of all and liberating to all.

One cannot read and understand the learning content or the approaches that Jesus employed if one is not familiar with the movement of Jesus which set the context that he addressed. Most studies around Jesus are philosophically based on Christology whereas my particular interest is to analyse the Bible so as to unearth and get to know Jesus' philosophy around learning content and approaches. Elsa Tamez provides a clear description of the Jesus movement[176] which explains the ethos which characterised the movement (*cf.* Horsley 1994:116-118; Borg 1998:107). The Jesus movement brings into perspective the reality of his community interaction and its interest in community learning. The movement's focus on the social circumstances of the women of Southern Africa is also important if members of the WAs are to critically understand their context and the role they need to play in order to bring about societal change.

[176] Tamez makes a clear distinction between the Christian movement beyond Palestine and the movement of Jesus of Nazareth (2001:vii).

3.1.5.1. The Person of Jesus and the Context of his Learning Ministry

Jesus was from Nazareth in Galilee. Galilee was a rural or country village known for its agrarian way of life. The African-American Black Theology scholar, James Cone, sets the scene of Jesus' birth and clearly shows the disadvantaged circumstances under which Jesus' family lived. Jesus was born in an animal stable in a manger. Cone believes that it is the circumstance of birth that defined Jesus' existence with the disadvantaged and the oppressed. Cone also refers to other signs of Jesus' family as members of the oppressed. These include:

> …the visit of the Shepherds, the journey of the wise men, Herod's killing of the babies and the economic, social and political unimportance of Mary and Joseph (1970:204-205).

Cone also finds within the narratives of Jesus' baptism and in his temptation stories illustrations of him being one of the oppressed.[177] The devil, he believes presents all kinds of enticements so that Jesus would give up his idea of serving the oppressed (Cone 1970:206). It is this background that infuses within Jesus the passion with which he carries the message of liberation. This firsthand experience gives him the authority with which he speaks about the circumstances faced by him and others. The Jewish customs and laws with which he was raised make him an expert of his surroundings.

The atmosphere in which Jesus was born, throughout his lifetime and after his death was a much politicised one. As Richard Horsley points out, the the Romans took possession of every possible territory in the Middle East at the time. Rural villages such as Galilee outside of Jerusalem were frequently governed by Roman 'puppets' that were often drawn from the local people. They administered affairs on behalf of the Roman Rulers. Roman Governors also had control over and influenced the religious leaders that were responsible for the Temple and religious services even in the farm areas such as Judea and Galilee. At this time, the Governor was Pontius

[177] Some theologians tend to speak about Jesus as one who sides with the oppressed (*Kairos Document*, 1980). I prefer to name Jesus as one who was oppressed. To think of Jesus merely siding with the oppressed does not make it clear whether you speak of him as one who was oppressed.

Pilate. This is an indication of the political power with which the Romans controlled their occupied territories.[178]

Elsa Tamez sketches the same picture of the setting in which Jesus' ministry was exercised in her (2001) book, *Jesus and Courageous Women.* She explains that, being politically conquered by Rome meant a number of things for the indigenous communities. Military forces identified as 'legions' were situated strategically to curb any protests against the Roman occupation. Military and political suppression meant economic, cultural and spiritual suppression. The economic implications were that ordinary villagers were expected to fund the expensive Roman practices and luxurious lifestyles. Newly built statues, shrines and temples, as well as big festivals are all examples of the economic burden that was put on the conquered people. The erection of such statues and shrines also meant that people were expected to pay special tribute monies for these. This was in direct conflict with the spiritual beliefs of those who worshipped the Hebrew God Yahweh. The financial obligation on locals was levied in the form of tax revenues against the citizens. The Temple also collected contributions. The harvest produce and land of the pastoral people were particularly at risk. These traditional people were also threatened by different cultural practices and opposing values. Their mainly oral laws and customs were overtaken by Roman Laws. The poorer sector of society was more open to exploitation; they were mostly the small farm labourers and fisher people who were known as 'peasants' as a way of belittling them as being uneducated and marginalized (Tamez 2001:2-4). Any person that did not adhere to these imposed systems was publicly punished. This served as a lesson to the rest of society. It was to this tyrannical context that Jesus' movement and other Galilean movements responded.

Tamez, Borg and Horsley understand Jesus' ministry as a movement against the rulers within his society (Tamez (2001:vii); Horsley (2000:59-64); Borg (1998:107-108).[179] Horsley makes a profound statement which helps us understand the distortions that have evolved in time in the interpretations of Jesus and the movement. He attributes

[178] See Horsley (2003:15-34); Tamez (1982); Wink (1998); Borg (1998), where each scholar considers the context of the Jesus movement under different themes.

[179] This I think is a deliberate comment in the light of the "Earlier paradigms of Christianity" worldview which we have taken on which equates Jesus with "individual salvation." This is contra to the understanding of Jesus' movement. *cf.* Borg (2003); Horsley (2003:5-14).

these distortions to a depoliticised Jesus who was reduced to a relatively innocuous religious teacher and a depoliticised context (2003:5-12). The argument put forth by these writers serves as a reminder that when one discusses the Jesus' movement we cannot focus on him as an isolated person and not locate him in his historical, political and economic context. This understanding of Jesus within a movement or within a community with a socio-political environment goes against many traditional Western theologies which focus on 'individual salvation' themes.

Tamez (2001:vii) expounds on this idea by saying that Jesus had followers, because his intention was to bring renewal amongst the individuals and communities of his day. This ought to help us understand that Jesus' thinking went beyond a personal change but he had a vision of social conversion. The feature of individual and community renewal which was at the heart of Jesus' vision is very important to take into consideration particularly in relation to the motivation of this study because it is only with such an outlook that we can begin to understand the need for a new ethos of learning for liberation.

The Sri Lankan Roman Catholic priest and theologian, Tissa Balasuriya, explains what Jesus looks like through the eyes of the traditional Western worldview. He traces the origins of the idea of original sin to theologians such as Augustine and Anselm who did theology from a Western traditional perspective that interpreted God outside of the human condition. Balasuriya names such theologies as "extra-historical interpretations of the fundamental human condition" (1997:169-170). Balasuriya goes on to outline the commonly interpretation of the creation and Adam's fall into sin as related in Genesis and that Jesus had come to redeem the world from the sin's curse. Jesus therefore takes on the sin of the world through his crucifixion and atones for them. Balasuriya explains the implications of this theology in that it is based on dogma rather than on the historical life and the death of Jesus. The other focus is on individual sin instead of the community. This view totally ignores the political, economic and social circumstances under which Jesus lived. It does not consider the oppression of the Roman Empire and Jesus' cruel death for the sake of opposing and challenging the "domination system," as Walter Wink refers to it (1998:63). It is not critical of the structural and systemic injustices. Those who believe in this form of

Western fundamentalist theology are passive recipients who conform to the expectation that only Jesus can offer himself to repair the world (Balasuriya 1997:169-170). It was this form of theology, carried by the Western missionaries to Southern Africa and confirmed by the Apartheid and colonial forces, which Western-mission initiated churches of Southern Africa such as the UCCSA have been educated in.

A common view noted by scholars is the contrast drawn between the earlier traditional Western worldview and the Jesus movement. This is a significant feature that cannot be ignored in this study for it explains how the liberating ethos of Jesus and his movement is overlooked by this traditional reading which has been adopted by the WAs of the UCCSA. This traditional outlook corresponds with the views of how members of the WAs read and interpret the Bible text as explained by Mosala (1989:27) and Odoyoye (2001:13) in their understanding of African interpretations of the Bible. This interpretation has greatly affected the outlook of the WAs and its members as it has distorted the authentic context and message of the Jesus' movement which in turn has affected the WAs ability to find their own authenticity.

3.1.5.2. The Content of Jesus' Materials for Learning

The common view held among New Testament scholars is that the thrust of Jesus' teaching was to help his followers understand the concept of 'the Kingdom of God.' Feminist theologians have problematised the term 'Kingdom' as an exclusive and sexist term and instead have opted for words such as 'reign' (*cf.* Tamez 1982:67).

The concept of the 'reign of God' that Jesus used needs to be interpreted within the socio-political and economic context in which Jesus operated. This socio-political metaphor is one amongst many, through which Jesus brought his message of renewal. A characteristic to take note of is that this view of the 'reign of God' introduced by Jesus was offered in direct opposition to the oppressive dominance of the Roman Empire. Ordinary people, who were subjects within the 'Kingdom of Rome,' were confined to systems of patriarchy, economic and social injustice; hence Jesus' call for an alternative system, the reign of God. The alternative system that Jesus suggested

opposed the structures and values which were enforced by the 'Kingdom of Rome' (Tamez 2001:2-4, 1982:67; See also Borg 1998:107, 2003:131-135). With the overwhelming presence of the 'Kingdom of Rome' one can understand Jesus' emphasis on the 'reign of God'. This was an intensely political statement by which Jesus campaigned for all those who were exploited by the Roman political system, including the poor, those living in rural areas and the marginalised. Jesus offered an alternative system of reign based on humane principles that cared for the nonentities and the outcasts of the Roman Empire. Horsley suggests this new system emphasised "covenantal community and cooperation". God's reign promised restoration from suffering and it was for this reason that he reached out through his healing ministry. Healing was needed in the face of the disorder and devastation which was caused by the oppressive Roman system of rule. God's reign gave the assurance that the Roman Empire could and would be overpowered. This was vividly illustrated by his driving out of demons (Luke 8:26-39), which Horsley refers to as the driving out of alien occupying forces (2003:105-116).

Wink expands on the content of Jesus' mandate and explains that Jesus opposed all systems of domination. The good news of Jesus was founded on a domination-free society. As Wink records:

> The words and deeds of Jesus reveal that he is not a minor reformer but an egalitarian prophet who repudiated the very premises of the Domination system: the right of some to lord it over others by means of power, wealth shaming or titles (1998:65).

Wink uses several examples of domination to reveal Jesus' opposition to supremacy through quoting various Bible texts. Economic inequity is one such example. Accumulated wealth according to Wink is often a reason for domination. Money and riches create levels of class and status that are based on power. These unequal relations also result in the unequal distribution of the earth's resources. Wink (1998:66) cites Matthew 6:24 in this regard, "You cannot serve God and wealth" as one such passage to explain how Jesus denounces the power of material goods.

Another type of power rejected by Jesus was that of violence. Jesus discards force as a way of bringing about equality. Other sorts of power that existed within Jewish

society and which Jesus opposed were codes about purity and holiness. The legal system through a system of imposed controls resulted in social inequality as well as patriarchy.[180] It was this kind of opposition movement that Jesus set in motion.

3.1.5.3. Learning Approaches Employed by Jesus

This researcher has come to understand Jesus mainly as one that makes learning possible to his followers in the reading of the Bible. Jesus is one who advocates for a liberatory learning ethos. It is Jesus who facilitated learning through every interaction that he had with people. His entire being, his total intent was geared towards creating opportunities for learning so that his audience might recognise the injustices of the day. This was the primary purpose for his movement. He facilitated learning as the core instrument to achieve liberation in the lives of his listeners.

The quality of Jesus' facilitation of learning is well-attested to in the Bible. He made his message known far and wide. Mark 10:1 records that "Jesus taught the crowds as was his custom," whether it be in temple, the synagogues or outdoors by a well (John 4) or in a boat (Luke 5:3), he took time to enable learning among individuals as well as with crowds. This characteristic in which Jesus uses all opportunities to reflect on the gift of life and its implications for humanity expresses a learning approach that is not confined to a particular space or time but affirms the African worldview that God is in all: in the house, while fishing, in the lands, everywhere (*cf.* Mbiti 1986:27). Jesus looked at life as a whole and therefore addressed all of life in the process of facilitating learning within that practice of healing, protesting, socialising or simply relating to people. His prophetic learning approaches he employed went hand in hand with all aspects of life; he could not do the one without the other.

Tamez believes that Jesus used examples and descriptions that were familiar to local people. He regularly used examples about sheep, money, workers and their cruel masters to demonstrate his points because that was what he and his listeners knew (Matt. 13:24-30, Mark 4:26-32). Tamez goes on to say that "Jesus' every gesture, word and deed responded to his followers' dreams of hope" (2001:4).

[180] Patriarchy is further discussed in the section 'The Jesus movement and women,' pp. 234-237.

Borg (1998:108) further explains that Jesus was offering people in his context a new cultural paradigm, and for this Jesus used metaphorical language.[181] There was no doubt that Jesus used his message to defy the Roman Empire. His use of the phrases 'reign of God,' 'Jesus is Lord' and 'Saviour' were terms that were in direct opposition to the Roman Imperial powers because these were expressions with which leaders such as Gaius Julius Caesar Augustus (63 BCE-14 CE) or Tiberius Julius Caesar Augustus (42 BCE-37 CE) were known within the Roman Kingdom (Borg 2003:126-138). Jesus also used images that were symbolic of the peoples' suffering. Other symbolic images include the cross which was a sign of the death sentence received by many for being insubordinate to their rulers. This was marked how his own life was put to an end by the authorities as a result of his forthrightness. The sharing of the Last Supper that Jesus had with his disciples was symbolic of his envisaging and articulation of the equal sharing of resources unlike the time in which the rich would be made richer and the poor poorer (Mark 14:17-25). At the same event, Jesus washes the feet of his disciples; by so-doing, Jesus once again overturns the regular concept of leadership in which those who are in leadership expect to be held in high regard (John 13:1-17). Tamez explains that Jesus used images that were familiar to him and to those around him. Other examples that Jesus used were of fields, figs and vineyards (Tamez 2001:2). All the examples around metaphorical images seem to be applicable to Jesus' main purpose of confronting the systems that were in operation at the time (Wink 1998:63-81; Borg 1998:101).

Another methodology that Jesus often used as a learning strategy was that of the discourse. These discourses were dialogical, examples of which are especially present in the Gospel of John. Some well-known examples include his encounter with Nicodemus (John 3:1-21) his meeting with the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4). In the case of the latter he confronts her context. Not only does he help her know herself as an individual, but he delves into her past, in order to help her understand where she was coming from and where she was then. He helps her reflect on the influences on her life, but also how she ought to direct her future. Their conversation goes on to delve into the poor relationships between the Jews and the Samaritans and

[181] As Borg can state, "Clearly, he was brilliant. His use of language was remarkable and poetic, filled with images and stories. He had a metaphoric mind" (1998:101).

how theological differences have historically directed such differences. Together, the two of them dialogue about every aspect that affects her life.

One more recognisable learning approach is Jesus' use of the question-posing method. This is notable within various conversations that he engaged in. Instead of giving people answers to their questions he probes for answers from them, challenging their ability to think critically. An example is found on the journey to Jerusalem as he asks his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" (Luke 9:18-21). The question then leads to a long theological reflection, which ends with the declaration by Simon Peter which reflects his own perception of Christ when he declares, "The Christ of God" (Luke 9:20). A second approach that can be draw from this same passage has to do with Jesus' self-assessment, "Who do the multitude say that I am?" (Luke 9:18). Jesus' learning intention here could have been to help his disciples form an opinion of how the masses had come to understand him.

An added approach used by Jesus is that he lived by example. His teaching was that which he believed in and lived. It is for this reason that he could confidently confirm opinions such as that in John 14:6 in which he says, "I am the way, the truth and the life." This Borg (2003:26) believes was at the centre of Jesus' teaching. Here, Jesus expected his disciples to follow his example. The way and truth that Jesus was talking about exemplified his own life's journey. This often meant that Jesus had to be critical of the values with which he was raised. He critiqued his own Jewish belief system for the sake of justice.[182] The characteristic of him reviewing his own Jewish upbringing makes him stand out as one who strives to live differently. One of the areas questionable in Jewish life was their relationship with other religious and cultural traditions. There are many examples in the gospels in which Jesus practices this envisioned relationship in which ethnic boundaries are broken down; he relates to and sits with those who come from different cultural backgrounds (John 4) so as to make his message valid.

Not only did Jesus talk about the relations between the Jews and the Samaritans but he uses examples that reflect the discordant relationship of the two groups for the Jews to

[182] See Tamez (2001:5) "As a Jewish man, he saw the ways that Jewish society discriminates…"

reflect on. An example of this is when Jesus tells the story of the 'The Good Samaritan' to do this self-critique amongst the Jews. The question that follows is critical for self-analysis; "Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbour...?" Not only does Jesus help the lawyer to analyse his own beliefs, his customs but he also guides him to reflect on his area of expertise, the laws (Luke 10:25-37). So he returns the initial question that the lawyer posed to him "And who is my neighbour?" to answer for himself, after he told the parable.

Jesus again uses the problem-posing learning method which allows the listeners to answer. He does not give them the answers, only the case study. This was a popular approach employed by Jesus. He does not provide the answers but allows people to respond themselves to the questions that they have after he has sketched a scenario and given time for reflection.

Another method is Jesus' transmission of values in the process of mentoring and nurturing his disciples. Throughout his ministry, Jesus cultivates a spirit of justice amongst them. He nurtures them by walking alongside them showing them examples of alternative values by exposing them to others, through observing the lifestyles of others, or simply by providing them with information. Mark 8:31-38 is one such example of an information session in which Jesus prepares his disciples for the confrontation that will take place. On another occasion (Mark 12:41-44), Jesus was sitting near the temple and observing people putting offerings in the box. Once they have observed, Jesus asks his disciples to gather around him so that they could discuss what has just happened. Hence, by doing, exposure and conversation Jesus helps his followers to understand what his values are about.

An important feature that is key to Jesus' facilitation of learning was that his intention for each hearer to understand liberation. Jesus was clear that he was speaking out for and with the disadvantaged, the dispossessed, and the oppressed because he was one of them.[183] This part of his ministry is expressed in his manifesto at the beginning of his ministry. Luke 4:16-20 clearly sets out the kind of community that he envisioned. Throughout his lifetime, and even after his death, Jesus spoke as one who was

[183] See Borg (1998:101), where he states, "Jesus was a peasant, which tells us about his social class..." This goes against popular theological views that we need to 'side with the poor.'

disadvantaged. He spoke out for those who were disregarded by society, the widows, the women, the Samaritans, those who needed healing, those who did not count in society. He helped people to feel renewed,[184] to become fully human, to save them from the oppressions and indignity that they faced, that which troubled them and caused them pain. His learning therefore was geared towards liberation. This he did through making them aware of their social reality (Matt. 19:16-22). The sources of Jesus' teaching were not some textbook facts, but the real experiences and the prior knowledge of those he addressed. He knew about the everyday concerns of his community, who they were and he spoke to them in his public discourses.

Jesus did not only address those who were disadvantaged by the system. He also reprimanded those who created the system; both those who governed the Empire and the elite that benefited from the system, including the religious leaders who benefitted from their allegiance to the Roman Empire. All those who benefited from the Imperial system were confronted through the advocacy of his teaching. The rich young man is one such example; he confronts him head on for the riches that he possesses. Jesus puts the lifestyle of the young man against values of justice (Mark 10:17-25). A similar incident is Jesus' encounter with Zacchaeus, the Chief Tax collector (Luke 19:1-10). Zacchaeus too did not go unchallenged by Jesus. Zacchaeus was recognised as a symbol of the Imperial system because he collected taxes on behalf of the system. The Pharisees, Scribes and High Priests were also some of those that were regularly confronted by Jesus. Examples are found in Mark 11:15-18 and 12:1-12. His judgment over the Temple system was unambiguous because the Temple System wielded further oppression over the people (Mark 13:1-2). The oppression practiced within the Temple was based along the same lines of the Roman system which exploited and excluded the majority who were disadvantaged (Horsely 2003:79-104). The narrative of Jesus overturning the tables in the temple is a good illustration of his constant confrontation with domination. These examples expose yet a different model; one in which Jesus deals with the topic frankly.

In the same way that Jesus directed his learning to the community, he was also concerned with the lives of individuals. Often through an individual's reflection, the

[184] Tamez (2001:vii) explains that the primary purpose of the Jesus movement was to enable renewal; *cf.* Horsley (2003:105).

conversation shows the impact of situations on the society. Again, here one can use the examples of Jesus' interaction with Nicodemus and the woman at the well. The theme though remains the same which is transformation or renewal for the sake of liberation. One of the metaphorical methods that Jesus used to express this personal liberation is "to be born again/born from above" (John 3:3). This can be articulated as dying to an old identity and being born into a new identity that correlates with the expectations for accepting the values of the reign of God (Borg 2003:103-108). In order for one to be born into this new identity one needs to know and understand what the character of God's reign was like. The values of God's reign reflect the character of God which needs to be understood as being different from, and in opposition to the Roman heroes and gods. The danger of this focus on the personal level has always been the misunderstanding to "domesticate" "depoliticise" or create an "individualistic salvation" interpretation of Jesus' movement (Horsley 2003:9). In contradistinction to this, the liberatory ethos advocated by the Jesus' movement needs to be understood in relation to the community in which the individual lives.

Carlos Dreher discerns another learning approach used by Jesus with the Emmaus story (Luke 24:13-24). He names this "popular practice" (1992:7). Dreher sets out the various stages of this method. In his meeting with the couple, Jesus first creates a relationship so that he might establish trust between himself and the couple. He then initiates a conversation by asking them how they are. This results in them emptying themselves of all their emotions about the circumstances which they find themselves in. Jesus listens while the couple analyse their own reality. They describe it for themselves. They name it as it was. Jesus does not put words in their mouths, but allows them to define their reality for themselves. Jesus then gives them opportunity to exchange knowledge where he puts into perspective his own understanding of the situation. This is an important approach in which Jesus enables social analysis to be done not from his understanding but from the lived reality of the people.

Jesus as a facilitator of learning has been critiqued for the way he related to some people. Dreher calls this a "pedagogical posture" (Dreher 1992:9). The Emmaus passage is one such passage in which Jesus is being critiqued for his attitude towards the couple. Jesus seems impatient with them, he calls them foolish. Another example

in which Jesus seemed similarly harsh and acted out of character with his listener is in the passage where he tells the Syro-phoenician woman that he did not come for her but "to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. 15:24).

A final approach is recorded in Luke 10. The passage explains how Jesus sent out seventy of his followers. These disciples are being prepared to work amongst the community members. Jesus asks them to go into the homes of all and to eat what the people eat. They were not to take any money bags and no extra pair of sandals. This was not a community that the followers hailed from. They therefore had to understand the culture, faith and beliefs of the community. This exposure that Jesus creates for those whom he worked with was a most valuable experience for them. The story is also a reflection of the fact that Jesus does not minister on his own but shares his leadership with many others in the movement. This is a sign of the trust that he exhibited with those he walked with; that they too are capable of facilitating learning.

3.1.5.4. The Jesus Movement and Women

Tamez explains that the Jesus movement was well-accepted by women. Women either served as disciples of this movement (Luke 8:1-3), or because they were in need of help as well as others who were rich but still adopted his notions because they heard about him, such as Johanna who was the wife of the administrator for Herod Agrippa. There were also those that provided economic support for the movement. All these women found within the Jesus' movement dignity and worth which was eradicated by the customs of the patriarchal society (Tamez 2001:4-9).

Wink gives details of Jesus' views in relation to patriarchy. Jesus saw patriarchy as yet another form of domination in the Jewish society. He contravened all laws and customs that positioned women on an unfair footing to their male counterparts. According to Wink, Jesus regarded the family structure as a model which upheld patriarchy and male dominance. He notes Jesus' deliberate omission of the word 'father' from scripture when he says; 'Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother (Mark 3:35).' Wink agrees with Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza that the term 'father' was used by design to refer to God as it was making reference to

a different type of father. The one term was put in opposition to the other in the same way as Jesus used the reign of God as opposed to the Kingdom of Rome. In this way, Jesus challenges the patriarchal dominance of the father; "No one can now claim the authority of the father, because that power belongs to God alone" (Wink 1998:77).

Even though the Bible is loaded with patriarchy and male bias, African women theologians have engaged with biblical passages and found within them 'fullness of life' for all women. Feminists have particularly deliberated on the person of Jesus Christ and the implications of Jesus' character for their own contexts. African feminist theologians have not only found liberation for women within Jesus' relationship with women in the Gospels but also see liberation in the personalities and the roles women themselves play in the Bible. These examples are also important for this proposal of a liberatory ethos for the WAs of the UCCSA.

Oduyoye (1986:97-108) writes about the image of a Jesus that saves. This salvific character of Jesus is particularly recognised in his relationship with the poor and the marginalised and those who were held captive by the dominant systems in the Gospels, mostly women. An example of this is found in Mark 5:21-43 with the healing of the woman who was bleeding for twelve years. The woman is saved from her physical, economical and social disease to which she was confined. Jesus boldly proclaimed this deliverance through his deeds but also in the way he addresses and gives acknowledgment to those he saved "Daughter your faith has made you well" (Mark 5:34). This likeness is a perfect one for women who suffer under various circumstances and since it is the same suffering that Jesus endured too.

Jesus' relation with women is another special characteristic to which women are drawn. Bette Ekeya (1994:145) believes that Jesus had every reason to perpetuate the subjugation of women as a Jewish man. Though, in spite of this patriarchal Jewish culture from which he came and the dominant patriarchal culture promoted by the Romans, Jesus defied these and gave women an equal place next to their male counterparts in society. His relation with Mary and Martha in Luke 10:38-42 is a perfect example of how he regards their roles as women differently from that which society had portrayed. Ekeya sees subservience and subjugation as one of the main

causes of what prevents women from "fully apprehending the truly good news that Jesus Christ's coming has brought especially for women" (1988:17-29).[185]

Another important feature which women relate to is Jesus' victory over suffering and death through the resurrection. This is a story that has great significance for women who are yearning for new life beyond their suffering. The other reason why the resurrection has a significant impact on the faith of women is in the fact that women themselves are at the centre of the story. The role of Joanna, Mary the mother of James, Mary Magdalene and the other women is immortalised in the narrative as it records them as the first witnesses of the resurrection (Luke 24).

Women, like these in the resurrection story who were or became disciples and many who are nameless in the text have been part of the Jesus movement. These are the stories of women that have had a huge impact on women. One example is the story of Mary, the mother of Jesus. Her calling as a young, poor woman who became a mother under difficult circumstances has much significance and relevance for women in Africa. The song of liberation (the Magnificat), her continued relationship with Jesus as his mother, the fact that she became part of his movement and her being there to the very end is a very inspirational story for women. Marie Assaad regards Mary as a key figure of empowerment and hope, a figure of compassion, the Mother of God, a builder of solidarity and a creator of new images. Assaad (1994:204-208) names Mary as one who reverses her natural order. Mary serves as the inspiration behind Jesus' movement, not the other way around.

Mary is but one example amongst many others. The Syro-Phoenician woman is another biblical figure that has struck a cord with feminists. Despite her being female and a non-Jew, which made her secondary to the rest of society, she was outspoken and defiant of the worldview that Jesus wanted to operate from. She is a perfect example of one standing up for what she believes in.

[185] I cannot but agree with this statement made by Ekeya. This is why I believe that the stories related to Jesus' association with women in which he accepts, recognises and respects their humanity is vital for us to rehearse. These examples express the values of equality and justice that Jesus upholds.

So the stories of women and Jesus' values and relation towards them have become of vital importance for African feminists' understanding of their own condition and in presenting 'fullness of life' for women in Africa. This does not mean that the researcher is supportive of the way Jesus has been perceived by African Feminist theologians. Even though Hinga (1994:261-268) starts off with very thoughtful reflections on the distortions that have been created by Western Traditional theologies and ideologies in Africa, she nevertheless maintains the traditional image of Jesus the Christ as "personal Saviour and personal friend". Hinga and other African Feminist Theologians suggest images of Jesus that are unhelpful for the liberation of the WAs of the UCCSA. This general viewpoint of African Feminist Theologians seems to be one in which they relate to Jesus the Christ rather than the Jesus of the movement.[186] Nolan believes that the view held by many African Feminist theologians, whereby, "Jesus is a much underrated man. To deprive him of his humanity is to deprive him of his greatness" (Nolan; 1978, 117). This relation to Jesus the Christ is no different from the WAs viewpoint of Jesus and would not be valuable for the WAs to make a radical change to their current ethos.

3.1.5.5. Beyond the Jesus Movement

Subsequent to the Jesus movement era was what became commonly known as missionary journeys of Jesus' followers through which the transformation message against the dominance of the Roman Empire continued to be expressed.[187] During these missionary journeys, the apostles changed from preaching about Jesus of Nazareth to Jesus the Christ. This pressure group expanded far and wide beyond the culture of the Jewish society. First they were known as "people of the way" and then later were nicknamed "Christians" (Acts 11:26).

[186] As Oduyoye has confirmed: "The imagery of God in Christ as Redeemer is one that speaks clearly to Africa" (1986:102). Nasimiyu-Wasike (1991:77-79) also suggests African Christological models for women. Amongst some of these is an eschatological model. Even though Nadar comments on the innovative work of these women (Nadar 2005:22), I find them no different from those of the Women's Associations.

[187] Tamez (2001:vii, 9) names this as the Christian movement beyond Palestine. She thinks that in spite of these movements being seen as different, she prefers to identify them as one liberation movement in the face of the Pax Romana.

The Acts of the Apostles records how the movement against the authorities spread out further and further from one place to another. The Bible informs us of how followers of the Jesus movement such as Stephen, Lydia, Priscilla, Peter, Paul and Mark were devoted to spreading a message which affirmed alternative values to the Roman belief system. In every village they tried to set up alternative communities who would uphold values and cultures that were contrary to the conventional. We are also told how many of these disciples paid with their lives for this anti-Imperial position. The first person who was martyred was Stephen (Acts 7).

Horsley believes that there was also another side to the establishment of Christianity which needs to be admitted to. He believes that all the signs are evident in the New Testament and other Christian literature of a message that compromised Jesus' transformational message of justice.[188] Horsley (2003:129-136) blames the very apostles who resisted Roman Imperialism for being responsible and incorporating a hierarchical majestic order by practicing this exclusivist arrangement themselves in the Christian structure which resulted in orthodoxy.

Horsley also tells us that as the Christian movement gained strength it cunningly became integrated into the Roman Empire. This was easier than attempts to ward it off and fight against it:

> After generations of increasing accommodation to the imperial order, the churches were finally recognised as the official, established religion of the Roman Empire by the emperor Constantine (Horsley 2003:135).

Ever since then the initial message of the movement of Jesus became diluted and bargained with, with every following century. This was a very sad state of affairs for the liberatory learning ethos for which the Jesus of Nazareth was crucified.

These negotiated mixed Christian messages have become a reality in the different translations of the Bible. These messages are there in the many denominations and

[188] I referred to Kwesi Dickson (1991) in chapter 5 who mentions examples in the New Testament as signs of the imperialism that crept into the movement. Wink (1998:129-130) also provides examples of how this liberatory message of the Jesus movement changed over time.

cults who profess to be Christian and uphold different doctrines. Some of these are steeped in ideologies such as Apartheid and missionary exclusive beliefs which were discussed earlier. Jesus' message of liberation has drowned through the ages. As a result, the same message of Jesus that brought about liberation for women then has been submerged with alternative theologies today.

4. Summary

It is impossible for to unpack every approach that Jesus used. The variety of methods through which he interacted with people is remarkable to learn from and a most fascinating subject to investigate. One can in the above fashion scrutinise every interaction that Jesus had with people to reveal his intent and learning ethos. Jesus' ethos is one of liberation around the economy, around gender, social and religious justice through which he wants empowerment for individuals and communities. One can only echo Borg's observations that he was brilliant (1998:101). It is not the object of this study to engage in a comprehensive investigation. Indeed, this study can only serve as a limited study into a topic that requires further in-depth exploration. Of particular interest is the strength of Jesus' liberatory learning ethos which has timeless meaning, not only for his own context, but filled with meaning even for us today.

The objective of this chapter was to explore to what extent African culture and theological resources developed in Southern Africa can assist in the quest to shape a liberatory learning ethos for the WAs of the UCCSA. What has emerged is a noteworthy resemblance in the spirit of the Southern African cultural ethos and that suggested by theologians as well as in the values of the Jesus movement. The challenge which remains is to propose ways in which these can be harnessed. The final chapter that follows will seek to summarise the findings of this study and suggest some constructive ways forward.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUDING REMARKS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Introduction

This chapter will draw together the threads of this study in the form of a summary to recap what this research project intended to investigate and make some recommendations for what needs to happen in order for women to discover a different liberating ethos of learning from what they currently have.

This study came about due to an intense unease on the part of the present researcher about the lack or absence of a critical interaction with the oppressive systems in church and society by UCCSA members. It began with a case study of the WAs of the UCCSA to uncover why this critical engagement is not evident through a survey of the ethos of learning within the UCCSA and the WAs. This was done through a literature survey of the inherited educational systems of the WA's. The study demonstrated that the WAs in the UCCSA do not impart a liberatory ethos for the empowerment of their members. This is in spite of the overwhelming challenges faced by African women in church and society at this time. The WAs have inherited a learning ethos from the Global North Western missionary and apartheid legacies that have not been liberating. Therefore, the WAs need to embrace values espoused both in African culture and the theological resources which have been developed in Southern Africa in order to craft a liberatory learning ethos for themselves. The following recommendations constitute some of those values through which such an ethos can be crafted. The recommendations are drawn from the values or tools that have been filtered from within the African culture and theological resources. It is these common values within the cultural and theological resources that can become tools for a liberatory learning ethos for the African women of the SADC Region. These recommendations are not meant to be exhaustive, but derive impetus from what

I have learned through the study in terms of the non-liberatory learning patterns in the WA's.

2. Recommendations

While I have been critical of some of the outcomes of liberation theology being confined to the academy, ironically, one of the 'success stories' of liberation theology and its ability to impact on communities has been the 'see, judge, act method' that has developed over time. The learning values of the 'see, judge, act' method is essentially participatory and it is about developing critical consciousness.

A 'see, judge, act' approach is being suggested here in order to provide some criteria for the WAs of the UCCSA to craft a liberatory learning ethos. This is an interpretive model that was originally introduced in the UCCSA to assist churches to do contextual analysis in their reading of the Bible (De Gruchy and van der Water 1993:24).[189] These are drawn from the common values which have been identified in the tools above and common which are duly summarised below.

2.1. See

The first commonality is to know why such a liberatory learning ethos is required. As the study has shown, the answers to this question lie in the overwhelming challenges that African women face today. This first stage of the 'see, judge, act' method places much emphasis on the 'see' phase—that is, it encourages the participants to be able to 'see' the situation for themselves.[190] What is crucial is the ability to 'feel' as well.[191] Kairos Theology's "flames in the townships" (Nolan 1994:213) and African Feminist Theology's "irruption" (Oduyoye 1994:25) gave rise to the urgency of human liberation from oppression. These incidences are signs that an ethos can only be born from within, and from a deep emotional conviction. It is from within that African

[189] Boff and Boff refer to these same three stages as 'mediations' when used within the framework of Liberation Theology, namely, socio-analytical, hermeneutical and practical mediation (Boff and Boff 1987:24).
[190] Boff and Boff name this process socio-analytical intervention (1987:22-27).
[191] It is this 'feeling' that motivated Freire (1996) and Biko (1986) to seek human liberation from oppression. This capacity to 'feel' is often found lacking in other theological approaches.

women need to feel their anger, hurt and frustration with how they are treated. Emotions such as these make liberatory learning a genuine, organic exercise. This does not mean that research or social analysis should be excluded. In effect, these two qualities should complement one another in order for the WAs of the UCCSA to address issues of substance. This relates to the dialectical approach which is suggested by the Boff brothers, that we ought not to engage superficially with reasons of oppression but dig deep into the understanding of history for such policies and the thinking that guides such beliefs (Boff and Boff 1987:22-27).

It is out of these emotions and facts that theology should emerge. Questions need to be asked about God, about the Bible and about Jesus in order to understand the polity and practices of the church in general and the WAs of the UCCSA in particular. This is demonstrated well in the following quote:

> We engage in the process of theologising when we ask and discuss questions of faith. Theology emerges from asking critical questions based on our experience and reflection on life.[192]

2.2. Judge

This leads us into the second element of our interpretive model, the "judge" phase. Liberation theologians regard this second phase as hermeneutical mediation. In other words, "What has the word of God to say about this?" (Boff and Boff 1987:32).

The researcher, as with some African feminists (Oduyoye 2001:24-27; Kanyoro 2002) wants to place emphasis on the relationship that exists between culture and faith and propose that an critical examination is needed of African cultural beliefs and theological resources. The WAs of the UCCSA should objectively 'judge' or weigh up the consequences of why the situation is as it is through the lenses of their cultural traditions and Christian faith. This can only be done when the WAs engage in a process by which they critical examine and retrieve that which is core to their cultural traditions and Christian faith. This is where the contextual approach to the Bible and the Jesus movement cannot be overstated. Correlations between the Jesus movement

[192] UCCSA, *Introduction to Theology*, Module 1/3.

and African culture could bring about radical changes to the ethos of the WAs of the UCCSA.

Some of the commonalities that have been drawn from the tools above are that African culture is an introduction into life. The fundamental essence of theology and learning is about humanity which encapsulates truth, equality and justice. The emphasis is on knowing your own self but also how you relate to others. It is more than knowing the self but as Biko correctly expressed it, it is the search for "true humanity" (1986:91), the authentic self and how we relate to others in the world in which we live. These are the motivations for the evolution and interpretation of liberation theologies amidst the dominance and imposition of Western missionary theology and culture in Southern Africa (Pato 1994:154).[193] For African women, it is more than finding their humanity as an African or being Black; it means forming their own Theology of Liberation through which they can discern their humanity of being woman. Such a theology for African women is an absolute necessity, one which the WAs of the UCCSA cannot do without.

These foundational convictions should be at the centre of the existence for the WAs of the UCCSA. They should feature strongly in their policy documents and be core to all their programmes and discussions. These key convictions set the basis for a liberatory learning ethos through which new seeds could be planted in the hearts and minds of the WAs of the UCCSA members and new outlooks harvested.

2.3. Act

Finally, the question is how the WAs of the UCCSA attain this liberatory learning ethos for the empowerment of it members? The concluding phase of our interpretive model or "practical meditation" (Boff and Boff 1987:41), is the 'act' phase. In order to be authentic, these practical action steps need to be in line with the principles upheld by the cultural traditions and Christian faith of African women.

[193] As Boesak (1987:67) notes, "Black Theology then, must mean a search for a totally new social order, and in this search it will have to drink deep from the well of African Tradition."

Here, the values around doing theology from the perspective of African Feminist Theology perspective prove invaluable. Njoroge's emphasis on participation and exploration (1997:78) are in line with the values upheld in the Kairos Theology and the ethos of African cultural learning. It accentuates the entire community. No person should be excluded from the discussions. There are no hierarchies. This embraces Mr. Mosimakoko's reflection[194] that it should be enabling to all, irrespective of one's status, qualifications or ability. This is already an advantage for the WAs of the UCCSA as their membership is inclusive of age and qualification, even though not of race. Another advantage to what the WAs of the UCCSA already practice is the variety of expressions through which the learning content can be structured. This has also been explored by some African feminists[195] and is inherent in African culture. These expressions are in the form of stories, songs, art, poems and many others. They come naturally to the WAs of the UCCSA. Their oral character is as intrinsic to the WAs of the UCCSA as it is in African culture.

3. Final Summary

These cultural and theological elements provide powerful contributions to deconstruct the current enslaving learning ethos and distortions that have been part of the faith of the women of the WAs for centuries. They also put in a nutshell, the theoretical frameworks of Village Learning and Feminist Theology as a basis for a new liberatory ethos for the empowerment of the members of the WAs of the UCCSA. My sincerest hope is that the findings of this study will spur the UCCSA and particularly the WA's to find a liberatory ethos of learning that will enable the fullness of life promised to all, irrespective of race, class or gender.

[194] See chapter 1, pp. 38-41.
[195] Narrative theologies have been explored by Kanyoro (2002); Fulata (2006) and Oduyoye (1995).

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APPENDIX I

UCCSA VISION PLAN SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Our Diversity	Lack of accountability under guidance of the congregation	Material resources	Rigid in terms of tradition
Human Resources (Men, Woman, Youth)	Not supporting one another	Chances of coming together in meeting, workshops, assemblies, etc.	Loss of membership due to disgruntled members that have left the church
Visioning Process	Lack of interdependence, we exist independently	Developing policies and procedures	Absence of continued study for ministers, no spirit of going any further
Financial Capacity	Lack of memory and technical review	Leadership training (basic theological and upper level)	Failure to contain or involve young people
Expertise (in various fields)	Lack of participation in society and justice issues	Awareness of mission responsibility	Decline in membership, why are they leaving
International Relations	Absence of formal critical division in ministerial	Spiritual growth and development	Congregationalism
Freedom of Worship	Assembly and other meeting reporting focuses too much on the past, leaves a big gap for future planning	Outreach for advocacy relief	Leaving pastoral ministry for better economic opportunities
Involvement of Eucharist	Division of men/woman in different organizations	Partnership with partner churches, government organisations, and NGO's	Racism dividing the running of the church
Various Ministries	Education (shortage of trained ministers, Sunday school	Making full use of global partnerships and	Regionalisation (not willing or able to become a

	teachers, youth leaders, etc.)	forging links	part of the larger family)
Faithful Membership throughout Southern Africa	Inability to deal with different race, gender, etc.	Rethinking Christian education and being a leader in theological education	Lack of financials
Youth still responding to ministerial call	Lack of sharing of information and feedback	Income generation projects throughout regions (utilise what we already have)	HIV/AIDS
Unity that enables different people to work together	Financial disobedience	Take advantage of regional economic trends	Poverty
Well educated ministry	Poverty	Commitment to sharing resources	Age gaps
Long history of working together	Non-utilization of expertise	Turn weaknesses into opportunities	Lack of full participation
Independence of local churches	Lack of fellowship	Create financial sustainability	Inability to communicate
Interdependence of the five synods	Non-utilization of international relationships	Having open and friendly relationships with government	We tend to take our existence for granted
Structure allows for leadership to change often	Lack of technological ability (phone, fax, etc.)	National enrichment	Rural church loss
Partner relations with other organizations (CWM, CGM, etc.)	Congregationalism	Inclusiveness of membership at all levels of leadership	More dictatorial leadership is emerging within the congregational system
Strong ministry for HIV/AIDS	Voting system divides us	Redefine congregational identity	Youth non-existence in the church
Mission Council brings different groups and ministries together	Gender imbalance at forums	Making use of theological commission to respond to national issues	Lack of ministers (ministering to 2-3 churches at one time)
Fairly young church with young vision and leadership	Belief in patriarchal systems	Rethink mission council	Lack of clarity on our spirituality
Richness of scope	Frequently lose youth to other denominations	Having a voice in influence of	

		governmental structures
Woman involvement	Sense of responding on national issues is non-existent	
Quality of persons	Hardly have means/strategies in winning young persons and anyone that was not born into the denomination Do not use mission council to it's fullest High propensity for conflict and no conflict resolution Minister support varies from synod to synod Lack of Christian education materials Structures do not reflect the demographics Often do not honour policy documents Our stewardship Lost prophetic voice No coordination of ministries (HIV/AIDS, poverty, etc.) Non-coordination in training for leadership as denomination Lack of ongoing training and specialization	

APPENDIX II

UCCSA SOUTH AFRICA SYNOD MISSION STATEMENT[1]

WE BELIEVE THAT….

God is the source of all life
Jesus is Lord of all
The Holy Spirit is actively transforming the whole creation
The church is a community of believers, called to uphold the values of the gospel and the kingdom of God
We are a Christ-centred community of believers
God creates humankind to fellowship with God and one another
We must acknowledge our diversity as a family
God creates all people equal and all have the right to fullness of life
We are servants of transformation and we are called to unity
God creates us to work together for God's purposes through the richness of our diversity
The Holy Spirit gives a variety of gifts for the enrichment of God's people
Everyone is called for a specific purpose in fulfilling God's plan
God calls and empowers us to fulfil God's purposes
We are called to be faithful stewards
God, through God's grace continues to guide and enlighten the church
There is a future

WE COMMIT OURSELVES TO….

Continuously proclaim the Lordship and the love of Christ Jesus in Church and Society.
Be a welcoming, embracing, caring and inclusive church, never to discriminate, ignore, reject, or undermine any person or group.
Pursue the fullness of life given by Christ Jesus.

To fight all forms of corruption within the church and society

Re-reading the bible in light of our experience and mission.

Journeying together in the search for transformation of the systems that deny justice, equality, and human rights.

Become what God wants us to be.

[1] <http://www.sasynod.org.za/synodretired/vision_mission.html/> [Accessed March 17, 2011].

APPENDIX III

UCCSA TEAM VISIT SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Longstanding ordination of women	Struggle to implement policy	Vision plan in regions, synods and denomination gives direction	Economic and political challenges
Policy exists for gender equality and opportunities for leadership	Lack of resources to implement programmes and projects	Plan for combining women's associations and to establish women's desk	HIV-AIDS
Enabling resolutions exist for gender balance, formation of gender committee Women Ministers' forum	Lack of understanding of diverse parts of the church often becomes a tool for division e.g. language	Launch of Social Justice initiative for anti-sexism and anti-racism campaign	Culture of materialism and individualism
Groups, various men and women groups provide opportunities for learning	Support for gender equity not practiced in church	The variety of organisations and other groups in the church- women's group, men's group, Sunday school, youth provide opportunities and spaces for learning	Mis-interpretation and misunderstanding of African culture, traditions and Biblical interpretation
Global partnerships e.g., CWM, URC	Socialization that determines specific roles for women and men	Sharing 'good news' stories and models of inclusiveness and transformational learning e.g., Lephoi Centre who are working with differently - abled children	Structures that do not enable mission and lack of understanding of covenant relationship within UCCSA
Quality theological education that includes gender sensitivity	Lack of economic independence for women	Culture of inclusiveness, hospitality and respect	

Ecumenical relations with organisations that are dealing with similar issues e.g. national councils of churches	Skills not matched to opportunities	Encouragement of skills in crafts and music provide opportunities for economic independence
Sexual harassment policy	Missionary heritage prevents the church from discovering what it means to be the church in Africa today	Opportunities to learn language to enhance dialogue
Unity and diversity of culture, language, as a trans-national church	Complacency with regard to goals already achieved e.g. ordination of women	Associations and collaborations with global and ecumenical partners
Skilled and resourceful persons		
Denominational Vision Plan		

APPENDIX IV

CONSTITUTION OF ISILILO/MANYANO/BOMME

THE UNITED CONGREGATION CHURCH OF THE
CONSTITUTION OF ISILILO / MANYANO / BOMME

PREAMBLE

The UCCSA Isililo / Manyano / Bomme has operated in different regions as separate groups with the common cause since time immemorial. We give thanks to God as we come together to be one unified body of Black Women. By s
o doing we hereby commend this constitution to the Glory of God. May the blessings of God rest upon all believers as we work together to proclaim His word and serve Him in this world.

NAME

The name of this organization shall be known as UCCSA Isililo / Manyano / Bomme.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1. To proclaim the Kingdom of God through the organization and by the strength of its Evangelist nature, win into Christianity those women who are not yet committed into the fellowship of the church.
2. To instill Christian faith in the family, so that christian women lead exemplary lives in the church, home and society.
3. To train young people of the church in the Christian stewardship of the time, church womenship, stewardship of giving talents and to persevere and pray particularly.
4. To encourage women to be faithful in their giving and contribution to the church.
5. To encourage women to uphold Christian norms and standards such as love and reaching out to the needy, i.e. the sick and spiritually weak) and to live peacefully with others.
6. To encourage a spirit of ecumenism amongst Christian churches of all denominations irrespective of colour or greed.
7. To encourage Christian witness and influence in the church and home.
8. To support and take care of the needs of the Minister and his family.
9. To be regular in attending women's and church prayer meetings and attend Women Conferences with christian love and dedication.
10. To encourage private prayer and pray with and for others.
11. To initiate activities and projects for church growth.
12. To receive IMB reports from synods and present reports to Mission Council / Executive and Assembly.

SUBSCRIPTION

There shall be an annual contribution subject to revision by the Denominational Conference. Annual contributions should be sent to the treasurer at the end of May each year.

BLOUSING OF NEW MEMBERS

A new member shall be robbed / bloused by the Minister's wife, retired Minister's wife or widowed Minister's wife in her local church. In case where there is no Minister or where the Minister and Wife (through sickness or other reasons) are unable to do this, another Minister's wife or Minister of another UCCSA church or Minister's wife of any neighbouring recognized C.U.C Churches shall be requested.

The Executive and its functions

- Shall have powers to replace any vacancy which may occur prior to the sitting of Executive conference.
- Shall give its considered opinion and guidance on matters which may be brought before by the President / Secretary however leaving the final decision to the conference.
- Shall act as conference when it is not in session.
- Liaise with Synods before conference sits and determine the annual hospitality fees according to the circumstances of the hosting synod.

Duration of office

The Executive shall serve for period of two years.

Frequency of meetings

- There shall be an Executive meeting in February each year, which will be formed by the denominational officers the President, President Elect, Secretary and Treasurer. Synod Officers: President, President Elect, Secretary, Treasurer depending to the Synods.

Conference

- Shall meet in two years
- Subscriptions shall be sent to treasurer annually so that administration should not be stagnant
- Notices for conference will be sent to Synods three months before date of conference.
- Hosting office for conference will be decided by Executive at its sitting. Denomination President and Secretary plus the Synod President and Secretary shall attend assembly.

Assessments

- Shall be decided by the Executive at its sitting.
- Be levied per Region in different Synods, and be sent to the hosting Synod three months before conference.
- This will be reviewed from time to time.

Amendment to the constitution

- Shall be amended at any time by conference only in the following manner

1. Any notice or notices of motions to amend the constitutional shall be sent to the secretary in writing and reach her not later than four months prior to the sitting of conference.
2. The Secretary shall immediately notify Synods by circular letter setting out clearly to notices of motion to amend the constitution.
3. Any such motion which on division fails to secure two thirds majority of those present and voting shall be deemed to have bee defeated.

6. **Interpreters**

Two interpreters shall be the executive members of conferences only.

7. **Outgoing President**

She shall remain in the Executive as an Ex-officio at the February meeting only for the purpose of continuity.

POWERS AND DUTIES OF OFFICERS

1. **President**
   - Shall precide over all executive meetings and conferences
   - At the end of the term office shall give presidential address.
   - Shall be required to submit reports of the organization to the Mission Council, Executive and Assembly.

2. **President Elect**
   - Shall assist President to execute her duties and takes responsibilities wherever she is called upon to do so in the absence of the President.

3. **The Secretary**
   - Shall receive all reports from Synods Secretaries and compiles her own report which shall be submitted to the President for perusal before it is sent to the General Secretary of UCCSA.
   - Shall receive all notices of motion from Synods and thereafter circulates them to the respective Synods for study before conference.
   - Shall be responsible for the agenda in consultation with the President and the entire Executive of I.M.B.
   - Shall be responsible for distribution of conference programmes and minutes to all representatives and Ex officio members of the executive.
   - Shall draw attention of all Synod matters decided upon by conference, mission council, Executive and Assembly and encourage their implementation.

4. **The Treasurer**
   - Shall deposit the money in a recognized commercial bank and issues receipts for all monies received.
   - Will be empowered to sign on all official transactions together with the President and the Secretary.
   - Shall submit a written and clear financial report to Executive and conference.

DURATION OF NEW MEMBERS

New members shall be on trial for 6 months. Each local church shall draw its guidelines for members on trial in the different regions in the different synods.

UNIFORM

Shall be a black skirt with over lap or box pleat at the back. White blouse, pale blue rosette, black shoes (not fancy) black stockings, a white jersey, jacket (when cold) and a badge UCCSA badge of Isililo / Manyano / Bomme.

Length of Skirt: It should be 3 – 4 centimeters below the knees

HAIR STYLE

Any hair style including braiding should be neatly tacked into the hat. It should not protrude.

MOURNING

Members shall respect the mourning period.

- Shall not mix the uniform. No black doek or button or any other form of mourning

OFFICERS

Officers shall be elected by the Denominational Executive of the I.M.B and determine which synod takes office. The particular synod will be responsible for electing the said officers as follows:

1. **President**

Who must be Minister's wife, active widowed or pensioned Minister's wife.

2. **Secretary**

It shall be any of the above or active member of I.M.B.

3. **Treasurer**

It shall be any member of I.M.B CAPABE AND ACTIVE

4. **Additional members**

It shall be any two members of the I.M.B.

5. **President Elect**

It shall be Minister's wife, retired or widowed Minister's wife elected by the Synod taking the office.

GIRLS

Girls groups consist of 2 selections

a) Blue ribbon girls – under 13 years of age.
b) Above 13 years of age and upwards who are full members of local churches in different synods.

Conditions to be a member of UWH

- Shall attend class for 6/12 months then robbed with (Isiphika)

Uniform

Blue ribbon girls
Black skirt or tunic, a white club trimmed with blue at the edge of a white skirt, black socks and white hat.

Girls
Whit shirt, black shoes, black skirts, black stockings, blue club, white hat and ULCSA badge.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES, OFFICERS, OFFICIAL DUTIES

The Synods will write their own as they differ in different regions.

Rules

All women and girls structures in the UCCSA are part of the greater church, therefore all authority that governs the church is above the rules of such structures. Members of the above structures will therefore work in consultation with the Minister and Deaconate's Court.

Amended at the consultation of February 6 – 8 2004, humbly compiled for ratification and approval by Isililo/Manyano/Bomme.

Signed this 7 Day of **February 2004** at **Ebenezer Christian Centre, Magaliesburg**.

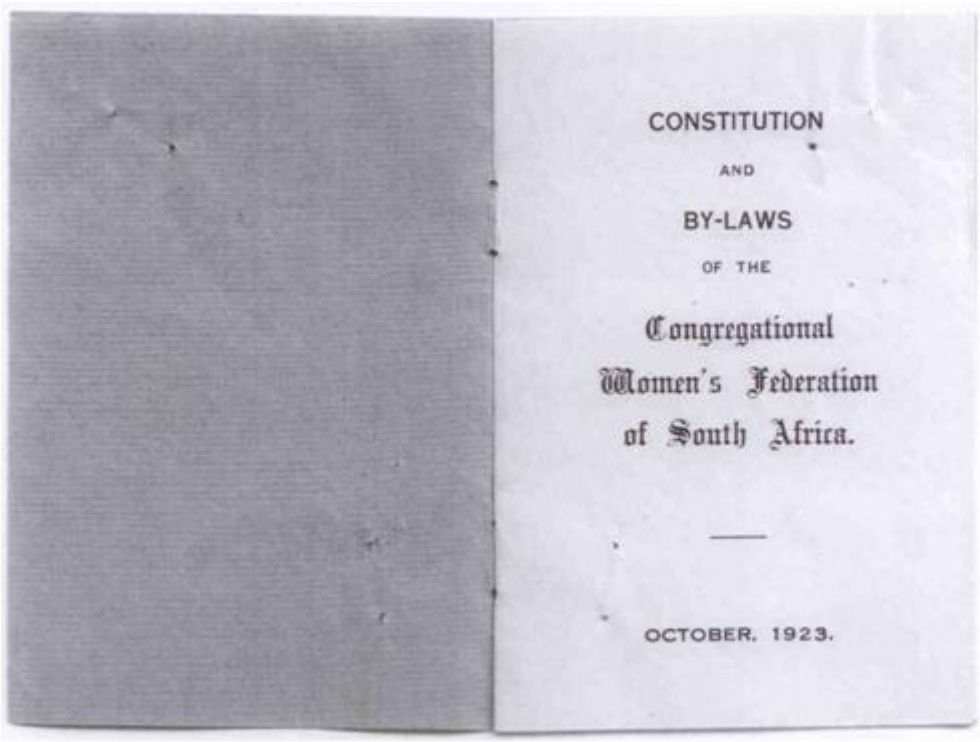
President_____ Secretary_____

President Elect_____ Treasurer_____

APPENDIX V

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS OF THE CONGREGATIONAL WOMEN'S FEDERATION OF SOUTH AFRICA

OCTOBER 1923


CONSTITUTION
AND
BY-LAWS
OF THE
Congregational
Women's Federation
of South Africa.
OCTOBER. 1923.

CONSTITUTION OF THE

Congregational Women's Federation

OF SOUTH AFRICA.

ADOPTED AT THE FIRST ANNUAL MEETING IN JOHANNESBURG, OCTOBER, 1923.

ARTICLE I.

NAME.—The name of this organization shall be "THE CONGREGATIONAL WOMEN'S FEDERATION of South Africa."

ARTICLE II.

CONSTITUTION.—The FEDERATION shall consist of Women's District Associations which have been and may be approved by the FEDERATION. Such Women's District Associations must subscribe to this Constitution, and pay an affiliation fee of one guinea (£1 1s.).

ARTICLE III.

OBJECTS.—The objects of this FEDERATION shall be:—

(*a*) To unite for mutual help and sympathy the Women's District Associations.

(*b*) To organize and strengthen the work of the women in the Congregational Churches in aid of the general work of the Congregational Union of South Africa.

(*c*) To deepen the spiritual life of its members.

(*d*) To enlist the young women of the churches for service.

(*e*) To further any special efforts which the FEDERATION may from time to time undertake.

ARTICLE IV.

OFFICERS.—The officers of this FEDERATION shall be a President, Vice-Presidents, Secretary or Secretaries, and a Treasurer, each officer to be in full membership with her church.

The Presidents of the District Associations shall be *ex officio* Vice-Presidents of the FEDERATION, and shall take precedence according to the accredited membership of their District Associations.

The above Officers, one Representative elected by each District Association, together with the Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer of the District in which Headquarters is situated, shall form the CENTRAL EXECUTIVE, with power to add to their number.

ARTICLE V.

DUTIES OF OFFICERS.—The President shall preside at all meetings of the FEDERATION and of the CENTRAL EXECUTIVE, and conduct them according to Parliamentary Rules; shall deliver an Annual Address; and shall perform any other duties usually devolving upon this office.

It shall be the duty of the Vice-Presidents, in order of precedence, to perform the duties of the President in her absence, or, in the event of her death during her term of office, and at all

times to hold themselves in readiness to assist the President in any way.

The Recording Secretary shall keep a record of all meetings.

The Corresponding Secretary shall attend to all correspondence, shall assist the President in drawing up the programme for the Annual Meeting, shall write an Annual Report, and shall perform all the other duties usual to her office.

The Treasurer shall receive and shall keep an account of all monies, shall pay all accounts authorized by the CENTRAL EXECUTIVE, and shall present her audited financial statement at each Annual Meeting. Cheques are to be signed by both President and Treasurer.

Each elected Representative shall attend the meetings of the CENTRAL EXECUTIVE whenever possible, and shall keep her District Association informed of the work of the FEDERATION.

ARTICLE VI.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS.—Nominations for President shall be made by District Associations, and sent to the Secretary of the FEDERATION not later than August 31st.

The President shall not hold office more than two years consecutively unless special circumstances render it advisable that she should be re-elected for a third year.

The Secretary, or Secretaries, and Treasurer shall be nominated at the Annual Meeting.

These Officers shall be elected annually at the Annual Meeting, and take office at its close.

ARTICLE VII.

MEETINGS.—The Annual Meeting of this FEDERATION shall be held at the same time and place as the Annual Meeting of the Congregational Union, at which each District Association shall present a written report of the year's work.

Meetings of the CENTRAL EXECUTIVE shall be held quarterly, and special meetings may be called whenever the President and Secretary deem necessary. Four members shall constitute a quorum. The Secretary shall forward a report of each meeting to absent members of the Central Executive.

ARTICLE VIII.

REPRESENTATION.—Each District Association shall be entitled to one delegate to the Annual Meeting of the FEDERATION for every twenty (20) members or fraction thereof.

These shall be chosen from the different Local Associations in the District, to make the representation as wide as possible.

Only members of the Central Executive and District Delegates may vote at the Annual Meeting of the FEDERATION.

ARTICLE IX.

METHODS OF VOTING.—Each member of the Central Executive and each Delegate shall have one vote, which must be cast in person. Voting by proxies will not be allowed. The President shall have a casting vote only.

Voting shall be by show of hands unless, by request of a majority, a ballot is called for.

ARTICLE X.

FINANCIAL YEAR.—The Financial Year shall close June 30th, to enable the Treasurer to have her books audited before the Annual Meeting.

ARTICLE XI.

WORK.—The FEDERATION pledges itself to support the work of the Congregational Union in every way.

ARTICLE XII.

AMENDMENTS.—No alteration shall be made in this Constitution except at the Annual Meeting of the FEDERATION, three months' notice of the proposed alteration having been sent in writing to the Secretary, and forwarded by her to the District Associations for their consideration.

altered 1927.

BY-LAWS.

1. All meetings of the FEDERATION shall be opened and closed with prayer.

2. An agenda of subjects to be brought before the Annual Meeting of the FEDERATION shall be sent to District Associations six weeks earlier for discussion by Local Associations.

3. A minute Secretary shall be appointed at each Annual Meeting to assist the General Secretary.

4. Each District Association shall be assessed annually according to membership, half the amount so obtained being earmarked by the Federation Treasurer towards the expenses of Officers attending the Annual Meeting, and the other half forming a fund for general expenses.

5. It is not considered desirable that funds should be raised for church purposes by means of card-playing, dancing, or raffling, and Associations are requested to avoid such methods.

Townshend, Taylor & Snashall. 6715.

APPENDIX VI

A COLLECTION OF NEWSPAPER ARTICLE CLIPPINGS ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE WOMEN'S ASSOCIATIONS OF THE UCCSA

This electronically reproduced collection of original newspaper article clippings, taken from the decade 1970-1979, cover the activities of the Women's Associations not long after the formation of the UCCSA in 1967. These original newspaper clippings have been taken from the pages of the *Christian Leader*, the then official organ of the Christian leadership of the Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa (PCSA) and the UCCSA. The *Christian Leader* featured the numerous activities of the two South African church denominations respectively. There were also features that focused on possible unity talks between the two denominations.

These selected newspaper article clippings of the activities of the Women's Associations of the UCCSA do not depict any new information, but instead further substantiate the activities in which the WWC was involved. An obvious omission in all these articles is the complete absence of Black women. While the June 1976 article included in the collection entitled, "Women's Work Committee Does Not Cater for Black Women" did try to discuss glaring omission, it was from the perspective of the WWC. Today, it seems preposterous that one of the concerns of the Assembly that the Black women were meeting on their own during the time of the Group Areas Act. The other outrageous issue in this article is that these questions were being asked at the height of the political upheavals in South Africa in 1976.

U.C.C.S.A. ASSEMBLY 1972

THE ASSEMBLY

The Annual Women's Gift amounted to R1335. Our picture shows Mrs. M. Hough presenting the Natal Region's share of that amount to the Chairman. The gift is to be used for medical work and the Scholarship Fund.

The women's work committee organised a meeting during Assembly week. Talks were given by Mrs. Terry Hendrikse on her visit overseas, as the wife of the U.C.C.S.A. Chairman, and also by Mrs. Abbott on ministry.

Approximately fifty women attended and all regions of the church apart from Mocambique were represented.

A show of pictures and charts was arranged to depict the work in the different regions. This was viewed with great interest prior to the meeting itself.

A discussion took place at the meeting upon the forms the women's work must take if it is to cater for present day situations.

Our picture shows part of the group assembled for the meeting.

November 1972

January 1973

My friends,

We are a part of the Fellowship of Christ's Church and have publically acknowledged Him as Lord and Saviour and those who are, our friends and outside the Church looking in feel that they should see a picture of joy, fellowship and service.

They are all too often disappointed for, as you and I know in our heart of hearts, the picture is very different however good a facade has been erected. In this, my New Year letter, I want to share some thoughts with you.

First two true stories —

A new Secretary was to be elected at the Women's Association A.G.M. everyone had an excuse but one woman said "I'll do it if someone else will read the minutes." Many offered to do so for someone else was going to do all the work and she was elected. The business proceeded, the Benediction was given the meeting was over and then she came to the Chairman and said "Of course I cannot really be Secretary," dumbfounded the Chairman asked "Then why did you offer?" to be shattered by the reply "I thought it would help to get the meeting over quickly.".

The Young Wives asked their middle-aged President to stand down so that they could run things. Six months later the new young President came saying "Please come back — we thought you were bossy because whenever we decided to do anything you always asked "and who will be responsible for this and this" we still decide to do things, but no one volunteers to help and I have to do it all."

In our churches we have those who cannot be physically active, those who could do more, others who, seemingly, do a lot but it is all talk and froth, and some who do far too much for "no one else will do the job" and have come to regard themselves as indispensible.

The only way I know of changing the situation is for us to place ourselves, as individuals, into God's hands; offering Him the whole of our life — the full and the empty hours. It will not be easy for some will find that they must do more, others that they must do less and we will all find a need to spend more time **listening to** God instead of talking **at** Him. As we do this the Holy Spirit will begin its work of refining and moulding our lives that the redeeming love of God may work through us.

With affectionate greetings,

MARY ABBOTT

WOMEN OF THE CHURCH UNITE!

Well they asked for it!

The Church Unity Commission asked the Women's organisations of the Churches to arrange a committee to begin to co-ordinate women's work in relation to plans for Church Union. That committee has now returned to the C.U.C. with a few suggestions.

The first one made is that there should be women members on the Unity Commission itself. The only women near the meetings at the present time are those who make the teas, meals, etc for this all male group.

The women also suggest that when there are discussions upon such important items as the role of women in the church, including the ordination of women, that there are women present in those discussions. Let the women decide their own place, they say, instead of it being decided for them.

During the women's committee discussions a general problem was discovered. There are a number of difficulties being encountered by all the women's organisations in the churches.

The difficulties stem from that word "in". Many feel that the organisations are not enough IN the Church. The women, therefore, want discussions to be held upon the function and the structure of women's work in any new merged Church.

The report of the Women's Committee will be one of the items onthe agenda of the Church Unity Commission when it meets from January 29th — February 1st at St. Peter's, Hammanskraal.

Gentlemen. You asked for it!

April 1973

GREETINGS TO THE W.A.'S.

Dear Fellow members,

One of the criticisms levelled at us is "the women of the Church just raise money and pour tea". Whenever we hear this we rise up in wrath and indignation saying this is not true. We do many other things for our churches.

We are correct in pointing out that our women are involved in every sphere of church life. But we are open to criticism on other grounds and this is, maybe, what our critics are trying to express.

A truer criticism of us as church women would be our lack of interest and involvement in the tensions, pressures and problems of modern living. Our failure to see our role in the situations into which many of us, of all age groups, are pressured. Do we, for instance, at our meetings consider how to help those who find themselves in difficult family situations. Drug addiction, truancy, unwanted pregnancy, mental illness and divorce are not simply academic problems to many people.

All these situations can be found not only in the community around us but among our own church folk.

In such situations pious platitudes and uniformed advice, however well meant, are quite useless. In offering them we demonstrate our own failure.

So what do we do? I believe that two things are needed and they go together. PRAYER and WORKS.

Prayer should be at the very core of our lives. We all need to take stock of our prayer life as individuals and as women's groups. How real are our prayers? Is it central or at the edge of our life?

In the realm of works we so often "go it alone" or do nothing. What I mean is that when we pray about a situation we should also offer ourselves as channels through which He may work His will. We are not always the chosen instruments, but we must offer ourselves and be prepared to be used.

To be prepared means more than saying "here am I send me" or "Here is our group use us". We need knowledge. Simple knowledge about the kind of organisations that are available to help people is most valuable. We can refer those in need to the right form of help. We can gain knowledge ourselves about coping with particular situations. Through knowledge comes understanding and with this we shall refrain from our hasty judgements.

Having approached God in prayer and laid a situation before Him, and having offered ourselves as channels through which He may work, our next step is to be ready to listen. In our relationship with God and with other people we so often talk too much. We never hear what God is saying to us, nor hear the real cries of those around us.

So in a way we have come a full circle back to the criticism that we should BE ALERT to the call of God and the needs of the community. The women's world day of prayer held at the beginning of March has set our feet on the path. May we continue along the way.

God bless you in your endeavours.

November 1973

WOMEN OF THE CHURCHES UNITE !

THE WOMEN'S UNITY COMMITTEE met early in July for a whole day — it was its fourth meeting, the most representative and in many ways the most useful. It has taken the members some time to get to know each other for we come from varied traditions and there are quite wide differences in the ways in which Women's work is organised and how it is related to Church structures.

Our conversations during the day covered a wide range — useful information was given and received but the most important matters that were discussed, which at this stage can be reported upon, concerned

a) The relationship of "church women" to the Church Unity Commission. To date the only woman admitted to its discussions has been Mrs. Shirley Turner, Chairman of the Women's Unity Committee, who was invited to attend part of one session at its last meeting to give a report and answer questions. Many of those present deplored the fact that the Churches had not appointed a woman among their representatives on the C.U.C., for a very large proportion of church members are women and most of these are still ill informed regarding the steps already taken towards Union between the Anglican, Methodist, Congregational and Presbyterian Churches.

It was recognised that it had not been easy for the Churches to appoint women, for while in the Congregational Church women have always been eligible for appointment as delegates to the Annual Assembly, it has not been so in other denominations until the last year or two; therefore the role of women in the total life of the church has been kept within certain well defined limits. However the role of women is changing in society and Church women are no longer satisfied to be told what has been or is going to be done, but desire to play a part in decision making.

It is important to note, however, that the members of the Women's Unity Committee were quite clear and definite that they did not want any woman to be appointed to the C.U.C. or any committee because "she is a woman" but that they want women to be considered for appointment as responsible members of the Churches.

The Women's Unity Committee understands that the C.U.C. has come to a point in its existance when, following decisions to be taken by the participating Churches before the end of 1973, its structure will be remodelled and new committees set up in addition to those already dealing with various aspects of union.

The work of all the committees will be of interest to the women, but it was decided to ask for **representation** on those dealing with communication and structure and observer status on the other committees unless a woman had been appointed to any of them.

b) The holding of a National Conference in 1973 had been agreed to at the meeting held on April 1973, but difficulty had been experienced in finding a suitable date and venue as Conference Centres are booked far ahead. Mrs. Turner reported to the Committee that she had been able to book Koinonia and Botha's Hill, Natal for the week-end of March 1-3 1974 and members of the committee agreed to the date and place.

The Programme was discussed and while the final format is in the hands of the Chairman it is hoped to include — Bible Study, Church Structures, the working of the C.U.C., Reconciliation, and the New Image of Women in Church and Society. The title of the Conference to be "Women's Role in Unity and Reconciliation".

It is envisaged that following on this conference teams will be formed to visit churches in each area and that committees will be set up to plan for joint projects and to encourage fellowship between the Churches.

Mrs. Madge Hough presents the Natal Region's portion of the Women's gift to the Chairman during the recent Congregational Assembly. A total amount of R1 479 was raised and will be used for bursaries.

COLD WIND MEANS WINTER COATS AT UCCSA ASSEMBLY

THE LEADER requested a special feature on Women's fashions at the U.C.C.S.A. Assembly. The cold wind ended any opportunities that the ladies may have had to show off and winter coats were a "must" all the week. Here Mrs. Audrey Briggs, Mrs. Mary Abbott and Mrs. Maggie Naidoo keep themselves well wrapped up as they chat together during one of the tea breaks at Assembly.

March 1974

Dear Friends,

The first week-end in March which will be almost, if not quite, over by the time this letter is read, is a very important one for two reasons.

The first is international; the Womens World Day of Prayer is being held on Friday, March 1st, and could be of real significance in history. On that day the women of the Churches all round the world are called to join in a great act of worship, penitence, intercession and dedication based on a chosen them.

It is a great concept which stems from a small group of women in an American Presbyterian Church who, many years ago, decided to set aside one day each year to pray for missions, from this small handful of women praying together has grown the great chain of prayer which stretches round the world, songs of praise rise in many tongues and tunes, words of penitence are spoken by women of all ages and races, and prayers of intercession for all mankind lead to a great act of dedication.

The women of Japan have chosen the theme for this year — BUILDERS OF PEACE — a great theme; taken seriously and acted on wholeheartedly by all Christian women so much could result from it.

And yet, in years past we have had great themes, we have gathered together and then returned to our homes and our work and can we honestly say there has been any real change in the life of the world? My prayer is that this year all the women of the Church of God may have publically or privately joined in this great act of worship and dedication and had a sense of being part of a great worshipping multitude.

Nationally the week-end of March 1st to 3rd sees the holding of the first Conference organised by the Women's Unity Committee. The theme of the Conference is Unity and Reconciliation, and some sixty or more women from all parts of the Republic will gather at Koinonia in Natal.

The first Conference of women representing the uniting Churches will be facing some of the problems of union, learn more about each other organisations, methods of working, aims, objects, hopes and fears. But most important of all their listening for the voice of God that his will for the Church in this day and generation may become clear to the women.

It will be a week-end of hard concentrated worship and work

My plea to you all is that, when your delegates return and meet with you, you should clear your minds of prejudice, listen carefully to them, consider all suggestions prayerfully and then move forward, even if it be into new and unknown ways, confident that "with God all things are possible".

MARY ABBOTT

June 1976

Mrs Olive Hendricks, Chairman, Women's Work Committee, gives her report to the Executive. On her left is Mrs Doreen Carmichael and the Revd G Normanton of Vryberg, Northern Cape.

Women's Work Committee does not cater for Black Women

We are fooling ourselves when we say we are one, said the Revd John Thorne during a debate on the report of the Women's Work Committee.

'Our women are not one', he said. 'As far as our Manyano is concerned the blouse is the point of focus. It is not going to be possible to contain the two in one organisation. We must accept that the Women's Work Committee does not cater for the black women of our Church.'

Mr Thorne called for two organisations - the Woman's Work Committee and the Manyano.

'We should not have to make sacrifices just to say that we are one.' he said.

The Revd Chris Drake said that the women of his area felt that they are forced to accept the principle of representation at meetings against their will. 'If there is a meeting, say a hundred kilometres away they would all like to go rather than send representatives.'

Mrs Olive Hendricks, the present Chairman of the Women's Work Committee, had opened the debate when speaking to her report by saying that she was disturbed that the Manyano were holding separate meetings.

Entering the debate the Chiarman, the Revd Edgar Hendricks, pointed out that the Women's Work Committee was intended to cover all women's work in the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa.

The Revd Joe Wing stressed that the Women's Work Committee was an integral part of the UCCSA.

'There was not a single African woman at the recent Women's Work Committee Consultation. This disturbs me greatly. We will have to ensure that the Manyano and Isilelo have representation on the Women's Work Committee.

The Executive confirmed that the Women's Work Committee would continue as a single body co-ordinating the women's work of the whole Church.

Pointing out that there was no national Manyano meeting, the Revd Leo Duze said that the Transvaal and Natal have a combined meeting under the name of Isilelo.

The Botswana Women's Work Committee will take over the reigns of office at the Assembly in September. The Chairman will be Mrs Modukonele and the Secretary Mrs Joan Jones.

October 1976

Botswana leader for women's work

The Women's Fellowship afternoon was highlighted by the announcement of the total donated to the Women's Gift. R5 015 had been given by the women of Botswana, Rhodesia and South Africa to the UCCSA Bursary Fund, reflecting the emphasis laid by the women on education for the church of the future.

Although it had been decided at Consultation that no Regional reports would be presented at Assembly, some Regions brought charts and photgraphs of their work. Three most artistic banners designed and made by the Kei Region were displayed in the church.

SOLIDARITY

A representative from Rhodesia expressed solidarity with the women of South Africa assuring the meeting she would take the news of the Republic back to the women in Rhodesia and urge their support in prayer. She went on to describe the agony of Rhodesia at the present time.

News of the women in Mocambique was given by Mrs Maggie Naidoo who was thanked for maintaining close ties with the Church in Mocambique.

The women of Botswana are involved in Botswana's Tenth Anniversary. They are taking an active part in cleaning the villages to make places presentable to guests invited from different parts of the world to the celebrations.

THEME

The theme for Women's Fellowship Sunday was determined as 'The Christian women in the caring Church and Community'. Mrs Anna Smit, chairwoman of the Central Region, called 'in the name of Christ for a full day of fasting and prayer for our land'. It was decided that each region should respond to this call as soon as possible.

The national chairwoman, Mrs Olive Hendricks, thanked the women for their hard work and support during her two years of office. She urged the women 'to consider their membership of the Women's Fellowship not just as a right, but as a privilege'. Gifts were presented to Mrs Hendricks and her secretary, Mrs Myrtle Barnes.

As hostesses, the women of Natal gave crocheted bookmarkers to all present as a token of love and welcome.

PRAYERS

The outgoing chairwoman led prayers of thanksgiving, confession, intercession and rededication ending with everyone joining in the prayer for Africa:

God bless Africa
Guard her children
Guide her rulers
And give her peace.

At the end of the worship the leadership was handed over from the Western Cape to the women of Botswana. The incoming chairwoman is Mrs M Modukanele with Mrs Joan Jones as her secretary.

Lighted candles were handed to the new office bearers to symbolise the transference of leadership and the bearing of Christ's light in the world through the women's organisations.

Mrs Maripe Modukanele is the new chairwoman of the Women's Work Committee. She is the wife of the Revd Dias Modukanele.

A school teacher since she left school, she is at the moment headmistress of the Matsaungang Primary School in Kanye, Botswana.

She leads a very full life as President of the YWCA in Kanye, Director of the Division of Red Cross and field officer of the Junior Red Cross.

October 1976

Mrs Anna Smith, chairwoman of the Central Region Women's work committee, hands over the R1 200 collected by that group towards the Women's Gift for 1976.

Mrs Olive Hendricks, chairwoman for Women's work in the UCCSA and the Revd Edgar Hendricks, chairman of the UCCSA, accept the gift.

This was s bumper year for the Central Region women who had previously collected amounts of approximately R300. It helped to set a record amount of R5 015 for the Women's gift which was donated again to the Bursary Fund.

September 1977

WOMEN PRAY AND WORK

After a number of years of hard work, I am happy to report that the National Council of the Women's World day of Prayer has had a wonderful break through.

For the first time in history, our National Council Annual General meeting was completely interdenominational, consisting of 6 English speaking Church ladies, 6 Afrikaans speaking ladies and 6 African, Coloured and Indian church ladies plus a representative from Cape Town.

Thus for the first time all women of all peoples of our Protestant Churches sat round one table to discuss the future work and plan for our 1978 Day of Prayer.

There was such a feeling of elation that those of us who had worked so hard for so long at this started to sing hyms of Praise to God for guiding us through many troubled waters.

I trust that those ministers who prevented their ladies from taking part last year will now realise that 'God works slowly his wonders to perform' and will encourage their ladies to attend the March 1978 services, which will be – as in the past – open to all women.

Here is some background information about what we do as a result of this Day of Women praying together.

We print 225 000 copies of the 15 different programs and prayer guides in 11 languages and distribute them in 1 500 parcels as far afield as South West Africa.

Last year we presented two State Bibles, one in English and the other in Xhosa to Transkei on the occasion of their Independance Celebrations at Umtata during October 1976. This presentation can be regarded as the culmination of the past 13 years of contact with Transkei through the Bible House in Umtata.

Since May 1963 we have donated R86 500 towards this House. This year our donations of R20 000 will be distributed to Bible Houses in Johannesburg, Transkei, Swaziland, Lesotho, Botswana, Leboa, Zululand, Bophutswana and Windhoek to Scripture Gift Mission and Transworld Radio.

Women of all peoples realise anew that the deepest need of our community today, is the love of God in action through us all.

Contributed by Beryl van Vliet.

November 1977

'Women's Gift' was over R6000

One of the more joyful moments at Assembly each year is the presentation to the Chairman, by representatives of each region's Women's Fellowship, of their annual gift.

This year, the women of the church had raised money for the Bursary Fund and the Ministerial Stipend Fund. The Assembly volubly expressed its appreciation to the women when an amount of over six thousand Rand was presented.

Particularly appreciated was the contribution from the Algoa Region of over R1800.

November 1978

Women's gift accepted

After a controversial debate on the fourth day of the UCCSA Assembly the tensions among delegates was completely broken by howls of laughter and enthusiastic applause as the women presented their report.

Mrs Modukanele shared her experiences and joys in her report covering her year's activity as Chairlady of the Women's Committee. In the United States they had told her she was "beautiful" and she felt she had to pass this on to the Assembly. She had also been blessed with the gift of tongues since the Americans had said she spoke English like an Englishman!

The women, as always, have worked hard during 1977-8 and a representative from each region came forward to hand over their gift to the UCCSA.

The Algoa Region presented a record R1 526,00 from their Women's Department. This was a very commendable effort.

The Central Region were next with R928. Then followed the Peninsula with R836,66, Natal with R752,65, Kei (R560,75), Botswana (540), Outeniqua (500), Rhodesia (R351,77), Gordenia (300), Northern Cape (183), Orange Free State (R50) and Mocambique (R13).

It was wonderful to have the widow's mite from Mocambique and to hear how the work is progressing there.

The Chairman thanked all the ladies of the UCCSA for their gracious and overwhelming generosity. The Chairman had received both the gift as well as the kiss from each delegation! Then Assembly responded with a standing ovation.

The final words in the busy Business Session agenda allotted to the Women's Report were the words of the Rev Bernard Spong: "Does Assembly adopt the report of the Women's Committee? Does anyone dare to vote against adoption?" !

Mrs Marope Modukanele of Botswana hands over the chain of office of the Women's Work Chairperson to Mrs Bhebe of Rhodesia.