
CHAPTER 1

THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH IN EDUCATION FOR SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION.

PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION

The church's educational problem rests not in its educational programme, but in the paradigm or model that under girds its educational ministry...Christian educators and local churches have functioned according to a schooling-instructional paradigm...I contend we have become victimised by this schooling instructional understanding of religious education and imprisoned by its implications. As long as it informs our labours, significant alternatives will have difficulty in being born or sustained.¹

1. Motivation for and Focus of the thesis

My first official appointment by the church was to a poor informal settlement community where I had the responsibility of developing a Methodist ministry. My approach to mission was a holistic one, which we referred to as a “comprehensive approach.”² This approach sought to address both the spiritual and material needs of the community. Five years later the church had grown, and had a number of projects and ministries, including a sewing project, literacy programme, pre-school and candle making. While a number of people improved their lives by working and benefiting from the programmes, there were people who did not support the programmes in the church arguing that they were not the responsibility of the church but of government or NGOs. Then there was a group that supported the project but could not see how it related to their spiritual lives, so they joined the projects for the economic benefits. At the same time I was working on an M.Th in Missiology. In my thesis I concluded that there was a lack of education in the church and this was an obstacle for people in the church to know why they do the things they do in the church. I realised that most churches, especially in my own denomination, were doing good mission work, but these were not accompanied by education strategies, so that people would know, value and own these projects. At this point I

¹ Westerhoff, J. *Will Our Children Have Faith?* (Minnesota: The Winston Seabury Press, 1976), 6. I think that the statement of Westerhoff well-summarises the objective of this study, which is to search for an alternative education model for the church.

² Kumalo, R. *From Deserts to Forests: A Theological Model for Community Development.* (Pretoria: CB Powell Bible Centre, 2003), 77.

committed myself to help the church in South Africa to re-discover the teaching office of the church by doing research on Christian Education.

Through my involvement with the church I have developed a strong conviction that churches in South Africa do not hold the right perspective on education and in particular Christian education that lead to liberation and social transformation. My commitment in embarking on this study is to learn more about this so that I can provide informed leadership towards its development in my church.

Some years later in my current university post I was asked by the MCSA to help as a pastoral assistant at Howick Methodist on a part-time basis. Soon after I had started working there, it came to my attention that members of the congregation knew very little about their faith and nothing about the Methodist church, and especially its significant programmes for social transformation. In a workshop with the leadership of the church it transpired that the root of the problem was the lack of an intentional and deliberate educational ministry in the church. A large amount of time was spent in preaching and praying and yet very little is done in the area of education once again. This brought to my attention the urgent need for CE in the church and for people to know what they believe in. This concern about the lack of education in the Methodist church that has arisen out of my own ministry in both Ivory Park and Howick constitutes the first key motivation for this thesis.

The second motivation is my involvement in the Methodist Church of South Africa (MCSA) as an ordained minister with a strong sense for liberation and social transformation. A key theme of this thesis is the need to reject indoctrination and opt for participatory methods of education. Education must be seen as a major aspect in the development of a democratic culture upholding the values of human dignity and mutual respect. A liberating project requires a liberatory pedagogy.

Thus, thirdly, I am convinced that CE is a theme that challenges the basic assumptions of ministerial formation. One such is that Christians must participate in the processes of transformation in South Africa. For this to be realised there is a need for the church to embark on rigorous education strategies. When I was appointed by the University of KwaZulu-Natal to teach and conduct field research in the area of Practical Theology within the School of Religion and Theology, I chose to focus on CE so that I can help the school in

its ministerial training by offering courses on CE. The churches have to learn to participate in the processes of liberation and transformation of society, and it is clear that this can only emerge from an appropriate approach to education. For this to take place, the church has to be encouraged to revive the teaching office.

Rooted in these motivating factors, the task of this thesis is therefore three-fold:

- (1) To remind the South African church of the importance of Christian Education
- (2) To develop a particular contextual model for CE, one that helps to transform individuals, churches and society towards freedom and justice; and
- (3) To root this in the Methodist tradition so as to provide particular assistance to the MCSA.

1.2. Education and Transformation

In this section we will discuss education in the MCSA. This is important in order to lay a firm foundation for the study.

1.2.1. Education in the MCSA

The need for CE in the MCSA cannot be overstated. Reverend Trevor Hudson passionately echoed this in an address to the Port Elizabeth MCSA Conference in 2001.³ Addressing the theme “Christ healed Africa for the healing of the nations,” he could state:

Our people in the church are hungry for food to feed and nurture their faith and lives. At the moment we do not seem to be giving them any. If we go on without giving them anything to eat they will go away to look for food and when they find it they will eat it, even if it is junk food that will end up destroying them.⁴

Rev Hudson’s plea was set firmly against the advent of South Africa’s new democracy, and the churches need to be involved in healing and rebuilding the nation. For the local churches

³ The church is referred to as the Methodist Church of Southern Africa MCSA because of its area of operation, which goes beyond the South African borders to other countries such as Swaziland, Lesotho, Mozambique, Botswana and Namibia. In this study we will use the acronym MCSA to refer to it.

⁴ Hudson, T. *The Church with Open Doors*, Bible Study conducted at the conference of the MCSA in Port Elizabeth, July 8, 2001. Conference is the legislative body of the MCSA, which has the ultimate powers for decision-making.

this meant nurturing the faith of people for Christian living that empowers them to participate in the processes of healing and development of their communities.

His concerns were confirmed by the fact that most Methodist Churches lacked educational materials that they could use for such instructive activities. As a result, such materials as Emmaus, Alpha, Willow Creek, Discipleship etc., were utilised. Most of these materials come from North America and were not necessarily relevant to the African context. Additionally, some of them were not consistent with the doctrinal principles of the MCSA, and were expensive so that not all Methodist churches could afford them.

During the Mission Congress of the MCSA held in Mthethwa, Eastern Cape, November 25, 2004 held to re-vision the mission of the MCSA, it was pointed out that the church had no education material of its own. The majority of White churches were using the imported programmes and Black churches had very few education programmes at all. It was also brought to the attention of the Congress that the only educational resource that the church possessed at that moment in time was its laws and discipline book.

Hudson's concerns about the lack of CE in the MCSA have also been voiced by Rev Peter Storey in his book titled *And Are We Yet Alive*. In it, he says:

At local church level, the absence of meaningful Christian Education programmes for both adults and children in the majority of our congregations is a scandal that should no longer be tolerated. As doors of opportunity in the secular world open to increasing numbers of people, the paucity of intellectual stimulus in their churches will be laid bare.⁵

Another respected Bishop within the MCSA, Rev George Irvine also shared his concern about the lack of CE in the MCSA.⁶ Blaming the lack of mission in the church on the lack of intentional CE, he pointed out that:

...for any congregation to be in mission, it needs to adhere to three great priorities. The first is to teach. The second is...to teach. The third is...to teach.⁷

⁵ Storey, P. *And Are We Yet Alive?* (Cape Town: Salty Print, 2004), 63.

⁶ Irvine is a retired minister and bishop of the MCSA.

⁷ Storey, *And Are We Yet Alive?* 64.

The Black Methodist Consultation has also registered its concern about the lack of CE in the church. As a result, its national meetings are structured in the form of different schools so that it can offer education to its members.

The above statements illustrate the concern that leaders of the MCSA have had concerning the lack of CE in the church. I agree with their concern about the lack of intentional CE in the MCSA, especially in Black churches. However, I take my concern further, by asking the question as to the *type* of CE that must be offered in the church and the methods that must be employed in its implementation. Thus, for those churches that have CE, the challenge is for them to analyze its form, content and objectives, as most have a CE whose aim is the domesticating of people, an aim that is not acceptable in the least.

A key problem with this approach to CE is that it does not empower people with the skills to be independent and initiate changes that would improve their situation both in the church and society. Instead it encourages people to be meek and passive, and led by others, both their church and community. This “domesticating” type of CE is derived from, and perpetuated by, the shepherd-flock model where the Minister leads a passive congregation. It is replicated throughout all the structures of the church where people are dominated by those above them and they, in turn, have to be passive followers of their leaders e.g. congregation-Minister, priest-bishop, bishop-archbishop etc. This has become a hierarchy that repeats itself, thus undermining the church’s quest to be a place of freedom and equality. It also seriously undermines the potential that ordinary church members have to act as agents of their own liberation. Contemporary liberation theologians have argued for the recognition of the agency of the marginalised in working for their freedom. Tinyiko Maluleke and Sarojini Nadar have thus argued that:

the poor and marginalised are not mere doormats for their oppressors, but astute if desperate agents engaged in a (daily) struggle for survival and liberation.⁸

In this thesis I argue for a form of CE that will bring about transformation, be it ecclesial or social. Therefore in this study the focus is not simply to argue for the importance of CE for the Methodist church, but rather for a form of CE that will assist the transformation of both church and society.

⁸ Maluleke T. S. and Nadar S. “The Agency of the Oppressed Discourse: Consciousness, Liberation and Survival in Theological Perspective.” *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* November, 120 (2004), 5-17.

1.2.2. Social Transformation

The church has no alternative but to be involved in the processes of transformation taking place within society. To do otherwise would be detrimental to its mission in the world, and in effect the church would become an irrelevant institution. Julius Nyerere challenged the church to always participate in processes of transformation if it is to remain relevant in society by saying that:

I am suggesting to you that unless we participate actively in the rebellion against those social structures and economic organisations which condemn men [*sic*] to poverty, humiliation and degradation, then the church will become irrelevant to man and the Christian religion will degenerate into a set of superstitions accepted by the fearful. Unless the church, its members and its organisations, express God's love for man by involvement and leadership in constructive protest against the present conditions of man, then it will become identified with injustice and persecution. If this happens, it will die- and, humanly speaking deserve to die- because it will then serve no purpose comprehensible to modern man [*sic*].⁹

CE is important not only for the church membership, but a country's citizenship in general. This is especially true in Africa which is undergoing a process of transformation, and which presents the church with a golden opportunity to contribute to the shaping of a new society. Observing the transforming nature of the South African society Robert Pozzuto, an American writer, contends that:

There is an opportunity in South Africa to create a socially just society. The diversity both in terms of cultural groups and forms of economic development provide for this opportunity. The diversity also makes the task complicated. South Africans know that societies can be transformed. This is a lesson they have provided for the rest of the world.¹⁰

As we will see in chapter two, the church in South Africa has been deeply involved in social transformation. Now the church must continue to be involved in the transformation processes of post-apartheid society. If the church is the light of the world, then it must lead the way as to how a country can transform itself from an oppressive oligarchic regime, to that of a democratic, egalitarian society.¹¹ The church does not enjoy the popularity it once enjoyed in its early days in South Africa, but it is still one of the most important agencies positioned to impact society as a whole. In recent research conducted on the youth of South Africa it was discovered that among young people of all races, aged 16-35 years, the highest percentage

⁹ Nyerere, J. *The Church and Society in Freedom and Development* (Dar Es Salaam: Oxford University Press, 1973), 215.

¹⁰ In Dominelli, L. D. and Bernard, W. T. (eds). *Broadening Horizons: International Exchanges in Social Work*. (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2003), 114.

¹¹ Mathew 5: 13.

(16%) belong to churches and sports clubs. The next highest category of membership is to political parties, which is listed at 4%.¹² I am aware that the church has its own problems (in the field of education for transformation), but I believe that a process can begin to take place if the leadership of the church can be taught a methodology for facilitating Christian education that will help the church to mobilise its members to participate in processes of social transformation.

1.3. Overview of the argument

We are now at a point where we can examine the logic of this thesis, so the reader can follow it. In the rest of this chapter 1.4 is an overview of CE theory. This is done through a review of the contemporary literature that comes predominantly from North America. However this study is a South African one, it needs a South African perspective on liberation, theology and education. And this is explored in 1.5. For us to develop a credible foundation for CE as required by the South African situation we need a solid theoretical basis. For this purpose we build on Paulo Freire's liberatory pedagogy because of the impact it has had in different parts of the world where it was employed. This is done in 1.6.

To examine the depth of the problem of the lack of education as identified in this study in chapter two we explore the processes of the Journey to the New Land (JNL). In chapter three we engage the Methodist tradition with a focus on John Wesley's theology. Chapter four examines the contribution of four creative educators from Southern Africa with the aim of learning from their insights and brings them into dialogue with Wesley's theology and contribution to CE so that we can lay the foundation for a model of Christian education for social transformation. Chapter five is a discussion of a proposed model of CE. In chapter six we implement the proposed model at Howick Methodist church. We close the study with recommendations and conclusions in chapter seven.

¹² CASE, 2001. *Youth in Brief*. (Johannesburg: Community Agency for Social Enquiry), 50.

1.4. Setting the parameters for Christian Education

The history of this discipline poses a challenge to the type of education that needs to be developed, as well as its goal. CE is looked at with ambiguity and suspicion in our context because of the role it was made to play in the entrenchment of the policy of apartheid. Hence, there is a need to be explicit about the nature, goals, content and method of the education that one advocates. One needs to set the premises and the parameters that guide and limit the discipline of a CE appropriate for the South African context. We need a CE that will enable people to participate and continue the process of transformation that was started a decade ago after liberation. Its ultimate goal should be the total transformation of oppression to freedom, dehumanisation to humanisation, poverty to self-sufficiency, religious intolerance to religious tolerance. Transformation must be understood as the overall goal of CE and must “seek to heal and liberate persons, Christian communities, wider society and all of creation.”¹³ In order for this to become a reality, there needs to be space for dialogue and participation. This has implications for the methods of education that are to be utilised, for as de Gruchy can observe, “there must be congruence between our theological vision for development, and the way we teach.”¹⁴ This means that we cannot teach for transformation using non-transforming models, nor can we teach participation using non-participatory methods.

In seeking to develop CE we need to draw from the resources and insights that have been developed in the past decades. While this task remains for the most part to be done in Africa, a number of theorists in North America have addressed pertinent issues of CE. Indeed education for social transformation in religious education has been in discussion for a long time.¹⁵ The pioneers of this work were John Dewey who argued for the progressive education movement and George Albert Coe and Harrison Elliot who argued for a Reconstructionist approach.¹⁶ These educators sought to engage the public in social transformation educationally and religiously. Dean Blevins notes that:

¹³ Moore, E. M. *Teaching from the Heart: Theology and Educational Method* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 64.

¹⁴ De Gruchy, S. “Theological Education and Social Development,” *Missionalia* 31 (3), (2003), 462.

¹⁵ Seymour, J., O’ Gorman, R., and Foster, C. *The Church in the Education of the Public*. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1984), 24.

¹⁶ Moore, A. J. *A Social Theory of Religious Education*, in A. J. Moore (ed), *Religious Education as Social Transformation*, (Birmingham: Religious Education Press), 9.

Other Christian Educators have argued for religious education that includes efforts for peace and justice, visits or relocations to impoverished areas, for deeper understanding, service learning, and alternative Bible studies that explore real life situations.”¹⁷

Thomas Groome who set out to argue for a comprehensive CE model, which he called the shared praxis approach, has dealt extensively with issues of theory and method.¹⁸ Jack Seymour also argues that education requires interdisciplinary collaboration, because it is public, diverse and depends on a living religion for vitality.¹⁹ Some have noted that the church “educates” explicitly, through its intended educational programmes and implicitly by its practices, liturgies, music, prayers and ministries.²⁰ Others have argued that there is a deep connectivity between theology and church education.²¹ There has also been the observation that CE is by nature “political,” meaning that it is not politically neutral.²² CE is a sub-discipline of Practical Theology, whose scientific nature has been subjected to rigorous debate both locally and overseas.²³ A call for the recovery of the teaching ministry of the church has also been sounded by a number of CE theorists, and we turn now to them to gain an overview of the current issues in CE.

1.4.1. Thomas Groome: Education as a shared praxis

For Groome, there was a need to introduce the discipline of CE with all its aspects and components. One of the most important contributions he has made is in drawing parameters in

¹⁷ Blevins, D. “Educating the Liturgical Self: A Sacramental View of Pedagogy.” *Journal of Christian Education* 45, 3 (2002), 7-20. Seymour, J. and Miller, D. *Contemporary Approaches to Christian Education* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1982), 40.

¹⁸ Groome, T. *An Introduction to Christian Religious Education*. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1980). This book has been developed into a new version, Groome, T. *Sharing Faith: A Comprehensive Model for Pastoral Ministry* (Eugene Wipf and Stock, 1998). Others who have sought to address the problem of theory and method in CE; Wimberley, A. *Soul-Stories* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1997); Westerhoff, J. *Will our Children Have Faith?* (1976). Many other books have been written on this topic but one can note have developed a consensus on paradigm shifts. See, Browning, D. S. (ed) *Practical Theology. The Emerging Field in Theology, Church and World*. (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1983).

¹⁹ Seymour, J. *Mapping Christian Education: Approaches to Congregational Learning*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997), 7.

²⁰ Hauerwas, S. *Christian Existence Today: The Gesture of a Truthful Story*. (Durham: The Labyrinth Press, 1998). 101. Hauerwas argues that “the Christian church does not *do* religious education, instead the church *is* a form of religious education.” Maria Harris also echoes the same sentiment in her book *Fashion Me A People*. (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1989).

²¹ Farley, E. “Can Church Education be Theological Education.”? *Journal of Religion and Education*, 34 (2003).

²² Groome, *Sharing Faith*. See also Karen Tye in *Basic of Christian Education* (Nashville: Abingdon 2000), 54.

²³ Zeffass, R. “Praktische Theologie als Handlungswissenschaft.” in Klostermann, F and Zeffass, R. (Hrsg) *Praktische Theologie heute*, 164-177. Munchen; Kaiser/Grunewald, 1974). Local practical theologians that have made a contribution on the methodology debate are Nel, Malan. “Die wisselwerking tussen teorie/praxis in praktiese teologie.” *Practical Theology in South Africa* 6 (1), 22-37 (1991) and Pieterse, H. “Die wetenskapsteoretiese grondlag van die praktiese teologie.” *Practical Theology in South Africa* 6 (1) 38-51 (1991).

terms of its nature. He argued that Christian Education is a political discipline and that it is part of religious education. He located this discipline within both the church and in society. He argued that CE was part of the educational enterprise. This meant that it does contribute to the development of knowledge, which he saw understood in a three-fold manner, namely, *theoria, praxis* and *poiesis*.²⁴

Groome further argued that education was not free from politics. For him education was a political activity, which meant it was shaped by the political views of the educator. He defined it as:

a political activity with pilgrims in time that deliberately and intentionally attends with them to the activity of God in our present, to the story of the Christian faith community, and to the vision of God's Kingdom, the seeds of which are already among us.²⁵

Groome brought awareness of the importance of time for education. He argued that it is past, present and future. The substance of the act of teaching consists of a threefold responsibility: “to make present the story, to propose its vision, and to choose life in the present.”²⁶ These are important time components of education, for they locate it in its context. Another important contribution that Groome made to CE is the development of his method of doing CE. He called this the “shared praxis approach.”²⁷ He saw education to be approached from a point of sharing life experiences. This sharing takes place during the teaching and learning situation where both the educator, who is understood as a facilitator, shares experiences with the learners who are understood as co-partners in the journey of learning.

Who are the co-partners in the enterprise? And who are our students, and how do we perceive our own self-identity in the event of Christian religious education? Throughout his work, Groome maintains that he has “called for critical consciousness on the part of Christian religious educators in understanding the nature, purpose, and context of our educational endeavours.”²⁸ For him, education has both a formative and conscientising role. The understanding of education as formation has roots in the Great Commission, but Groome takes it further to embrace the element of conscientisation in education so that it becomes truly liberating. He notes that:

²⁴ Groome, *An Introduction to Christian Religious Education*, 137.

²⁵ Groome, *An Introduction to Christian Religious Education*, 25.

²⁶ Groome, *An Introduction to Christian Religious Education*, 274.

²⁷ Groome, *Sharing Faith*, 135.

²⁸ Groome, *An Introduction to Christian Religious Education*, 261.

The point is that in all educational activity, choices are made about the past to be conserved and the future to be proposed. There are political choices, and the activity arising from them is political activity.²⁹

From these proposals, we understand that Groome locates the discipline of CE in its proper position both within the theological and social sciences arena.

1.4.2. Jack Seymour et al. Christian education is for social transformation

In his seminal book, *Mapping Christian Education*, Seymour collaborated with seven other Christian educators to offer an overview of CE. He delineates the diversity and number of theories that CE scholars have produced.³⁰ Seymour also argues that education requires an interdisciplinary collaboration, because it is “public, diverse and depends on a living religion for vitality.”³¹ He argues that CE is as old as the church itself, Jesus as founder of the church being its archetypal teacher. Seymour argues for the indispensability of CE for the church. As a result he and those who have followed his approach have understood the church as a learning community. Another important point that Seymour makes concerns the way “convictions about education affect the way we structure congregational life.”³² Through this, he raises awareness of the importance of CE for the life and ministry of the church.

One of the contributors to *Mapping Christian Education*, Daniel Schipani deals, with the question of social transformation, viewing it as a “frame of reference for CE.”³³ Schipani proposes that transformation from the point of view of CE “becomes both the goal and process of education until God’s kingdom of justice and love is fully embodied.”³⁴ Another contributor, Robert O’Gorman, identifies the church as a community that seeks to learn faith. O’Gorman argues that when we participate in the life of the church (faith community), we learn to promote authentic human development. He brings awareness to the importance of small groups in congregational learning, and goes further to argue that the church as a faith community must teach people a faith which leads to social action, intervention and social

²⁹ Groome, *An Introduction to Christian Religious Education*, 16.

³⁰ Seymour, *Mapping Christian Education*, 7.

³¹ Seymour, *Mapping Christian Education*, 7.

³² Seymour, *Mapping Christian Education* 14.

³³ Seymour, *Mapping Christian Education*, 19.

³⁴ Seymour, *Mapping Christian Education*, 19.

transformation.³⁵ The method O’Gorman proposes for congregational learning is a circular movement of service, reflection and action.

In the same book, Maria Harris and Gabriel Moran explore the spiritual dimension of learning.³⁶ The proposal made by Harris and Moran is that as each person in the learning process appropriates faith, so the church grows. They view CE as spiritual formation, towards Christian maturity. Through CE people are helped to get in touch with their inner beings and deepest senses. For Harris and Moran CE enables people to become connected with others, so that together they work for care and justice in the world. As a result, CE inspires people to be involved in issues of social transformation.

The last contributor in this book is Elizabeth Caldwell. Caldwell proposes an action reflection approach to CE, which she names, home-making, which focuses the aim of CE to the building and nurturing of the Christian family. She also views education and learners as partners who “dwell in the place of care, reflection and meaning where we learn a story and a faith in order to live responsibly and faithfully in the face of the world.”³⁷ Caldwell replaces the schooling approach with tending, cleaning, nurturing, caring, and knowing of homemaking.³⁸

1.4.3. Walter Brueggemann: The Bible as an educational book

Walter Brueggemann’s primary work looks at the question of education from the Bible’s perspective. As the study concerns itself with education in the church, it is imperative that we consider that part of Brueggemann’s work that deals with the question of education from a Biblical point of view. This will help us to develop an idea of the role that can be played by the Bible in education. One of his early, but important, works in this area is *The Creative Word*, published in 1982. In this work Brueggemann outlines the key issues that consistently emphasise canonical content and the centrality of education. He states:

Thus the broad line I suggest is that canon is a clue to education, both as substance and as a process. One reason...if canon is neither an unexamined given nor an unintended accident, but an intentional transmitting process, then clearly it concerns education.³⁹

³⁵ Seymour, *Mapping Christian Education*, 20.

³⁶ Seymour, *Mapping Christian Education*, 20.

³⁷ Seymour, *Mapping Christian Education*, 20.

³⁸ Seymour, *Mapping Christian Education*, 21.

³⁹ Brueggemann, W. *The Creative Word*. (Philadelphia; Fortress Press, 1982), 3.

Brueggemann maintains that the canon has three trajectories by which it deals with education. It begins with the question that is asked by people to the prophets in search for knowledge “Is there any word from the Lord for us.” It continues by asking where such knowledge can be found. Finally, it asks the important question as to how we shall know.

For Brueggemann, the main aim of education within the Bible is to pass on the stories of the community of faith so that it may continue from one generation to another. He observed that education in Ancient Israel “consists giving the older generation an opportunity to communicate its passion to the younger generation and hopefully the younger generation appropriates them with zeal and imagination.”⁴⁰

Secondly, Brueggemann notes that another important facet of education in the Bible is to empower Israel to care for those without social value and power.⁴¹ The third reason Brueggemann gives for education in Israel is so that Israel may not conform to the enemies of God, but rather have what he calls “permitted rage” towards God’s enemies.⁴² Finally, Brueggemann notes that education in the Bible serves the purpose of authorising Israel to hope. Israel is challenged to hope that “God will work an extrapolated, un-derived newness, wrought *ex nihilo*, only out of God’s power and purpose.”⁴³ In this case, education in the Bible serves to make people aware of God’s promises of a better future or world. It brings awareness to the fact that God is at work transforming the world.

Brueggemann brings to the fore an awareness that education in the Bible served the important function of building and maintaining God’s community. As a result of its educational nature, Brueggemann argues that the Bible is “a statement about public life...because it concerns public life, the use of power, the management of resources and the shaping of policy.”⁴⁴ Brueggemann concludes by suggesting that there is a need to bring church education into the public sphere. He thus states, “Perhaps the primary issue in education, in relation to the Bible, is to break the grip on church education which tends to be privatistic, idealistic and spiritual.”⁴⁵

⁴⁰ Brueggemann, W. “Passion and Perspective: Two Dimensions of Education in the Bible.” *Journal of Religion and Education*, 23 (2000), 70-79.

⁴¹ Brueggemann, “Passion and Perspectives” 73.

⁴² Brueggemann, “Passion and Perspectives” 73.

⁴³ Brueggemann, “Passion and Perspectives” 73.

⁴⁴ Brueggemann, “Passion and Perspectives” 79.

⁴⁵ Brueggemann, “Passion and Perspectives” 79.

The unique contribution that Brueggemann makes in the area of CE is firstly, to remind the church of its responsibility towards education; and secondly, to emphasise the educational significance of the Bible in order for it to survive.

1.4.4. Joseph Grassi: Education must be kingdom-centered

Within his writings, Joseph Grassi argues that the goal of religious education is to educate for change and transformation.⁴⁶ Education is not simply for continuity, but for change. Grassi therefore speaks about the need for “kingdom-centred” religious education as opposed to church-centred education. He thus argues that,

Kingdom-centred education is focused on mission with and to the world, on creating shalom, a world of peace and justice that would truly be God’s world. Such education calls for creativity and new ways of seeing and doing.⁴⁷

Contrasting kingdom-centred education and church-centred education Grassi explains church education by stating that,

Too often our purpose for educating in the church is to create good church members who will know the rules and regulations, work hard, and do things the “right” way. Instead we need to be educating faithful disciples who live of Christian faith in and for the world. We are forming “Christ’s ones” not Church one’s. Such a formation process calls for change.⁴⁸

Viewed from this perspective, the purpose of CE can be understood as serving the purpose of bringing about an awareness of the Kingdom of God and how Christians can live it out in the world. This means making them aware of how things are by asking them critical questions so that they can see their situation clearly and then be able to act appropriately in those situations. The goal of education must be the promotion of conscientisation, or bringing people to the awareness of what is going on in their community so that they can bring change where things are not the way they should be.

⁴⁶ Grassi, J. *Informing the Future: Social Justice in the New Testament*. (Mahwah: Paulist, 2003), 20.

⁴⁷ Grassi, J. *Teaching the Way of Jesus, the Early Church and Today* (Mahwah: University Press of America, 1989), 145.

⁴⁸ Grassi, *Teaching the Way of Jesus*, 26.

1.4.5. Karen Tye: Education as building the kingdom of God

In her book *Basics of Christian Education* Karen Tye articulates the pertinent questions about CE: why, where, what, who and how. The important factor about Tye's approach is that she implements a critical approach towards CE. According to Tye the goal of Christian education is to educate people about the Kingdom of God as it is expressed in the life, work, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ, so that they can emulate it by the way they live out their Christian lives in the world today.⁴⁹ As Tye has written,

We want to nurture and support each other on our faith journey. We need to develop the skills and attitudes necessary to live as a community of faith and embody in our life together what it means to be Christian. We do want to teach what it means to live as though the realm of God is a reality, to live out a vision of justice and mercy, human dignity and worth, and freedom for all.⁵⁰

From Tye's point we can see that the purpose of Christian education includes assisting one another in their faith journey, by developing community and teaching a vision of the coming reign of God, which is a vision for justice and mercy. Approaching CE with a vision for justice and mercy as Tye suggest, means that CE assists people by raising their consciousness about their living conditions so that they can see behind the ideology to the truth.⁵¹ In this, the causal link between CE and conscientisation is established. The aim of CE as transformation cannot be achieved without a teaching that it is rooted in the call for social justice and mercy which conscientises people to understand and embrace the vision of the kingdom of God.

Within Tye's methodology of education, the *process* that an educational activity takes becomes all-important. Tye defines *process* as "a series of actions we take in order to accomplish our purpose."⁵² She goes on to define *methods* as "the specific activities and techniques that we use to carry out the process."⁵³ There are three important points that Tye raises concerning process and methods that I think are important for this study.

⁴⁹ Tye, *The Basics of Christian Education*, 21.

⁵⁰ Tye, *The Basics of Christian Education*, 22.

⁵¹ Steve de Gruchy's definition of conscientisation. Kumalo files, March 2005.

⁵² Tye, *The Basics of Christian Education*, 90.

⁵³ Tye, *The Basics of Christian Education*, 90.

(1) The process and methods do not educate or teach. People do!

Here Tye argues that the process and the methods we choose are simply tools to help us teach and learn. There is a need for people to be involved in education, if we are to achieve any educational goals. She goes on to assert that:

Attending to the skills and abilities of our teachers and helping them discover how they embody the truth of what they teach is an important part of how we educate.⁵⁴

(2) The process and methods are shaped by the contexts within which they are used.

How we educate will depend on the particularity of a given situation. Tye says “this assumption challenges the misconception that ‘one size fits all,’ or that one approach or method works equally well in all settings.”⁵⁵ Here we learn that when selecting a process and method to use, we have to give thought to the environment, to the people and to the content in order to educate in ways that will connect.

(3) The process and methods should be consistent with the purpose and goal toward which we educate

Tye says, “How we educate should match why we are educating.”⁵⁶ This means that when selecting a method we want to use during education we need to keep in mind the goal towards which we are striving. Hence Tye can state:

If we seek to educate people to be disciples of the Christ in the world today and to serve in continuity with Jesus’ ministry of justice and mercy, our process and method must bear witness to this and truly help people to learn what it means. Relying on lectures, a traditional method in many adult church school classes, to help people learn what it means to serve seems to be a limited approach.⁵⁷

There is a need for the process and method to fit the vision and help the educator to achieve it. These three assumptions provide guidance in terms of understanding the importance of

⁵⁴ Tye, *The Basics of Christian Education*, 90.

⁵⁵ Tye, *The Basics of Christian Education*, 91.

⁵⁶ Tye, *The Basics of Christian Education*, 91.

⁵⁷ Tye, *The Basics of Christian Education*, 91.

process and method in education. The methods must be compatible with the content, context and goal of learning. The goal is to help people to learn. The reason is that its purpose is to aid the teaching and learning situation, meaning it needs to help with the production and sharing of knowledge and enable people to achieve the goals of the teaching and learning event.

1.4.6. Parker Palmer: Education in community and for the community

Education in the church has a very important aspect of community within it. The main purpose of CE is to build the Christian community, so that it can in turn build the kingdom of God in the world today. Therefore the method and process of Christian education must be consistent with the purpose to which we educate, which is to build the community of faith.

Learning in the context of Christian life involves the process by which people are introduced to the Christian community; its stories, people ways and vision of the world- and incorporated into that community, experiencing its fellowship, participating in its mission, and moved by its passion.⁵⁸

Educating for community building and enhancement means that those involved in education, educators and learners alike, need to be connected with one another. This makes us aware of the relational nature of education. It means that education is done *with* others; it is a social activity as opposed to an individualistic one.⁵⁹ Parker Palmer sees a therapeutic motif when education is done as a relational reality or in community. In his book *The Courage to Teach* Palmer asserts that:

This model makes intimacy the highest value in human relationships, because intimacy is regarded as the best therapy for the pain of disconnectedness: in intimacy, we explicitly share our deeper natures with each other, in the belief that we can be fully known and the trust that we will be fully accepted.⁶⁰

He continues by saying that:

The therapeutic motif has a place in education simply because any loveless enterprise is likely to be pathological: it is hard to imagine a healthy school that lacks any trace of love for learning or for learners.⁶¹

⁵⁸ Williams, K. *Nurturing Perceptive Faith: An Approach to Educating for Christianity from a Wesleyan Perspective*. (Unpublished MTh dissertation, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, 1992), 142.

⁵⁹ I prefer to use *teaching and learning community* when referring to the Christian education group. This is because it incorporates all the people involved e.g., educators, learners and other people who may be part of this process either as observers or supporters of the group.

⁶⁰ Palmer, P. *The Courage to Teach*. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998), 90.

⁶¹ Palmer, *The Courage to Teach*, 90.

Additionally, if education is going to build community it means that the teaching and learning community must be motivated by common issues and concerns engaged with the learning process. This is an important aspect that makes and glues the learners and educators together as a community. As Daniel Aleshire notes:

Learning in faith is a community enterprise. It is something people do in the presence of others, in response to shared prompting, common longings, and diverse reactions.⁶²

Palmer noted the fact that people become a community due to shared civic concerns, which he observes are important if community is to be maintained. In explaining the civic model of community Palmer writes:

A community where people who do not and cannot have intimacy with each other nonetheless learns to share a common territory and common resources, to resolve mutual conflicts and mutual problems. In civic community, we may not learn what is on each other's hearts, but we learn that if we do not hang together, we will hang separately.⁶³

The educational implications of the civic model of community is that within societies divided by race, ethnicity and gender, teaching and learning communities contain a "broader cross section of people engaged in common work and often doing it with civility, media-fuelled "political correctness" wars notwithstanding-than one can find in many settings."⁶⁴ The model of community of doing CE by building community becomes important especially in the church, where a teaching and learning community can be used to explore issues of common concern, that affect people both in the church and in society, so that they can bring about transformation. The CE process and method must be a way of building an alternative community that will reflect on its life and faith experiences and seek ways of participating in the transformation of their society as Christians.

In his analysis of the inadequacy of the traditional method of education Parker Palmer states that:

It centres on a teacher who does little more than deliver conclusions to students. It assumes that the teacher has all the knowledge and the students must take, that the teacher sets all the standards and the student must measure up. Teacher and students gather in the same room at the same time not to experience community but simply to keep the teacher from saying things more than once.⁶⁵

⁶² In Williams, "Nurturing Perceptive Faith," 139.

⁶³ Palmer, *The Courage to Teach*, 92.

⁶⁴ Palmer, *The Courage to Teach*, 92.

⁶⁵ Palmer, *The Courage to Teach*, 116.

1.4.7. Kevin Williams: Christian education is for nurturing faith.

Williams is one of the very few South Africans who have written in the area of CE. His concern was on the *goal* of School-based CE, which he argued that it is development of *Perceptive Christianity*.⁶⁶ In his M.Th dissertation, Williams argues that CE must educate for building faith. Rejecting traditional forms of education within the church, he blames the church for not growing people into Christian maturity, but rather keeping them prisoners through domesticating education. Williams wrote as a White South African before the Policy on Religion Education was introduced to schools, and as a result ignores the issue of religious pluralism in schools.

Williams does make some critical observations on the ineffectiveness of the schooling paradigm. He called for a paradigm shift for education in the church. He revised the importance of the church's involvement in schools. He called for the training of Chaplains who will educate for perceptive faith in schools. He drew insights from Wesley and his relevance for school-based Christian Education.

Working as a chaplain in a predominantly White "elite" School, his perspectives of CE are informed by his racial background and context. Although he writes as a South African, he does not bring into his discussion the perspectives of Black Christians, whom he does not even interview. His thesis also does not cover issues of transformation neither does he relate the Wesleyan tradition to the African context of CE.

1.4.8. Malcolm Knowles: Adult Christian education is important for the church

Malcolm Knowles is regarded as an authority in the area of Adult Education. We must note that this present study is not about Christian Education as done in Sunday school, youth and confirmation, but it is about adult Christian education in the church. It aims at examining the need for revitalizing adult Christian education, one that goes beyond socialisation and Christian nurturing and becomes a life-transforming education thus assisting Christians to understand their role in the church and in society. Such a methodology will appreciate the difference between adult and children learners, and seek to exploit the traits of adult education. The contribution made by Malcolm Knowles to the development of a theory of

⁶⁶ Williams, "Nurturing Perceptive Faith", 32.

adult education is most important, particularly in respect to this study. In Knowles' thinking, adult education can be understood in terms of *andragogy*, which he defines as "the art and science of helping adults learn."⁶⁷

Andragogy raises awareness of the limitations of traditional *pedagogy* whose definition is "the art and science of helping children to learn."⁶⁸ Basic to this difference is the understanding that adults learn differently from that of children. Anyone who is committed to education in the church must consider adopting programmes that take into consideration different educational approaches for children and adults. Knowles theory notes the following characteristics of adult learners: Self-directing, experience, readiness to learn, orientation to learning, and motivation to learn.

The role of the facilitator or educator in andragogy is that of guide or motivator. It is not the same as in pedagogy where the educator is in charge of learning. This shows that in andragogy the learner takes charge of the learning process. She or he directs their learning with the assistance of the educator who is viewed as a companion.⁶⁹

1.4.9. Edward Farley: Education is for the whole church both clergy and laity

Farley seeks in his work to explore the reasons for the reluctance of the Christian faith to relate to reality, world, knowledge and learning of the laity. Farley also questions the reason that education is not part of the ordered learning of the church. He argues for theological education to be extended towards the laity so that they can also learn and understand the "interpretation of scripture, doctrines, moral principles, policies and areas of praxis of the church."⁷⁰ Farley calls for serious and ordered learning in the church for the laity, so that they can learn to do historical-critical studies of the Bible, etc. He argues that the reason for the lack of ordered learning for lay people is as a result of the "ambivalence the Christian movement has always had about the importance of learning, knowledge and the sciences."⁷¹ For Farley the answer for this perceived reluctance lies in the church's hesitancy in embracing

⁶⁷ Knowles, M. *Andragogy in Action*. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1984), 6.

⁶⁸ Knowles, *Andragogy in Action*, 4.

⁶⁹ See also Seymour, *Mapping Christian Education*, 28.

⁷⁰ Farley, "Can Church Education be Theological Education," 221.

⁷¹ Farley, "Can Church Education be Theological Education," 223.

enlightenment. Another reason he gives for the absence of ordered learning in the church is “the social structure of earlier Western societies which restricts learning to the elite classes.”⁷²

Farley raises three issues, which he thinks have promoted the gulf between church education for the clergy and the lack of church education for the laity. These are:

- (1) The professionalisation of theology;
- (2) The homiletical paradigm;
- (3) The generalisation of the meaning of education.

For Farley, the professionalisation of theological education has meant a separation of theological education, which is reserved for the clergy who as professionals in the church do this in seminaries and universities. Church education was understood as catechesis, which did not include ordered learning and is inferior to theological education. The homiletical model subverts the structure of the reflective wisdom of the believer. The homiletical paradigm prevents CE from being theological education. It is one-sided, depends on the preacher, and the people are not expected to make any significant contribution. As a result of the separation of theological education and Christian education, the latter has become inferior. Farley says that Christian education is now defined by programme administration and development psychology, instead of rigorous theological education.⁷³

Farley concludes with a call for CE to become theological education, one that incorporates theological lessons in its curriculum, instead of general knowledge on the practices of the church. For this to happen, he observes that there is a need for CE teachers to be qualified theologians, and the directors of religious education to be educators and not simply administrators of educational programmes.⁷⁴

Farley has raised important points that are significant for this study. The fact that theological education has been professionalised and promotes clericalism is true and this study hopes to partially address this problem. He also reminds us of the importance of CE to be theologically sound if it is to empower the laity. His warning is well directed, particularly against the

⁷² Farley, “Can Church Education be Theological Education,” 224.

⁷³ Farley, “Can Church Education be Theological Education,” 223.

⁷⁴ Farley, “Can Church Education be Theological Education,” 224.

dominance of the homiletical model utilised within the MCSA. Farley's call for the revival of ordered learning and the need to promote theological education for the laity is consistent with the aims of this study.

1.4.10. John Westerhoff: The inefficiency of the schooling paradigm

In his book, *Will Our Children Have Faith*, John Westerhoff critically interrogates the relevance of the schooling paradigm in church as a *method* of CE. He is critical of the church for using this model as a dominant one whereas the context has changed and therefore needs other, more appropriate approaches. He mentions six institutions that supported and complemented this paradigm in the educational ministry of the church, all of which do not exist today. The first institution he mentions is the community. He says that community used to be homogenous; with parochial interests that supported the schooling paradigm towards CE. Communities have changed often dramatically, making this model no longer suitable. Westerhoff also observes that the family used to be an important institution of nurturing religion within traditional communities, but this institution has also collapsed and left a vacuum for the nurturing of CE. The disruption of the family institution has meant that there is no space for CE to be nurtured outside the church. If the church is not offering CE, it means that people are not getting it at all. He also notes that schools were spaces that offered CE, but with the growth of pluralism, this is no longer the case. As Westerhoff observes, "here persons were socialised in the understanding and ways of their particular denomination."⁷⁵

The fifth institution Westerhoff mentions is that of entertainment, which was found in the local church. Such entertainment was built upon Christian values. This as Westerhoff has shown has also changed:

Entertainment is not supportive of Christian values. The television and radio brought different culture to our communities, which counteract the Christian culture and values of the church.⁷⁶

The sixth institution Westerhoff mentions is that of the Sunday school. Today, in most churches there is no Sunday school, and even if there is one it is poorly organised and attended.

⁷⁵ Williams, "Nurturing Perceptive Faith," 123.

⁷⁶ Williams, "Nurturing Perceptive Faith," 124.

The loss of these institutions means that the church must urgently look for new paradigms or methods of doing CE. Westerhoff encourages churches to engage in rigorous education by shifting from the schooling paradigm to one that is relevant for contemporary society.

1.4.11. Ivan Illich and de-schooling

Illich spent the whole of his carrier life showing the weaknesses of the *schooling model* of education, arguing that it has dominated the field of education as if it is the only “authentic model of learning.”⁷⁷ Illich rejected the assumption that schools alone could provide education and that only education acquired through the school system was valid or recognised as authentic. With the monopoly of education by schools comes the devaluation of education that is offered by other institutions such as the family, church and work places. Illich was warning against this problem.

Illich went further to accuse the schools of becoming the “new religion or ritual necessary for participation in society, a means by which the educationally needy secured their salvation”.⁷⁸ He blamed the schools of doing the same thing that the church has done by “making religion compulsory for the salvation of the needy souls.”⁷⁹

In a nutshell, Illich calls for schools not to monopolise the education domain, but rather it must be seen as one way of education and must not be the only way through which people can participate in society. In fact if the church embarked on rigorous education it can learn a lot on contemporary method from secular institutions of education. In many ways contemporary secular education is way ahead of church schooling when it comes to participatory methods.

1.4.12. Stanley Hauerwas: The church is an educational community

Stanley Hauerwas argues that the church is and has *content* for CE through its practices and ministry. He argues that the church is a social ethic, which makes the church and its ministry to be an educational entity.⁸⁰ For Hauerwas, the church is itself an education that provides truth through its ethical choices.⁸¹ He observes that the church needs intentional education for

⁷⁷ Illich, I. *De-Schooling Society*, (New York: Harper and Row, 1970).

⁷⁸ Palmer, J. *Fifty Modern Thinkers on Education*. (London: Rutledge 2001), 186.

⁷⁹ Palmer, *Fifty Modern Thinkers*, 186.

⁸⁰ Hauerwas, *Christian Existence Today*, 103.

⁸¹ Hauerwas, *Christian Existence Today*, 102.

it to understand and embody the truth of the gospel. A theologically educated laity however is of no earthly good if it does not embody the truth in the very fibre of its being.⁸² After finding the truth, the church educates explicitly through its intended educational programmes and implicitly by its practices, liturgies and ministries. In *Christian Existence Today*, Stanley Hauerwas argues that “the Christian church does not *do* religious education instead the church *is* a form of religious education.”⁸³ He refers to its music, liturgy, prayers and other activities. By so doing, Hauerwas is providing an integration vision by rooting content in the midst of goal and process.

Hauerwas’ vision for integration is as a result of his awareness that the church has the tendency to view education as something that may come from outside its life and activities. In this case the content of what the church teaches does not only come from outside the church, but needs to be generated from within the church itself as the church reflects on its ministries and activities from a teaching and learning point of view. Most Christian educators agree with the idea that “church” is an educational activity. This raises the question of what will form the content of Christian education in the local church if all it does is educate. We cannot teach everything; although we can all participate in most of the activities and ministries of the church, and thereby learn something from them.

The important contribution Hauerwas makes to the debate is to remind us that CE does not only take place in small groups and ordered learning. Even within the liturgies, prayers and songs of the church, education is present. The activities and ministerial practices provide a curriculum for the learning community in the church. As this study is interested in new models of doing Christian Education, it will take into account the need to learn from the practices of the church.

1.4.13. Anne Wimberley: Education through story telling

People need to study their own life stories, to know what has helped to shape and form them. They need to study their heritage stories, to know their particular racial and ethnic context and their particular denomination’s perspective shapes and forms them. And finally, they need to study the Christian story in scripture to know the vision of who we are called to be as disciples of Christ.⁸⁴

⁸² Hauerwas, *Christian Existence Today*, 105.

⁸³ Hauerwas, *Christian Existence Today*, 101.

⁸⁴ Wimberley, A. *Soul Stories: African American Christian Education*, (Nashville, Abingdon Press, 1994), 82.

Wimberley seeks to present a *method* of doing Christian education from an African-American perspective. Her model draws on CE practice from the slave-era and entails a teaching/learning process focused on liberation and vocation. Her thesis is that people want to find meaning and purpose for their lives and that CE can offer this if approached from a story-linking point of view. Wimberley refers to this kind of liberation as liberation from self-denigration to positive self-valuing or positive self-regard.⁸⁵

The aim of Wimberley's model is her dialogical approach to CE, which seeks to "enhance leaders and teachers' abilities to make choices, while providing a method by which those same leaders and teachers can guide the decision making of their students."⁸⁶

1.5. Liberation, Theology and Education: A South African Contribution

The research question at the heart of this study concerns the educational role of the South African church given the transformation processes taking place in the country? The literature review clearly suggests the importance of CE in the life of the Church. However, there are gaps in the literature, which sets a research agenda for this thesis. In particular, there are four gaps, which this thesis will endeavour to address:

- (1) Because the CE discourse is dominated by the United States of America and its context, there is a need for an African and South African reflection and contribution to the wider ecumenical and scholarly debate;
- (2) This study must seek to dialogue with and provide insight for the wider Methodist tradition;
- (3) While being in dialogue to the wider ecumenical and scholarly debate, it must be rooted in, and assist the witness of the Black church (and especially the MCSA);
- (4) The church takes seriously the issues of Christian citizenship in a post-apartheid South Africa, which provides a contextual model for CE.

⁸⁵ Wimberley, *Soul Stories*, 4.

⁸⁶ Wimberley, *Soul Stories*, 13.

1.5.1. Christian education and transformation

CE in a technical sense is a form of education that seeks to educate people to bring about change, to assist the transformation of old traditions and teachings in order to bring new life to people.⁸⁷ CE is classified under non-formal education, defined by Coombs as:

any organised educational activity carried on outside the framework of the formal system to provide selected types of learning to particular sub-groups in the population, adults as well as children.⁸⁸

Non-formal education enables people to acquire skills and knowledge. Anne Hope acclaims non-formal education as an important tool for social transformation. She argues that:

Education is first of all about liberating people from all that holds them back from a full human life. Ultimately development and education are about full life...development, liberation and transformation are all aspects of the same process. It is not a marginal activity. It is at the core of all creative human living.⁸⁹

CE remains an important part of a non-formal education that contributes to the development of knowledge that includes social transformation. When reflecting on the above subsection we can conclude that education, transformation and liberation is about people. However, for people to participate in transforming society they need to learn. This learning has to be done with the ultimate aim of changing society. Such transformation is understood to be the result of God's co-operation with people and people's cooperation with God.

1.5.2. Liberation, transformation and theology

The engagement of the South African church in issues of social transformation gained its essential foundational motivations from Latin American liberation theology. Leonardo Boff and Clodovis Boff define liberation theology as:

⁸⁷ Karen Tye notes that there are many different purposes for Christian Education, but the above is one of them, where education is understood as helping people to cope with change. Tye, *Basics of Christian Education*, 23.

⁸⁸ Mumba, E. "Non-formal Education in Zambia: Experiences of the Working Group on Non-Formal Education in Zambia." (Paper presented at the National Symposium on Non-Formal Education in Mozambique, Maputo 12-14, 2002), 2.

⁸⁹ Van Schalkwyk, A. "The Story of Anne Hope's Quest for Transformation." *Missionalia* 29 (3), (2001), 423-475.

Reflecting on the basis of practice, within the ambit of the vast efforts made by the poor and their allies seeking inspiration of faith and the gospel⁹⁰ for the commitment to fight against poverty and for the integral liberation of the whole person.

The basic tenet of liberation theology is the preferential option for the poor and the turning of theology into a critical reflection on praxis. This requires that theology has to be done from the position and experience of the poor and oppressed. The theologian has to choose to be biased towards those who are marginalised in society. Thus the theologian can be seen as a social agent, standing on the side of the poor. Liberation theology was and is understood therefore as a theology of the poor.⁹¹ It seeks to bring the experience of the poor into theology instead of theology being done in a way that detaches it from the real experiences of the poor. It is because of its commitment to the poor and oppressed people that liberation theology was well received by the South African church, using it to reflect critically on Christian praxis in the light of the Word of God.⁹² Liberation theology became a tool in its fight against apartheid. One of the significant contributions it made was the promotion of Black theology, which was used to affirm the dignity and pride of Black people.

Liberation theology is an umbrella term, embodying a number of incipient theologies that are embraced by different groups of marginalised people as they reflect on their experiences of oppression in the light of the gospel. These include: Black theology, feminist theology etc. In the South African context liberation theology led to the rise of Black theology. This theology produced Black leaders such as Alan Boesak, Bonganjalo Goba, Takatso Mofokeng and Desmond Tutu. These Black theologians steered the church in its fight against racism and brought about liberation for Black people. Black theology was used to reflect on the experiences of Black people in the light of the God of justice and liberation. God was understood as one who was on the side of oppressed people. Alan Boesak in his book *Farewell to Innocence: A Socio-Ethical Study of Black Theology and Black Power*, notes that:

Our theological reflection must take into consideration—more strongly still, must emerge out of—that which White theology has never taken seriously: the Black experience.⁹³

⁹⁰ As quoted in De Gruchy, J. W. and Villa-Vicencio, C. (eds) *Doing Theology in Context: South African Perspectives*, (Cape Town: David Philip Publishers, 1994), 187.

⁹¹ De Gruchy and Villa-Vicencio, *Doing Theology in Context*, 189.

⁹² Gustavo Gutierrez defines liberation theology as “a critical reflection on Christian praxis in the light of the Word of God.” Gutierrez, G. *The Truth Shall Make You Free*, (New York: Maryknoll, 1986), 22.

⁹³ Boesak, A. *Farewell to Innocence: A Socio-Ethical Study of Black Theology and Black Power*, (Johannesburg: Raven Press, 1976), 4.

The focus of Black theology was to help Black people reflect on their oppression in the light of the Word of God. The basic elements of Black Theology in the context of South Africa during apartheid are summarised correctly by Gregory Mbanjwa when he states that:

Its points of emphasis included firstly the consciousness of blackness as a valid and equally unique mode of existence in the world where whiteness had been made the norm; secondly the consciousness of God's liberation of his people from whatever form of oppression, and thirdly the reinterpretation of Christ's incarnation in the light of the Black experiences of oppression and poverty.⁹⁴

It rose out of a need to articulate the significance of Black presence in an oppressive White world. Its aims were to encourage Black people to reflect upon their experience under the guidance of gospel values. It disputed the claims of White theology that had been the pillar and bulwark of the policy of apartheid. The murdered Black Consciousness Movement leader, Steve Bantu Biko defines Black theology as a theology that:

Seeks to relate God and Christ once more to the Black man [*sic*] and his daily problems...It grapples with existential problems and does not claim to be the theology of absolutes. It seeks to bring back God to the Black man and to the truth and reality of his situation.⁹⁵

Black theology viewed both Black and White people as being prisoners of oppression. White people oppressed Black people. White people were oppressed by fear and insecurity as a result of the suffering they inflicted on Black people. As a result they were also not free and needed liberation. Black Theology was therefore not only a theology of liberating Black people, but also of White people.

Black theology argued that God liberates people and that God was the one who had created Black humanity. God was understood as the one who offers life in all its fullness. This life includes peace, justice and mercy. Therefore "it is justice, peace and unity that liberation must bring to all people who have been oppressed and these things have to endure and continue to characterise a liberated society."⁹⁶

Black theology faced a number of challenges, as a result of its reflection and expression by Christian Black people upon their suffering and oppression. To do liberation theology in the

⁹⁴ Mbanjwa, G. *The Impact of Catholic Social Teaching on the Development of South African Black Theology: A Look at the Three Theologians* (Mogkethi Mothlabi, Buti Tlhagale and Mandlenkosi Zwane). (Unpublished M.Th Thesis University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, 2002), 68.

⁹⁵ Biko, S. *I Write What I Like*, (Oxford: Heinemann, 1987), 94.

⁹⁶ Mbanjwa, *The Impact of Catholic Social Teaching*, 3.

context of oppression requires that one must have a deep faith commitment both to God and to the oppressed. Such commitment is risky and can lead to death. Bonganjalo Goba echoes these sentiments when he writes:

Doing theology in South Africa constitutes a problem and a challenge. It is a problem because of the nature of our political situation in which blacks are not expected to think critically. For many of us it is a risk to think and express our views openly, a risk that can lead to one's death. Cases in point are Steve Biko and many unknown heroes of the Black struggle for freedom in South Africa. It is a challenge especially for Black Christians for it is an invitation to test the authenticity of our faith and to make a contribution to the current struggle for freedom that is going on in South Africa and for that matter in the world.⁹⁷

Following the institution of the new democratic states of South Africa in 1994, the church abandoned liberation theology, regarding it to be obsolete and irrelevant. However, no theology or method replaced it.

There are a number of problems that have led to the fall of Black theology that need to be mentioned in here, although not in detail. *Firstly*, Black Theology did not prepare itself for the role it was going to play after the demise of apartheid. The collapse of the apartheid regime and its structures has meant that people are no longer oppressed on the basis of the colour of their skins. After the new dispensation there have been a few problems with Black theology. *Secondly*, its rooted-ness in the Black experiential reality of oppression and the Christian faith posed a limiting factor in the sense that once the oppression was no longer based on colour Black theology was regarded as irrelevant. *Thirdly*, critics were opposed to the idea of the inclusion of Black experience of oppression and dehumanisation in church services and communal celebrations, seeing it as an attempt to divide the church, which is busy trying to build reconciliation, forgiveness and unity.

Groups that continue to fight using arguments that are based on colour have been accused of practising discrimination in reverse or being resistant to change. As a result, a number of people have been calling for the disbanding of the Black Methodist Consultation in the Methodist church.

It is a fact that the demise of apartheid and the establishment of a new political and democratic order do not mean that the nation is free from all injustices, suffering and other dehumanising experiences. Living conditions in South Africa are insufficient to restore the

⁹⁷ Goba, B. *An Agenda for Black Theology*. (Johannesburg: Skottaville Publishers, 1988), 1.

shattered humanity and dignity of the Black and White people. The attainment of freedom has brought more work in order to build a free society for all South Africans. These sentiments were echoed well by Nelson Mandela in his autobiography, *Long Walk to Freedom*:

I have walked along that road to freedom. I have tried not to falter; I have made missteps along the way. But I have discovered the secret that after climbing a great hill, one finds that there are many more small hills to climb. I have taken a moment here to rest to steal a view of the glorious vista that surrounds to look back on the distance I have come. But I can rest only for a moment, for with freedom come responsibilities, and I dare not linger, for my long walk is not yet ended.⁹⁸

The challenge is how the church participates in the building of a new society without being trapped in the past. How does it take the work that was done through liberation theology further without losing the foundations it laid?

The underlying assumption of these theories therefore is that being located in a transforming society the church in South Africa must encourage and enable the participation of its members in the processes of social transformation. The concern here is that the method employed for CE must be transformational and liberating. On this basis I have chosen to apply the *liberationist theoretical framework* in sorting and interpreting the historical and educational data. Because of his major impact upon educational theory and social transformation Paulo Freire's classic works, *Education for Critical Consciousness* (1973) and *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1996) will form the theoretical framework and foundation for the fact that people have the capacity to change their reality and circumstances.

1.6. Paulo Freire: Transformative education

Before one goes into detail with Paulo Freire's method, it is appropriate to preface such discussion by briefly relating something of his biographical details and the reason for choosing him in this study.

⁹⁸ Mandela, N. *Long Walk to Freedom*, (London: Abascus, 1994), 751.

1.6.1. Freire and South Africa

Paulo Freire was born in Recife, Brazil in 1921 into a middle class family.⁹⁹ When the world suffered economic depression in 1929, Freire and his family experienced poverty and it was this experience that laid the foundation for him to develop a passion for the education and advancement of the poor and oppressed. He was a Catholic, and worked for sometime for the World Council of Churches in Geneva, Switzerland.

There are two main reasons for choosing Paulo Freire as the theoretical framework for this study. *Firstly*, Freire had a profound influence on South African educators and learners during the years of apartheid. His influence was so profound that then South African government banned his books and papers. Vishnathie Sewpaul notes that:

In South Africa, the discovery of Freire's (1970, 1972, 1973) method of conscientisation through liberating dialogue and praxis came at just the right moment-during the 1970s when I was in Secondary school. At this time Freire's works, which were banned by government, found their way into South African Black universities and into SASO.¹⁰⁰

Secondly, Freire's relevance to the South African context was noted long ago by a number of scholars. For an example Nelson Alexander in his article *Liberation Pedagogies in South Africa* mentioned the following factors as those that allowed the easy entry of Freire's pedagogy into South Africa.¹⁰¹

- Freires' anti-capitalist social theory accorded with the experience and insights of South African liberation movements and of educationalists who were active within these movements;
- The pedagogical situation in Latin America out of which Freire's liberation theology was formed resembled conditions that existed in South Africa;
- Freire's pedagogical method of combining education and culture with conscientisation and politicisation was consistent with the views of the BCM, and was thus readily adopted by the movement;

⁹⁹ Pazmino, R. *Foundational Issues in Christian Education*, 75.

¹⁰⁰ In Dominelli and Bernard, *Broadening Horizons*, 116.

¹⁰¹ Alexander, N. "Liberation pedagogy in the South African context." in Critocos, C. (ed.). *Experiential Learning in Formal and Non-formal Education*. Durban: Media Resource Centre, Department of Education: University of Natal, 2002). See also, Hope and Timmel, *Training for Transformation*, who built on Freire's social theories of education.

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- The emphasis of the liberation movement of the late 1970s and the 1980s on grassroots organisation, rooted in small groups and community projects, heightened sensitivity regarding democratic principles. This sensitivity reinforced by Freire's educational philosophy became integral to the practice of alternative education.

For Paulo Freire the *goal* of education is *liberation*. His pedagogy had deep links with the basic principles of liberation theology. This is not surprising because his pedagogy was influenced by his Catholic faith. Steve de Gruchy affirms this point when he writes:

We need to start with the Brazilian educationist, Paulo Freire, whom I consider to be the most coherent link between the gospel language of freedom in Christ, and secular language on the praxis of freedom. Deeply influenced by his Roman Catholic faith and his partnership with the World Council of Churches, Freire promotes *humanisation* as the good to which society should struggle, indeed as "the people's vocation."¹⁰²

Freire's pedagogy was liberative and transformational in its nature and theory and was sorely needed by South Africa at the time. As Pazmino notes:

Our pedagogy cannot do without a vision of man and his world. It formulates a scientific humanist conception, which finds its expression in a dialogical praxis in which teachers and learners, together, in the act of analysing a dehumanising reality, denounce it while announcing its transformation in the name of the liberation of man.¹⁰³

This point makes clear the extent that Freire's approach has been relevant to the South African context, thus providing reasons to use his thinking in this study as the basis of my theoretical framework.

1.6.2. Critiques of Paulo Freire by other scholars

I am aware that Freire has been criticised by a number of scholars who are engaged in education. Moacir Gadotti dismissed the idea that dialogue is simply based just on unity and reciprocity.¹⁰⁴ In contradistinction, Gadotti develops his notion of dialogue by emphasising the productive place of conflict within dialogue, which Freire ignores as if it does not exist. For him dialogue is a place of harmony and unity. Building on Freire's understanding, Gadotti

¹⁰² See De Gruchy, S. "Of Agency, Assets and Appreciation: Theological Themes for Social Development." *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 117 (2003), 6.

¹⁰³ Pazmino, R. *Foundational Issues in Christian Education*, (Michigan: Baker Books, 1999), 76.

¹⁰⁴ Gadotti, M. *Pedagogy of Praxis: A Dialectical Philosophy of Education*. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996).

posits that dialogue takes place “in praxis-in action and reflection-in political engagement, in the pledge for social transformation he saw dialogue as a being of unity and conflict thus offering a dialectic interpretation” of a pedagogy of dialogue.¹⁰⁵ I find agreement with Gadotti’s notion that dialogue has potential for unity as well as conflict, with the codicil that unity and conflict can only be constructive when properly managed. I feel that Freire is naïve on this point. He gives it an unproblematic picture.

Peter Rule enters the debate by identifying an important critique from a liberal perspective by arguing that:

A liberal critique of the pedagogy of dialogue would approve of the idea of individuals negotiating interpersonal meanings and developing mutual understanding through open communication, but question the necessary association of dialogue with radical social change. Within a liberal paradigm, with its emphasis on the individual as the source of meaning and value, dialogue could be divorced from a liberative praxis and retained in the context of interpersonal classroom relationships.¹⁰⁶

James Gee criticises Freire of manipulating the poor, by refusing to hear from the poor; instead he already knows what the poor think and feel. Gee blames Freire for dictating to the oppressed what they must read and say. This criticism raises questions about Freire’s emancipatory method because it implies that he imposes knowledge upon people through the literacy material that he supplies them.”¹⁰⁷ For Gee, such literacy material must ensure that the oppressed think correctly, that is to re-say or interpret text and word correctly.¹⁰⁸

However there are a few factors that make me to see Freire’s approach to education as vital for this study despite the criticisms levelled against him by the above scholars. First, his focus is on the experiences of oppressed people who longed for the transformation of their situation of oppression. He believed that oppression has created different syndromes such as fatalism, horizontal violence, attraction to oppress, self-deprecation, and internalisation of ignorance. Second, is his observation that the basic problem of oppressed people is their illiteracy? As a result, even though he found it very hard to challenge the oppressive social system, he managed to raise the consciousness of the oppressed masses through his liberatory education.

¹⁰⁵ Gadotti, *Pedagogy in Praxis*, xvi.

¹⁰⁶ Rule, *A Nest of Communities*, 53.

¹⁰⁷ Gee, J. *Social Linguistics and Literacies*, (Bristol: Taylor and Francis, 1996), 38.

¹⁰⁸ Gee, *Social Linguistics and Literacies*, 39.

In his method of education he worked out a framework, which establishes steps in a revolutionary cultural action to liberate the oppressed people from dominant forces.¹⁰⁹

Third, his method is aimed at bringing about critical consciousness and transformation. In the context of liberatory pedagogy, transformation is understood as:

A liberating education that treats learners as subjects, as active agents, and not as objects or passive recipients of wisdom shared. Students are thus viewed as active, creative subjects with the capacity to examine critically, interact with, and transform their world. Transformation is also described as problem-posing education, which encourages freedom for students in cooperative dialogue with the teacher and other students.¹¹⁰

This method is based on values such as love, humility, truth, trust, hope and action.¹¹¹ Therefore as the aim of this study is to explore a method of education for transformation I am going to use Freire's dialogical approach to education as an appropriate theoretical framework. In approaching Freire we must look at the key components of his model of education being goal (liberation), method (dialogue) and content (conscientisation).

1.6.3. Goal: The goal of education is liberation

Essential to Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* is the conviction that all human beings, especially the oppressed, have the capacity to rise to the challenge of becoming more human by overcoming dehumanisation.¹¹² But for them to rise above the problem of oppression they need to undergo the process of "conscientisation," which means, "the arousing of a persons" positive self-concept in relation to the environment and society.¹¹³ The point that Freire raises is that in the world as it is there, is human suffering, oppression and dehumanisation. He therefore argues that:

While both humanisation and dehumanisation are real alternatives, only the first is the peoples' vocation. This vocation is constantly negated, yet it is affirmed by the very negation. It is thwarted by injustice, exploitation, oppression, and violence of the oppressors; it is affirmed by the yearning of the oppressed for freedom and justice, and by their struggle to recover their lost humanity.¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁹ Kim, M. Promoting Literacy as a Contribution to Social Development: The Role of the Church in Non-Formal Education in the Twentieth Century. (Unpublished Masters Thesis, University of KwaZulu-Natal, 2005), 23.

¹¹⁰ Pazmino, *Foundational Issues in Christian Education*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999), 76.

¹¹¹ Freire, P. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (London: Penguin, 1996) 74.

¹¹² See Freire, P. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 52; Maddox, R. *Responsible Grace: John Wesley's Practical Theology*. (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1994), 164.

¹¹³ Pazmino, *Foundational Issues in Christian Education*, 77.

¹¹⁴ Kee, T. (ed) *Education, Liberation and in the Church: A Reader in Political Theology*. (London: SCM Press, 1993), 26.

Freire recognised that those who are created by God have the potential of being dehumanised and oppressed. Therefore education has to be used as a tool to bring about their liberation. In his liberatory pedagogy Freire commences by recognising that the oppressed have been dehumanised.¹¹⁵ Therefore education is a process of their liberation. He wrote that:

The oppressed have been destroyed precisely because their situation has reduced them into things. In order to regain their humanity they must cease to be things and fight as men and women. This is a radical requirement. They cannot enter the struggle as objects in order later to become human beings.¹¹⁶

Education is there to serve the purpose of liberating people from suffering, oppression and dehumanisation. Without education taking into consideration the experience of oppression, education in Freire's view can be understood as a false pedagogy.

Freire goes further to seek for a remedy for this situation. If education is to be a liberatory pedagogy that leads to the *humanisation* of people, it needs to adopt a new approach, one different from the traditional one that has been used to dehumanise people. He proposed problem-posing education as a method of educating for liberation. Problem-posing education builds on the basic principles of conscientisation, critical thinking and dialogue.

For Freire, the *method* of education that was capable of bringing a solution to the problem of educating for liberation was the use of a problem-posing methodology. The merit of problem-posing education is that it brings about awareness to the situation of the oppressed, both to the oppressed themselves and also to the educator who acts as a problem-poser. Problem-posing education is advantageous because it benefits the educator and learner through mutual sharing of knowledge as they explore answers to the problems through the dialogical process.

In his compelling writings, Freire was concerned with the marginalisation of people from the centre of society. He concluded that what happens in society is that it does not place people in the centre, but instead holds a “mechanistic objectivism”¹¹⁷ attitude towards them. In this case people are treated as objects and not as human beings, which leads to their dehumanisation. To participate in the humanisation of people is therefore to participate in the humanisation of

¹¹⁵ Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 15.

¹¹⁶ Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 50.

¹¹⁷ Freire, *Education for Critical Consciousness*, (New York: Continuum, 1973), 146.

people from the periphery of the social circle to the centre, against “reactionary forces and these forces are the dominant elites.”¹¹⁸

The domination of people happens through cultural invasion and anti-dialogical actions of education that are employed by the dominant elites to move people from the centre of society to the margins. Freire describes such cultural invasion as “programmes and plans to disrupt the potentialities and development of the oppressed.”¹¹⁹ Cultural invasion implants the invader’s outlook and their philosophy.¹²⁰ The implications of cultural invasion are that the objects of intrusion are transmitted through cultural identity. Tools of cultural invasion include: advertising, mass media, television, radio, newspapers, school textbooks, technology and other sources of production. He argued that the oppressed are bombarded with images of their oppressors from childhood through to old age, until they adopt those images as their own models.¹²¹ In his now classic work, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* Freire notes the problem of cultural invasion:

Cultural invasion, which serves the ends of conquest and the preservation of oppression, always involves a parochial view of reality, a static perception of the world, and the imposition of one worldview upon another. It implies the “superiority” of the invader and the “inferiority” of those who are invaded, as well as the imposition of values by the former, who possess the latter and are afraid of losing them.¹²²

Through cultural invasion people become economically dependent on the invader and the resultant dependency becomes a form of enslavement and imperialism. Other results of such invasion are the imitation of the invader by the invaded as a means of dealing with their domination. Cultural invasion also disrupts tools that are used to promote creativity within a culture.¹²³ On the one hand, the invaders triumph as it seizes control of society and its institutions that promote its well-being. On the other, invaded societies begin to distrust their capabilities and potentialities. This leads to the people being compelled to live within the world-view of the invaders, with the consequent demise of their own cultural heritage.¹²⁴

¹¹⁸ Kim, M. 2005. Promoting Literacy as a Contribution to Social Development: The Role of the Church in Non-formal Education in the Twentieth Century. Unpublished Masters Thesis, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa 2005: 29.

¹¹⁹ Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 133.

¹²⁰ Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 133.

¹²¹ Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 133.

¹²² Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 133.

¹²³ Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 133.

¹²⁴ Kim, Promoting Literacy, 25.

1.6.4. Content: The content of education is conscientisation

For Freire, the *content* of education was conscientisation, which he described as the process by which learners advance towards critical consciousness.¹²⁵ This means that the purpose of education is not indoctrination for domestication or domination. Rather, it is a journey towards liberation and empowerment by making the oppressed conscious of their oppression. This process is understood by Freire as a means of “coming to an informed knowledge of one’s existential condition, and the accompanying process of developing the necessary tools for liberation”.¹²⁶ In Paulo Freire’s own words, “the term *conscientizacao* refers to learning to perceive social, political and economic contradictions and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality”.¹²⁷ Commenting on this Reddie can state:

Freire argued that for oppressed people to be free, they must first recognise the condition in which they find themselves. One of the primary ways in which the oppressor controls the actions of the oppressed is by restricting the thinking of the oppressed. The latter then views and perceives their reality in terms that are determined solely by the oppressor. This constricted worldview prevents the oppressed from claiming their freedom.¹²⁸

The necessity of a process of conscientisation that will free the oppressed from not seeing their situation clearly simply because they are using the oppressor’s way of seeing, is important because “the oppressed need to recognise the situation in which they find themselves before liberation can become a reality.”¹²⁹ Freire believed that literacy empowers people when it renders them active questioners of the social reality around them. Hence he could state:

Reading the world always precedes reading the word, and reading the word implies continually reading the world...In a way however we can go further and say that reading the word is not preceded merely by reading the world but by a certain form of writing or rewriting it, that is, of transforming it by means of conscious, practical work. For me this dynamic movement is central to the literacy process.¹³⁰

For Freire, “to study is not easy, because to study is to create and recreate and not to repeat what others say.”¹³¹ He goes on to argue in one of his notebooks to learners that education is meant to develop critical spirit and creativity, not passivity. Critical consciousness can only

¹²⁵ Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 34.

¹²⁶ In Reddie, “Developing a Black Christian Education of Liberation.” *Religious Education* 98 (2), (Spring 2003), 229.

¹²⁷ Freire, P. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 34.

¹²⁸ Reddie, “Developing a Black Christian Education,” 228.

¹²⁹ Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 45.

¹³⁰ Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 45.

¹³¹ Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 45.

be arrived at once people have been taught *critical thinking*. He argued that education must teach people to think critically:

When we learn to read and write, it is also important to learn to think correctly. To think correctly we should think about our practice in work. We should think about our daily lives.¹³²

Freire enumerates certain stages of consciousness growth, beginning at the lowest stage of intransitive thought where people resign themselves to fatalism and think that only luck or God can change their situation.¹³³ For Ira Shor, such critical consciousness can be described as possessing four innate qualities¹³⁴:

- (1) Power awareness: The realisation that society and history can be made and remade by human actions and organised groups. Knowing the location of power in the society;
- (2) Critical literacy: Analytic ability of thinking, reading, writing, speaking, which goes beyond surface impressions. Discovering the deep meaning of events and applying the meaning of the one's context;
- (3) De-socialisation: Recognising and challenging the myth, value, behaviour learned in mass culture. Critically examination of the repressive values operating in society;
- (4) Self-organisation/self-education: Self-organisation means taking the initiative to transform society from an authoritarian, undemocratic and unequal distribution of power to one that is based on values of democracy and equality.

¹³² Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 45.

¹³³ Sometimes in the church we perpetuate this type of thinking. We encourage praying hard and waiting upon the Lord to solve our problems, instead of thinking creatively so as to find solutions to our problems. Such dominant thinking on the part of the church perpetuates the domestication of people, instead of their freedom.

¹³⁴ Shor, I. *Critical Teaching and Everyday Life*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 54.

1.6.5. The method of education is dialogue

A significant characteristic of cultural invasion is that it is anti-dialogical. In order to deal with it there is a need to adopt a dialogical approach. Another point at issue is that to avoid compliance with cultural invasion, the educator need to adopt a dialogical approach when dealing with people. The anti-dialogical approach is parallel to “banking education” while the dialogical approach is parallel to liberative education. The problem with this approach to education is that it objectifies the oppressed, thus depriving them of their economic, social and political freedom. Kim notes that:

The Christian understanding of Freire at this point can be described as the nature of sin that compels the subjection of other people. In the similar manner it takes the Bible education (CE) to bring people to understand the realities of evil ways. The oppressed take consolation from the word of God as a source of strength to resist the oppression of evil.¹³⁵

The focus of dialogical action is on transformative education,¹³⁶ and forms one of the basic factors towards people’s growth and transformation. Dialogical education leads to productive and creative education.¹³⁷ It invigorates society so that it works for transformation. Freire argues that a dialogical approach to education enables a process of liberation. Together with Shor they define such dialogue as, “a moment where humans meet to reflect on their reality as they make and remake it.”¹³⁸

Freire emphasised the relationship between dialogue and political action as a dialogue that is not simply talking for its own sake. It is part of a liberating praxis intent on transforming the world, “through dialogue, reflecting together on what we know and don’t know, we can then act critically transform reality.”¹³⁹

Freire stressed an understanding of the struggle together with its dependency to dialogue and conversation for the empowerment of people as being essential:

If it is in speaking their word that men (sic) transform the world by naming it, dialogue impresses itself as the way in which men can achieve significance as men (sic). Dialogue is thus an existential necessity.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁵ Kim, *Promoting Literacy*, 29.

¹³⁶ Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 52.

¹³⁷ Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 51.

¹³⁸ Freire and Shor, *A Pedagogy for Liberation*, 98.

¹³⁹ Freire, and Shor, *A Pedagogy for Liberation*, (London: Macmillan, 1987), 99.

¹⁴⁰ Freire, *Education for Critical Consciousness*, 61.

It is in dialogue that people are able to share their experiences of injustices and at the heart of conscientisation; the encounter between the educator and learners is dialogue. In agreement with Paulo Freire, Brookfield describes it as “transactional dialogue, which is central to education and learning.”¹⁴¹

The problem is that education by oppressors is anti-dialogical. This system of education portrays an all-knowing and knowledgeable teacher and absolutises ignorant learners and/or communities. Beneath the principle of dialogue is the realisation of the problem of banking education.

In banking education there is no dialogue between the educator and the learner. There is no liberation or mutual growth. The solution to the problem is a liberatory education, which is embedded in the drive towards reconciliation and the solution to the teacher-student contradiction, which in turn will lead to a situation where both are simultaneously teachers and learners. In the place of banking education Freire posits a dialogic “problem-posing education” which transforms the teacher-learner relation:

The truly committed must reject the banking concept in its entirety, adopting instead a concept of men as conscious beings and consciousness directed towards the world. They must abandon the educational goal of deposit making and replace it with the posing of problem of men in their relations with the world.¹⁴²

He goes on to say that:

The liberated teacher of the student, and the student of, the, teacher cease to exist through dialogue and a new term emerges teacher-students and the student teacher. Libertarian education rejects communiqué and adopt communication, men develop their power to perceive criticality; makes students critical thinkers; encourages creativity and true reflection on reality; encourages mobility-men and dynamic; it demythologize reality. Banking on the other hand; mythologizes reality to conceal certain facts; resist dialogue; inhibits creativity domesticates; immobilize.¹⁴³

The effectiveness of problem-posing education’ is as a result of its four-fold dialogical action process:

¹⁴¹ In Pennefather, J. An Exploration of Selected Teaching Strategies and Content in South African Schools to Create an Awareness of Prejudice. (Unpublished Masters of Education Thesis, University of Natal, 1992), 42.

¹⁴² Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 60.

¹⁴³ Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 64.

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- (1) Co-operation contributes to transformation by building bridges and allowing the harnessing of available ideas and information;
 - (2) Unity contributes to transformation in dialogical action by reviving people's inert strength and binding their minds together for common action;
 - (3) Organisation as a dialogical factor strengthens the communication base to initiate transformative development;
 - (4) Cultural synthesis contributes to development in a dialogical way, by enabling cultural action to lift the people in a common identity and restoration of indigenous values.

Conclusion

In chapter one I have laid the foundation for the thesis by embarking on an intensive preliminary discussion. I have covered issues such as motivation for the study, its relevance; methods and procedures that have been adopted, problems encountered in conducting the research and the definition of terms. I also attempted a detailed literature review of the discipline of CE by examining the contemporary literature on CE with the a view of highlighting the paradigmatic work of Paulo Freire. From the literature I concluded that there is serious lack of material written from an African perspective in this area. Linked to that is the fact that CE is a neglected area in the life of the church especially in Africa. Paulo Freire's work has been presented both with its positive and negative aspects. I have also to argue why I use Freire as a major theorist. South Africa is a country that is undergoing a process of transformation from apartheid to democracy and development. The Christian Church has a moral and missional responsibility to participate and contribute to the process of transformation. A theological and pedagogical contribution has the potential to supplement and complement the political one. Therefore the study attempts to propose a Transformation-centered Approach to CE for the transformation of both the church and the South African society. The hope is that by using this model the church can contribute to the transformation process in South Africa and elsewhere. Now I move to chapter two of this study where I undertake a case study of education in the MCSA in detail. This will establish our concern to do with transformation-centered CE.

CHAPTER 2

THE EDUCATIONAL WEAKNESSES OF THE JOURNEY TO THE NEW LAND PROGRAMME

Introduction

This chapter looks at the Journey to the New Land Programme (JNL) in order to provide a South African case study on the contextual demands of CE. The JNL was a renewal and educational programme that the MCSA initiated in the early 1990s as a response to the changes that were taking place in South Africa.¹ The chapter is divided into three sections:

¹ I have served the MCSA in different capacities that have enabled me to accumulate a measurable amount of knowledge resulting from Personal Experiences. The personal experiences I gained through my involvement with the church have also provided me with a pool of knowledge and resource during the course of this research. In 1991-1993 I served as a class leader at Orlando Easter Methodist Church in Soweto. My responsibilities included teaching the JNL programme to members of the class meeting. In 1994-1997 I served as a probation minister and facilitator at Howick Methodist Church. In 1998- 2002 I served as an ordained minister and facilitator of JNL process at Ivory Park Methodist Church in Johannesburg. Whilst involved with the church at these different capacities I accumulated a lot of resources such as reports, training manuals and reports on the JNL programme. I consulted most of my records, files and presentations that I made on the JNL process, for information during this study. The challenge was to compare my personal experiences with the other sources of information gathered, recognise some of the continuities and discontinuities and draw conclusions. Retrieval of archival data was not a problem. The leadership of the MCSA was very helpful in making their records available for analysis. The Staff of the *New Dimension* where most of the records and articles of the church are kept were also most helpful. Other libraries were also most obliging in sourcing documents. The documentation included the following:

- (1) Minutes of Conference of the MCSA from the 1950s to 2004;
- (2) A few books on the work of Methodist missionaries;
- (3) Missionary Review pamphlets;
- (4) Christian education materials, books, daily almanacs and faith and life educational materials;
- (5) Minutes of meetings held on the JNL process;
- (6) Tapes of the bible studies and address at the JNL convocation in 1992;
- (7) Reports of the facilitator training that were conducted throughout the connexion.

In terms of secondary data the unpublished report of research done by the Methodist David Newby on the impact of the JNL was helpful to this study. Peter Storey and Ross Olivier's book on the JNL, articles on the JNL programme from the *New Dimension* were additional secondary sources utilised in this study. In organising the data I began by reading the documents that I had collected and identified the data that was relevant to the research questions. This was followed by the identification of data relevant to the questions, which was then categorised, into broad themes, for example goals, content and methods of education. This also required me to develop a file where I kept the organised material. A large amount of the data was collected through formal and informal interviews. These were conducted with a variety of people, a majority of whom were members of the MCSA. I conducted ten formal interviews with people who had been participants in the JNL programme. The advantage of this approach was that the topic and issues to be covered were specified in advance in a clear outlined form. A questionnaire was also sent to 200 persons by email, of which the research received ten replies.

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- (1) The first section identifies the context of the JNL by looking at the political and ecclesial dynamics that shaped it;
 - (2) The second section looks at the different aspects of the JNL programme, its origins, and implementation processes with a particular intention to discover the key educational concerns of the programme;
 - (3) The third section evaluates the educational approach of the JNL in the MCSA by looking at its success and failures.

2.1. Political and Ecclesial background to the JNL

The JNL programme was a product of its own context. It was a response strategy of the MCSA to the societal and political dynamics that were taking place in South Africa. To fully grasp the intent of the JNL it is imperative to study the contextual factors that pushed the church towards its implementation. Paulo Freire once raised the importance of the historical context of the churches in their educational imperative:

We cannot discuss churches, education, or the role of the churches in education other than historically. Churches are not abstract entities; they are institutions involved in history. Therefore to understand their educational role we must take into consideration the concrete situation in which they exist.²

Prudence Hatigikimana agrees with these sentiments by stating “various people at various places and times ask various questions about their faith.”³ These questions are always contextual, as are their answers. This is because our understanding of faith is conditioned by the questions we ask of it; equally, the questions we ask are conditioned by our social and historical contexts. Clearly, there is a need to place the JNL in its context for us to adequately understand its aims, intentions and broad impact, and in so doing, identify the key socio-political and ecclesial dynamics in South Africa, which led to its implementation and design. This discussion is not exhaustive of the issues but is intended to provide background and context of the study.

Thirty non-formal interviews with clergy, laity, church leaders, youth and women were conducted. Open-ended questions were deliberately included as to how they saw the JNL process and education in the church.

² Freire, P. *The Politics of Education*. (London: Macmillan Publishers, 1985), 121.

³ Hatigikimana, P. *Setting Captives Free*. (Pietermaritzburg; Cluster 2001), 1.

2.1.1. Political Background

This section will look at the political context of South Africa and how it impacted on the church.

2.1.1.1. 1948 and the imposition of apartheid

The struggle against apartheid in South Africa was both political and theological. It is imperative therefore that we must understand the political dynamics that lead to its adoption and how the church responded theologically, if we are to begin to understand the church and its ministry. The fact that a majority of the South African population is confessionally Christian means that faith commitments and political choices have serious implications. When the National Party came into power in 1948 it implemented the policy of apartheid, a seemingly innocuous term that referred to the policy of separate development along racial lines. This policy was a response to the fear that Afrikaners had of Black people, a strategy that D. F. Malan used to win the elections, by warning both English and Afrikaans-speaking white people of an impending *swart gevaar* (the Black danger).⁴ The policy supported the Afrikaans project, of working for “the survival of the Afrikaner nation as an indigenous, separate, and independent Western Cultural community in Africa.”⁵ Indelibly linked to this was the quest to establish Afrikaners as a *master race* or *Herrenvolk*.⁶

The architects of apartheid⁷ believed that they were doing God’s Will by maintaining Afrikaner identity and building their nation by strictly implementing the policy of separate development through the establishment of a number of laws and the rule of force.⁸ Afrikaans people had lived under British control for many years and wanted to rebuild their national pride and freedom by having their own government and implement an *affirmative action* policy that selectively advanced their own people.⁹ African people were not taken seriously in

⁴ Cassidy, M. *A Witness Forever: The Dawn of Democracy in South Africa the Story Behind the Story* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1995), 21.

⁵ Akenson, D. *God’s Peoples: Covenant and Land in South Africa, Israel and Ulster* (London: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1991), 215.

⁶ Asmal, K. (ed) *Nelson Mandela: From Freedom to the Future*, (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball Publishers, 2004), 5.

⁷ Dr. Hendrick Verwood as one of the key architects of apartheid, and policy, explained apartheid in terms of a “spirit of good neighbourliness.” See Shellington, K. *History of Southern Africa*, (England: Longman, 1987), 156.

⁸ See also De Gruchy, J. *The Church Struggle in South Africa* (London: SCM Press, 2004), 32.

⁹ Akenson, *God’s Peoples: Covenant and Land in South Africa*, 59.

these policies; they were pushed aside and relocated to separate rural and poorly resourced communities while the White race enjoyed the fruits of unilateral privilege.

2.1.1.2. Crucial aspects of apartheid policy

Soon after taking control, the White Nationalist Government promulgated the foundational law upon which the superstructure of all other apartheid laws and regulations was to be built, namely, the Population Registration Act of 1950. At its heart was the classification of people on racial grounds as White, Coloured, Indian or Black.¹⁰ This law created racial and social divisions within society that impacted every facet of society, including access to education, employment and property. To supplement this law the government passed the Group Areas Act of 1950, which carved up the geography of towns and cities, declaring areas White, Coloured, Indian or Black. It determined where people of different races could live, work or do business.¹¹ Over the next decades these laws led to the forceful removal of millions from their lands, communities and homes, thereby losing their pride, livelihood and identity.¹² Linked to this was the 1913 Land Act which reserved 80% of arable land for Whites, leaving the other race groups with twenty per cent of land, which in the main was infertile. In 1933 the Native (Urban Areas) Amendment Act was introduced, with it came influx control, thus severely curtailing the movements of Black people.¹³ This Act restricted their movement from rural areas to cities, thus limiting job opportunities and development. In September 1955, the government passed the Pass law legislation for Black people, which restricted their movement.¹⁴

The African National Congress (*hereafter*, ANC) and its subsidiary bodies responded to these laws by embarking on the Defiance Campaign. Its leaders started by making presentations to

¹⁰ Linnegar, J. (ed). *Every Step of the Way: The Journey to Freedom in South Africa* (Cape Town: HRC Press, 2004), 162.

¹¹ Linnegar, *Every Step of the Way*, 124.

¹² Bundy, C. "Land, Law and Power: Forced Removals in Historical Context." in Murray, C. and Regan, O (ed) *No Place To Rest: Forced Removals and the Law in South Africa*. (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1990). 3.

¹³ Marais, D. *South Africa: Constitutional Development*, (Halfway House: Southern Book Publishers, 1991), 174.

¹⁴ Gumede, W. *Thabo Mbeki and the Battle of the Soul of the ANC*, (Cape Town: Zebra Press, 2005), 20. A number of apartheid laws were passed in 1955, while the struggle against them intensified. It culminated with the People's Congress at Kliptown in June 1955 from which emanated *The Freedom Charter*. The congress and the charter were the brainchildren of Professor Z. K. Mathews, a brilliant academic, politician and devout Christian who later worked for the World Council of Churches. See Pollen, J. *The Freedom Charter and the Future*, (Cape Town: IDASA, 1998). 1955 was also the year that the MCSA declared its defiance of the Group Areas Act, declaring itself a "One and undivided Church."

the government but there was no immediate response to their concerns.¹⁵ Increasingly draconian laws followed, such as the Bantu Education Act of 1953, which had as its main component Christian National Education, a policy based on racial grounds that aimed at giving Blacks an inferior education whilst reserving quality education and fiscal resources to Whites.¹⁶ This act targeted in particular mission education, because it offered good education to African children, something the government wanted to curtail. Consequently, Hendrick F. Verwoerd, the main architect of apartheid and Minister of Education at the time, could argue:

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 its respects. There is no place for him in the European community above the level of certain forms of labour.¹⁷

In what has become a famous statement concerning so-called “Bantu Education,” Verwoerd could state before Parliament in 1953:

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 the Europeans is not for them. There is no place for him [*sic*] (the Black child) in European society above the level of certain forms of labour...what is the use of teaching a Bantu child mathematics when he cannot use it in practice?¹⁸

2.1.1.3. 1960: The Sharpeville killings and banning

The pass laws confined Blacks to so-called “homeland areas” or Bantustans, allowing them access to so-called White areas such as towns, cities and suburbs only as labourers. Strong resistance followed, and campaigns against these laws by Black South Africans strengthened as the new laws turned Blacks into foreigners in their own land. On March 21, 1960 a number of Blacks marched peacefully to the Sharpeville Police Station and burned their passes in front of the authorities. The police responded by opening fire, randomly killing sixty-nine people and wounding a further 186, most of whom were women. The government’s response was swift, placing banning orders on both the ANC and Pan Africanist Congress (PAC).¹⁹

¹⁵ See also, Z. K. Mathews. *Freedom for my People*. (Cape Town: David Phillip, 1981), 148.

¹⁶ Christie, P. *Right to Learn: The Struggle for Education in South Africa* (Cape Town: Raven Press), 61.

¹⁷ In Villa-Vicencio, C. *Trapped in Apartheid*, (Cape Town; David Phillips, 1988), 95.

¹⁸ Christie, P. *The Right To Learn* (Cape Town: Raven Press, 1986), 56. The National Party Government considered a three-hour daily session adequate education for Black children. This consisted of religious studies, gardening and rudimentary maintenance, the latter learned by carrying out odd jobs on the school premises. See Gumede, *The Battle for the Soul of the ANC*, 20.

¹⁹ Linnegar, *Every Step of the Way*, 176. This event was to shape the prophetic ministry of the church.

The killings were condemned by different organisations both locally and overseas. But such repression was not about to end, but rather signalled the beginning of the government's use of force to those who opposed the system of apartheid.

2.1.1.4. 1976: The Soweto riots

The government had enforced the Afrikaans language as a medium of instruction in Black schools. On June 16, 1976, 20,000 school children from Soweto marched in protest against this law and the policy of Bantu Education.²⁰ The reasons for the march were visibly inscribed on their banners, "Down with Afrikaans and to Hell with Bantu Education."²¹ More than 500 children were killed and thousands were injured. The march was meant to be peaceful and non-violent, but the police began to throw teargas canisters.²² Panic and pandemonium erupted, followed by the police shooting with live ammunition killing a number of children. More than a thousand students were shot and the results were devastating. The first victim was a thirteen-year-old boy by the name of Hector Peterson.²³ The students responded by burning government buildings and throwing stones at the police. Most of the student leaders went into exile to join the ANC.²⁴

2.1.1.5. 1982: The President's Council

With political pressure mounting, the then President P.W. Botha began to initiate some reforms in the country. He hoped to bring about reforms that would remedy the political climate in the country, but without undoing the vision of the government of implementing separate development.²⁵ As part of his reforms the Senate was abolished and replaced with the

²⁰ Soweto is an acronym for South Western Township, which is a name of a large township thirty-five kilometres west of Johannesburg. Soweto was established in 1927 for Black labourers in the White city and suburbs of Johannesburg. See Johnson, J. and Magubane, P. *Soweto Speaks*. (Johannesburg: A. D. Donker Ltd, 1979), 10. Most of the political leaders and organisations came from this township. Leaders such as Desmond Tutu, Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu and Zechariah Muthopeng had their homes in this township. It was in Kliptown, Soweto that the Freedom Charter was adopted in 1955. It was a site of the struggle in the full sense of the word. By 1980, Soweto had a population of over three million people. See, Johnson and Magubane, *Soweto Speaks*, 9.

²¹ Linnegar, *Every Step of the Way*, 199. See also Christie, *The Right to Learn*, 223.

²² Linnegar *Every Step of the Way*, 213.

²³ It is significant that the protest march began at Matseke Secondary School, Vilakazi Street, and Soweto. Vilakazi Street is famous for being the residence of two Nobel Peace Prize-winners (Nelson Mandela and Desmond Tutu). It is the same street where Hector Peterson lived, his home being close to Matseke Secondary School and the Orlando Methodist Church, the latter being where most of the children ran and found shelter when the violence broke out. Hector and his family were members of Orlando Methodist Church.

²⁴ The protest by the Soweto students sparked other protests and marches throughout the Republic, which lasted many months. Today there is a museum in Phefeni, Soweto, commemorating this memorable day.

²⁵ Brewer, J. (ed) *Restructuring South Africa*, (London: St. Martins Press, 1994), 22.

President's Council, which comprised of nominated members, including whites, Coloureds and Indians; Blacks however were excluded. The mandate of this Council was to "investigate a new form of government to match the Nationalists' limited reform initiative."²⁶ Black leaders were divided on how to respond to Botha's proposal. These were reforms that came into place proposed by the President's Council. They included the formation of the Tri-cameral Parliament, which included separate Houses for Coloureds and Indians, but again, no representivity for Blacks.

By 1985 Blacks had intensified their struggle against apartheid as they resisted the deplorable conditions they had to live under. Four years earlier the Human Research Council had conducted a study on township resistance. Entitled, *South Africa Society: Reality and Future Projects* its findings revealed that apartheid had reached an impasse and that resistance to it was also getting stronger, accompanied by economic and cultural sanctions and political pressure from the international community.²⁷ The intensification of the struggle was a result of different groups such as women's organisations, labour movements, student organisations and faith-based groups coming together under the Mass Democratic Movement. At this time struggle organisations such as the ANC, AZAPO and the PAC were in exile mobilising the international community.²⁸

President P. W. Botha response was to place the country under a State of Emergency. It was only withdrawn four years later.²⁹ Although Botha has been generally understood as the most stubborn of apartheid's political leadership, he realised that apartheid was not going to last. It is ironic that Botha was the first to speak about the need for the White Afrikaans people to change if they were going to survive, because apartheid was not a lasting solution:

We are moving in a changing world, we must adapt or otherwise we shall die...The moment you start oppressing people...they fight back...We must acknowledge people's rights and...make ourselves free by giving to others in a spirit of justice what we demand ourselves...A White

²⁶ Linnegar, *Every Step of the Way*, 213.

²⁷ Blacks had found courage from the toppling of Ian Smith's government in Rhodesia, and the establishment of Zimbabwe in 1980.

²⁸ Linnegar, *Every Step of the Way*, 223. They also made the country ungovernable. Rev. Allan Boesak who was one of the key proponents of Black Theology and a leader of the UDF noted, "What we are seeing is not merely a repeat of 1976. Then the unrest was concentrated mostly in Soweto. Now it is on a very broad scale-you find it in most Black townships, in the whole Vaal Triangle, on the East Rand, around the country. In 1976 those involved were mostly students. Now it encompasses the whole community, trade unions, civic organisations, adults as well as young people. The main issue then was education. Now you have a range of issues, really a broad-scale resistance to the oppression and the injustice in South Africa. The feelings are much deeper."

²⁹ De Klerk, F. *The Last Trek: A New Beginning*. (London: Macmillan, 1998), 116.

monopoly of power is untenable in the Africa of today...A meaningful division of power is needed between race groups...Apartheid is a recipe for conflict.³⁰

In spite of Botha's arrogance, he had come to accept that change had to come.

2.1.2. Ecclesial Background

Apartheid directly and indirectly shaped the ministry of the church in South Africa. Most importantly it brought pain, hurt and division to the churches as each denomination sought to respond to it. It also shaped the way different Christians (especially the clergy) lived out their faith in a racially divided society.

In general, the English-speaking churches were alarmed and opposed to the apartheid laws while the Afrikaner denominations supported them.³¹ For example, the MCSA responded with a statement from its Conference in 1953 rejecting the Bantu Education Act and the reduction of rights for Black people. In the statement it argued that:

No person of any race should be deprived of constitutional rights or privileges merely on the grounds of race. Morally binding contracts protecting such rights or privileges should be regarded on the high level of a pledged word. Political and social rights especially of the underprivileged groups should not be reduced but rather developed and expanded into greater usefulness.³²

The CPSA also responded negatively to the apartheid policy. Its Bishops condemned the policy in no uncertain terms. They observed:

The only hope in our judgment for the future of the men, the women and the children of Southern Africa lies in the creation of harmonious relationships between our various racial groups. And harmony can only be achieved if the Europeans, who at present wield power, engender the spirit of confidence amongst the non-European. To seek to preserve for themselves the exciting exclusive benefits of Western Civilisation, and to allow the non-Europeans merely its burdens, South Africans will inexorably draw apart into mutually antagonistic racial groups.³³

A clear division loomed between the churches as the family of Dutch Reformed Churches theologically underpinned and legitimated the apartheid laws.³⁴ In 1958, the largest of the Dutch Reformed Churches known as the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk (*hereafter*, NGK)

³⁰ Linnegar, *Every Step of the Way*, 223.

³¹ English-speaking churches refer to those churches that had British roots and were predominantly English speaking such as the MCSA, CPSA, UCCSA, PCSA and the RCC.

³² Churches Judgment, 11.

³³ Churches Judgement, 4f.

³⁴ The Dutch reformed churches were predominantly Afrikaans speaking.

defended the apartheid laws by arguing that they did not imply Black inferiority, but rather a biblically justified policy of racial separation:

The native was to have every opportunity to reach their highest possible measure of learning and culture, but not in an attempt to mimic the civilisation of a White.³⁵

2.1.2.1. Cottesloe and the Christian Institute

With the exception of the NGK, the English-speaking Western mainline churches condemned the violence of the apartheid laws and the brutal attacks on peaceful demonstrators at Sharpeville.³⁶ With the help of theologians and faith-based organisations such as the Christian Institute (CI) these churches took an active stance in the fight against apartheid. Until then the church had been making mild statements, without exerting much pressure on the state. Bishop J. de Blank, Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town called for the expelling of the NGK from the South African Christian Council (SACC) and the World Council of Churches (WCC) failing which the CPSA would withdraw its membership from these bodies.³⁷ The then Secretary of the WCC, Dr. Visser't Hooft, refused to expel the NGK, but instead organised a consultation to be held in South Africa on the issue.

The Consultation was held, December 21, 1960 at Wits University Students' Residence Hall, Johannesburg, known as Cottesloe. Ten delegates from each of the member churches attended, including the NGK,³⁸ its main aim being to "examine apartheid in the light of the gospel."³⁹

The consultation was marked by tensions between those who supported apartheid and those who did not.⁴⁰ Eighty percent of the delegates voted against apartheid policy and duly signed

³⁵ Quoted by Walshe, *Prophetic Christianity*, 21. See also de Gruchy, *The Church Struggle in South Africa*, 60-70.

³⁶ Walshe, *Prophetic Christianity*, 51.

³⁷ Walshe, *Prophetic Christianity*, 51.

³⁸ Member churches consisted of the Bantu Presbyterian Church, the PCSA; CPSA; UCCSA; MCSA and the NGK Sendingkerk, and the Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk van Afrika. See Walshe, *Prophetic Christianity and Liberation Movement in South Africa*, 53.

³⁹ Walshe, *Prophetic Christianity*, 53. Out of the eighty-six participants only seventeen of them were Black. The WCC sent six officials as observers.

⁴⁰ It is notable that Z. K. Mathews, a committed Anglican and leader in the ANC, was a Professor at Fort Hare and would later join the WCC staff. In his speech he denounced apartheid and was so angered by the criticism he received from members of the NGK that he stormed out of the meeting. He later apologised to the chairperson of the consultation for his behaviour. See, Mathews, *Freedom for my People*, 203. Most of the NGK signatories

what became known as the Cottesloe Statement. The NGK drafted the statement and signed it. The NHK and GK rejected the statement and joined forces with other right-wing organisations in their condemnation of the Cottesloe Consultation and its outcomes. Then the two churches resigned their membership of the South African Council of Churches (SACC). The Rev. Beyers Naudé who had been a member of the Cottesloe Consultation founded the Christian Institute (CI) in 1963.⁴¹ Created as an open space for doing theology in the light of the South African situation, it worked with the new generation of political leaders and Black theologians such as Allan Boesak and Manas Buthelezi. Others such as Steve Bantu Biko of the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) whose involvement in community programmes inspired the CI to embark on fund-raising programmes and conscientising work. In their work Biko and Naudé used Paulo Freire's techniques of literacy education, which in-turn sparked study groups on Black Theology in the townships. Its work included doing contextual and liberation theology and making theological statements through its newsletter *Pro-Veritate*. It also got involved in work that supported cadres forced to leave the Country, as well as providing financial and material support to political prisoners and their families. A number of White progressive theologians found a home from which they could fight the system in the CI.⁴²

Influenced by proponents of Liberation Theology such as James Cone and Dom Helder Camara of Brazil (who was later invited to visit the South African churches) the CI encouraged the church and other civil organisations to embark on peaceful marches and demonstrations against the apartheid regime. It also encouraged young White men to become conscientious objectors, by discouraging them from joining the apartheid military machine as was required by law. As far as economic issues were concerned, the CI condemned capitalism for its racist and exploitative practices in South Africa, Naudé calling for alternative economic structures that would reflect the more communal values of African culture.⁴³ Disturbed by its work and mission, the apartheid regime placed the CI and Naudé under a banning order in 1977.

recanted their signatures with the exception of the Rev. Beyers Naude who had been a key player in the consultation and had come to the conclusion that apartheid was a heresy. It was only in 1994 that the NGK apologised to Rev. Naude and re-admitted him back into the NGK clerical fold.

⁴¹ Cochrane, J. "Agape: Theo Kotze and the Cape Office of the Christian Institute." *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 118 (2004), 53-68.

⁴² One should note that Methodist ministers such as Rev. Cedric Mayson and Rev. Theo Kotze were both forced into exile as a result of their work against the apartheid regime.

⁴³ Walshe, *Prophetic Christianity*, 57.

The main contribution of the CI was that it bridged the gap between political organisations and the church. Further, it opened up theological debate on the heretical nature of apartheid, helping the church understand more clearly the issues at hand, and thereby decide its stance. It also planted the seeds of liberation theology that continued to grow even after the banning of the organisation. The CI also brought awareness to some White Christians by conscientising them. This led to the emergence of prophetic individuals and groups, which were in step with the goals of the liberation movement.⁴⁴ Its influence did not die after the banning but its legacy continued to live on, as the church followed its mission to work for justice.

2.1.2.2. The Message to the People of South Africa

The other organisation that is important in the history of the church struggle in South Africa is the South African Council of Church (SACC).⁴⁵ In 1967 soon after it was founded and ten years before it was banned the CI, together with the SACC, produced a groundbreaking document entitled *A Message to the People of South Africa*, in which it declared apartheid a heresy on biblical grounds. This document was directed to White people who were privileged and powerful, calling them to participate in the reformation of South African society. It called on White South Africans to establish justice for the poor. After the banning of the CI in 1977 the churches had reached a point of no return in their commitment to the struggle against apartheid. The church began to lead the struggle gradually. The challenge was in dealing with its ambiguous past in its attempt to be prophetic. Charles Villa-Vicencio in his book *Trapped by Apartheid* put it thus:

The issue was whether the liberating resources of the Christian tradition, suppressed by generations of acquiescence to changing cultural, political and economic forms of domination, (could) be rediscovered with the sufficient dynamic to enable Christians to share creatively in the process of change.⁴⁶

However it is important to note that the more churches took up the challenge of liberation theology and prophetic Christianity, so they became more divided. As Walshe puts it: “within

⁴⁴ Walshe, *Prophetic Christianity*, 57.

⁴⁵ On the history of the SACC see, Ryan, C. *Beyers Naudé: Pilgrimage of Faith*, (Claremont: David Philip, 2005); De Gruchy, S and van der Water, D. *Spirit Undaunted: The Life and Legacy of Joseph Wing*, (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 2005); Jacob S. (ed), *Hope in Crisis*, (Johannesburg: South African Council of Churches, 1986); Jacob, S and Mtshali, O. (eds), *Refugees and Exiles: Challenge the Churches*, (Johannesburg: South African Council of Churches, 1987); De Gruchy, J. *The Church Struggle in South Africa*, (London: SCM Press, 2004); Walshe, *Prophetic Christianity*, 112.

⁴⁶ Villa-Vicencio, C. *Trapped in Apartheid: A Socio-Theological History of the English-Speaking Churches*. (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1988), 224.

particular denominations, certain groups and sects supported the state, others sought compromise and reconciliation with the government.”⁴⁷

2.1.2.3. Apartheid is a heresy

Although churches had been struggling with the Biblical justification of apartheid, they nevertheless called it sin. It was only in 1977 that the Lutheran Church through the instigation of Bishop Manas Buthelezi (a stalwart of Black Theology) came to the conclusion that apartheid was a heresy.⁴⁸ John de Gruchy observes the intensity of labelling apartheid as a heresy, by saying:

The peculiarly Reformation theological notion meant that it was no longer adequate for the church to regard apartheid as sinful or immoral; it had to be unequivocal and publicly rejected as a heresy that undermined the Christian faith at its core.⁴⁹

This direct attack on apartheid from a reformed theological point of view was to be re-iterated five years later in 1982 when the General Council of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, meeting in Ottawa, Canada under the presidency of Dr Allan Boesak, adopted a statement that endorsed the Lutheran Church’s belief. In part, it read:

We declare with Black Reformed Christians of South Africa that apartheid (“separate development”) is a sin, and that the moral and theological justification of it is a travesty of the gospel and, in its persistent disobedience to the Word of God, a theological heresy.⁵⁰

The declaration of apartheid as a heresy by the world body of the reformed churches led to the suspension of the NGK’s membership. It intensified the critical attitude that other churches had over this church and its support of the apartheid government.

2.1.2.4. The Kairos Document

The foundation that had been laid by the CI and the BCM theologians was revitalised with the aim of encouraging a faith that proclaimed the dignity of all people and took sides with the poor and marginalized against the oppressive system. This led to the church leadership

⁴⁷ Walshe, *Prophetic Christianity*, 63.

⁴⁸ De Gruchy, *The Church Struggle in South Africa*, 187.

⁴⁹ De Gruchy, *The Church Struggle in South Africa*, 187.

⁵⁰ De Gruchy, *The Church Struggle in South Africa*, 187.

forming ties with groups such as the United Democratic Front (UDF), the Council of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and the ANC as well as other groups that sought to fight the system. There were also a number of faith-based organisations such as the Pietermaritzburg Agency for Christian Awareness (PACSA), Diakonia, and the Institute for Contextual Theology (ICT) who also sought to mobilise the church for action. The churches faced the wrath of the state for taking sides: Khotso House, the headquarters of the SACC, was bombed together with Khanya House of the SACBC. Leaders of the SACC such as Desmond Tutu, Peter Storey, Frank Chikane, Allan Boesak and others, were placed under banning orders, harassed daily, and had assassination attempts upon their lives by the security forces under the control of the apartheid regime.⁵¹ Further, the prophetic church was accused of collaborating with communists.⁵²

One of the aims of the *Kairos Document* (KD) was to educate the leadership of the church on the stance that the church needed to take in its fight against apartheid. It analyzed the contesting theologies that were in the country at the time (being State, Church and Prophetic). Thus it became a very important educational document for the church in South Africa. In its opening paragraph entitled “The Moment of Truth” the document makes an immediate and direct reference to the church:

The time has come. The moment of truth has arrived. South Africa has been plunged into a crisis that is shaking the foundations and there is every indication that this crisis has only just begun and that it will deepen and become even more threatening in the moments to come. It is the *Kairos* or moment of truth not only for apartheid but also for the church and all faiths and religions.⁵³

It continued to challenge the church by saying that:

Much of what we do in our churches has lost its relevance to the poor and the oppressed. Our services and sacraments have been appropriated to serve the need of the individual for comfort and security. Now these same church activities must be re-appropriated to serve the real religious needs of all the people and to further the liberating mission of God and the church in the world.⁵⁴

⁵¹ For the sake of this study it is important to note that both Peter Storey and Paul Verreyn were both influential Methodist ministers. After the bombing of Khotso House the SACC was accommodated at the Central Methodist Mission, Johannesburg where Peter Storey was a minister.

⁵² Mzimela, *Marching to Slavery*, 67. Interestingly, it was not only the state that labelled the activist church as communists, but theologians like Siphon Mzimela, a Ph.D and exiled member of the ANC for over three decades also fell into the trap of calling people like Desmond Tutu, Allan Boesak and Frank Chikane “communists.”

⁵³ *Kairos Document: Challenge to the Church*. Cape Town: Skottaville Publishers, 1986. The Kairos Document was developed in 1986 through the initiative of the Institute for Contextual Theology. Over 160 theologians from different denominations signed the document.

⁵⁴ *Kairos Document*, 1.

The biggest contribution of the KD to the theological scene was its analysis of the three contending theologies found in the South African situation:

- (1) *State Theology* was characterised by its support and underpinning of the system of repression. This was the theology held by the NGK.
- (2) *Church Theology* was held by most churches, and sought to promote easy reconciliation with the policy of apartheid.
- (3) *Prophetic Theology*, encouraged the church to join the liberation struggle.⁵⁵

The KD stirred the consciences of Christians both within and outside South Africa and was reprinted and translated into several languages. In 1989, Christians from Third World countries published *The Road to Damascus: Kairos and Conversion*, which applied insights of the KD to their situations.⁵⁶

The Church of the Province for Southern Africa (CPSA) conducted Bible studies based upon the document. A few churches and individual ministers asked for the document and used it as a tool for doing theology in the South African context.⁵⁷ This said, most churches did not embrace the KD as their programme of action.

The United Congregational Church of Southern Africa (*hereafter*, UCCSA) was among the first denominations to begin a process of transformation as a response to the changing context. Their move was sparked by the publication of the KD.⁵⁸ It is the only church on record that took the KD seriously and used it as a foundation for the transformation of the church. The KD became the theological foundation upon which the *Pastoral Plan for Transformation*, (*hereafter*, PPT) was built. Launched in Pietermaritzburg, May 1990 its main aim was to help the church in the process of transformation.⁵⁹ The PPT was a programme that was,

⁵⁵ *Kairos Document*, 10.

⁵⁶ Frost, B. *Struggling to Forgive: Nelson Mandela and South Africa's Search for Reconciliation*, (London: HarperCollins, 1998), 121.

⁵⁷ Van Der Water, *The Legacy of a Prophetic Moment*, 55.

⁵⁸ It is worth noting that Bonganjalo Goba, one of the architects of the KD is an ordained minister of the UCCSA. Ten years later when asked to comment on the document at a meeting in Bronkhorstpruit, Storey said that The KD was a good document. Unfortunately it was trapped by other people's ideologies that were based on Marxism, which limited its theological foundations.

⁵⁹ Steve De Gruchy, himself an ordained member of the UCCSA was involved with the PPT programme. He shared these sentiments in a conversation with the author, December 2, 2004 in Pietermaritzburg.

About the mission of the church... to transform our church and society in response...to the challenge of the values of the kingdom of God; justice, love, equality, freedom and peace.⁶⁰

The attitude of the MCSA towards the KD was ambiguous in the very least, the initial response by its leadership being in the main negative. The leadership of the church agreed with some of the issues raised by the document but rejected others. They were also critical of the process that was used in the writing of the document. They felt rather that the grass root communities should have been consulted first. They were also unhappy that they first heard of the document from the media.⁶¹

As time went on the church began to embrace the KD, although not without some scepticism. The winds of change and restructuring by major denominations compelled the MCSA to embark on a search for its own programme of action for the future.

2.1.2.5. 1989: Between God and Caesar: The church as a sight of the struggle

This section seeks to discuss the role that was played by the church in the struggle against apartheid soon before the end of apartheid. The church remained divided on the issue of involvement in prophetic Christianity. The NGK continued to support apartheid. However, the forces of political consciousness had so impacted on it that the *Sendingkerk*, its so-called daughter church, which served the Coloured community, and led by Dr. Allan Boesak rejected the policy of apartheid. This was encouraged by the formation of a prophetic pressure group known as the Alliance of Black Reformed Christians in South Africa, to which the *Sendingkerk* was a member.⁶² As President of this group, Allan Boesak made a call for White people to realise that their destiny was inextricably bound to the suffering of Black people, and hence they needed to change for their own sake.⁶³ Through the work of Allan Boesak and

⁶⁰ Van Der Water, *Legacy of a Prophetic Moment*, 144.

⁶¹ Bishop Peter Storey, who was the Presiding Bishop of the MCSA at the time, expressed negative sentiments on behalf of the MCSA concerning the KD. He expressed his disappointment at the process that led to the development of the KD by saying: "I have a very real question about whether theology is made through the medium of press conferences, and am wondering why the request for church response should come after the *Document* has been published rather than before." Van der Water, *The Legacy of a Prophetic Moment*, 57.

⁶² Lennigar, *Every Step of the Way*, 222. He was also a founder member and president of the United Democratic Front (UDF) a coalition of around 600 civic groups, students organisations and trade union movements. A strong proponent of Black Theology and an outstanding orator, Boesak became a South African version of the American Civil Rights Movement leader, Dr Martin Luther King Jr.

⁶³ He argued that "the time has come for White people in this country to realize that their destiny is inextricably bound with ours...they will never be free as long as they have to lie awake at night worrying whether a Black government will one day do to them what they are doing to us." Lennigar, *Every Step of the Way*, 222.

clergymen such as Beyers Naudé the NGK was saved from being denounced and isolated from the ecumenical community.

The CPSA Church is another church that made a tremendous contribution in the fight against apartheid. Its bishops such as Godfrey Clayton, Jooste de Blank, Timothy Bevans, Ambrose Reeves, Phillip Russell and Bill Burnett bishops were always opposed to apartheid.⁶⁴ Desmond Tutu occupied the position of General Secretary of the SACC; his contribution there was to unpack the state theology that had been developed by the NGK. He encouraged the growth of contextual theologies and social analysis so as to expose the misrepresentation of scripture by the architects of apartheid.⁶⁵ He called for the South African government to start the negotiation process with the ANC in exile, and offered to serve as a mediator between the ANC and the government. The government, however, did not listen to him; instead they persecuted him through vilifying statements, accusing him of corruption in the SACC and withdrawing his passport. In the midst of this smear campaign Tutu was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1984.⁶⁶

The Roman Catholic Church (*hereafter*, RCC) was also divided as far as issues relating to apartheid were concerned. Its Bishops through the South African Catholic Bishop's Conference (*hereafter*, SACBC) continued to condemn the country's constitution through a series of pastoral letters.⁶⁷ The prophetic voice of the RCC was led by a small group of religious leaders who had their roots in the BCM. These included Bishop Mandlenkosi Zwane, Fr. Buti Thlagale and Fr. Smangaliso Mkatshwa, then General Secretary of the SACBC and Bishop Denis Hurley OMI president of the SACBC. The White membership of the RCC refused to support the prophetic stance. In 1988 the Papal Nuncio alarmed and irritated the Bishops by warning them against political involvement.⁶⁸

⁶⁴ Lee, P. *Compromise and Courage*, (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 2005), 105. In this book Bishop Peter Lee tells the story of the Anglican bishops' resistance against apartheid.

⁶⁵ Spong, B. and Mayson, C. *Come Celebrate! Twenty-Five Years of the SACC* (Johannesburg: SACC Press, 1993), 121.

⁶⁶ Saunders, C. *An Illustrated Dictionary of South African History*, (Sandton: Books and Editorial Services, 1994), 242.

⁶⁷ Walshe, *Prophetic Christianity*, 68.

⁶⁸ *Herald* (London, July 30, 1987), and *National Catholic Reporter* (Kansas City), April 28, 1989. This was not surprising, as the Vatican had done the same with liberation theologians from Latin America such as Oscar Romero and Leonardo Boff, who were both silenced.

In spite of encountering many difficulties, and after a long process of consultation and reflection, the SACBC launched the Pastoral Plan, *Community Serving Humanity* Programme in May 1989.⁶⁹ Its aim was to transform the RCC so that it could become relevant to a changing society. Stuart Bate explains the reasons for the pastoral plan by saying that:

Events in the Southern African context point to a move from a time of liberation and struggle, exile and conflict to a time of freedom, return, emergence and reconstruction. Clearly the praxis of the Church will change as the Spirit blows in a new way.⁷⁰

A need to change the type of ministry and theology had arisen.⁷¹

The point Bate is making is the need for all churches to develop a new theology. This call was a clear shift from the theology of resistance, to one of reconstruction and hope.

The Evangelical and Pentecostal churches were another group that was severely divided, as Walshe shows:

On the one hand some evangelical and Pentecostal churches blamed liberation theology and went to the extent of importing several right-wing revivalists from the US to encourage the conformist attitude. On the other hand we see those who dissented by supporting liberation theology and criticised the apolitical theologies that maintained the status quo. Those who were concerned with the social gospel formed The Alliance of Concerned Evangelicals of South Africa (TAESA). This group of evangelicals were involved in the struggle against apartheid. Its key leaders were the Rev. Frank Chikane and others. Chikane, an ordained Minister of the Apostolic Faith Mission, later became the General Secretary of the SACC.⁷²

The African Independent Churches (AICs) who consist of the majority of Christians in South Africa were also not spared from the challenges that faced other churches in the country.⁷³ These churches were founded as a result of their dissatisfaction with racism in the mainline English-medium churches. Their origins date back to the missionary era when Black Ministers broke away to form Ethiopian Churches and the like. Leaders emerged such as Nehemiah Tile, James Dwane, Mangena Mokone, Isaiah Shembe (Nazarite Church),

⁶⁹ Bate, S. *Serving Humanity: A Sabbath Reflection* (Pietermaritzburg, Cluster Publications 1996), 7.

⁷⁰ Bate, S. *Serving Humanity: A Sabbath Reflection*, 7.

⁷¹ Bate's notes that "The critical approach to theology in the Apartheid era which focused on the structures of sin in the society, needs to be balanced in this time by a theology which seeks to affirm what is good in the human condition." Bate, *Serving Humanity*, 7

⁷² Walshe, *Prophetic Christianity*, 112. Chikane was also defrocked and ostracised by the White section of the Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa. In 1996, the church denounced apartheid as a heresy and in a packed stadium, before its members, the President of the White (and mainly Afrikaans-speaking) Apostolic Faith Mission, Dr Isak Burger apologised on behalf of the church and asked for Rev. Frank Chikane's forgiveness. Today, Rev. Chikane works as Director in the State President's Office. See also, *Challenge Magazine* 36 June/July 1996: 2

⁷³ De Gruchy, *The Church Struggle in South Africa*, 40.

Lekhanyane (Zion Christian Church) and Frederick Modise (International Pentecostal Church).⁷⁴ Although these churches despised the English-medium churches, when it came to taking a prophetic stance they adopted an apolitical stance. Others went to the extent of supporting the apartheid system.⁷⁵ However some of these churches understood their very existence as opposition to apartheid.⁷⁶

During this period a number of right-wing organisations were formed, with the specific task of discrediting those organisations and individuals who adopted a prophetic attitude towards the apartheid regime. Hence, in 1977, the Christian League of South African Churches was launched to purposely oppose liberation theology. In 1980, White Catholics formed the Catholic Defence League, intended to support the South African Defence Force in its “heroic struggle against communism.”⁷⁷ Ironically, the communists were those who were fighting against apartheid.

The Rhema Churches was another group that favoured the political right. They invited American tele-evangelists such as Jimmy Swaggart and Oral Roberts whose messages diverted people’s attention from the social gospel and prophetic Christianity. Hence, Swaggart, during a visit to South Africa in 1985, dismissed the resistance against apartheid as communist and declared the South African Defence Force to be fighting communism. He

⁷⁴ See also, Millard, J. *Malihambe*, (Pretoria: UNISA Press, 1999), 13-56.

⁷⁵ For instance, Bishop Linda Mokoena broke away from the Independent churches to form the African Independent Church Association, a body affiliated to the NGK. At the time he was working for the SACC as its director of church and development.

⁷⁶ This study does not intend to expand on this topic. For those interested in the attitude of the AICs towards apartheid they may see, Anderson, A. A. *Bazalwane: African Pentecostals in South Africa*. (Pretoria: UNISA, 1992); Anderson, A. A. *Tumelo: The Faith of Africa Pentecostals in South Africa*. Pretoria: (Unisa Press, 1993); Bosch, D. B. *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll: Orbis 1995); Chidester, D. “Worldview Analysis of African Indigenous Churches,” *Journal for the Study of Religion* 18 (2): (1989), 113-138; Classen, J.W. “Independent made Dependents: African Independent Churches and Government Recognition.” *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 91, (1995), 15-34; Cox, H. *Fire from Heaven: The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-First Century*. (London: Cassell, 1996); Dubb. A. *A Community of the Saved: An African Revivalist Church in the Eastern Cape*. (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1976); Daneel, M. L. *Old and New in Southern Shona Independent Churches, Vol 1: Background and Rise of the Major Movements*, (The Hague: Mouton 1971); Daneel, M. L. *Old and New in Southern Shona Independent Churches, Vol 2: Church Growth: Causative Factors and Recruitment Techniques*, (The Hague: Mouton 1974); Daneel, M. L. 1980. “Missionary Outreach in Africa Independent Churches,” *Missionalia* (8) (1980), 105-120; Ela, J. *African Cry*. (Maryknoll: Orbis. 1986); Makhubu, P. *Who Are the Independent Churches?* (Braamfontein: Skotaville, 1988); Mbiti, J. S. *The Bible and Theology in African Christianity*. (Nairobi: Oxford University Press. 1986); Ngada, N. and Mofokeng, K. *African Christian Witness: African Indigenous Churches*. (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 2001); Sundkler, B. G. M. *Bantu Prophets in South Africa*. (London: Oxford University Press, 1961); West, M. *Bishops and Prophets in a Black City: Africa Independent Churches in Soweto, Johannesburg*. (Cape Town: David Philip, 1975).

⁷⁷ Archdiocese of Pretoria, Commission for Justice and Peace; The Catholic Defence League (Pretoria, Circa 1980), 1-8.

preached an apolitical message favouring the prosperity gospel. The Rhema Church in South Africa drew a lot of White people from mainline churches because they were against the social gospel that was preached in those churches.⁷⁸

2.1.3. South Africa on the Eve of the Journey to the New Land Programme

Up till now the church mode has been that of resistance to the system of apartheid. The JNL however speaks a difficult language. This has to do with the massive break of February 1990, the pronouncements of the release of Nelson Mandela from prison and the unbanning of political organizations by President F. W. De Klerk. Therefore we need to examine these dynamics.

2.1.3.1. The Changing Political Context

When the National Party government realised that they were not winning the war against resistance, they embarked on a dramatic change of direction. In August 1989, in what was something of a royal coup, P. W. Botha was forced to resign, and F. W. de Klerk took over as State President.⁷⁹ At the time De Klerk was a relatively unknown cabinet minister. Widely regarded as a *verligte* (enlightened one) within the Afrikaans community, he was a member of the Gereformeerde Kerk (*Dopperkerk*) and a son of a former National Party leader.⁸⁰

In February 1990 he shocked the country and the world by announcing the imminent release of Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners. He also un-banned the ANC, the PAC and other political organisations. The activist Church leaders were greatly relieved by the events of 1990 as most of what they had been fighting for was beginning to be addressed by the government. The Church also needed to move and adapt to the rapid political changes that were taking place in the country. Many church leaders became involved as mediators between the negotiating parties. They also took part in peacekeeping efforts in the townships that were

⁷⁸ For instance, in 1976 under the leadership of Peter Storey, the Methodist Central Church in Johannesburg lost about 200 of its members after it admitted membership to Black people and declared its opposition to apartheid. See Storey, P. *With God in the Crucible* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002), 65.

⁷⁹ De Klerk, *The Last Trek*, 149.

⁸⁰ De Gruchy, *The Church Struggle in South Africa*, 206.

engulfed by political violence at the time.⁸¹ The role of the Church in society was changing “from a prophetic No to a Yes,” from resistance to assistance.⁸² The challenges they faced were finding a way forward and an appropriate theology for the ministry of the church as the socio-political and economic conditions was slowly taking shape. As a result theologians challenged the church to change its involvement strategies with the government.⁸³ As Villa-Vicencio was to show:

The challenge now facing the church is different. The complex options for a new South Africa require more than resistance. The church is obliged to begin the difficult task of saying ‘Yes’ to the unfolding process of what could culminate in a democratic, just and kinder order.⁸⁴

Frank Chikane, the General Secretary of the SACC at the time, speaking in Natal at Diakonia in August 1992, could observe:

The church’s role was to mediate between government and political organisations and this mediation should be mediation with the commitment to justice.⁸⁵

Most churches began to reposition themselves for the emerging era and challenge.

2.1.3.2. The Negotiation process

The ANC and its alliance partners, the South African Communist Party (SACP) and COSATU were the largest and oldest organisations amongst those who had led the struggle against apartheid. Therefore they took the prerogative of leading the negotiation process. This was also made possible by the fact that the events of 1990 had been as a result of a series of negotiations between the ANC while in exile, Nelson Mandela (who had been in prison at the time) and the apartheid government.

⁸¹ It is notable that the peace accords were led by church leaders such as Peter Storey and Stanley Mogoba who were leaders in the MCSA and were instrumental in the formation of the JNL programme.

⁸² De Gruchy, “Theological Education and Social Development.” 452.

⁸³ Villa-Vicencio is quoted by Peter Walshe in *Prophetic Christianity*, It is important to note that Villa-Vicencio was a Methodist minister at the time and was regarded as one of the most respected theologians and voices in the MCSA. In the same year he was asked to do lectures for Methodist students at Rhodes University on the Theology of Reconstruction. In his lectures he raised the importance of the church to develop a theology of reconstruction instead of resistance. He argued that “The prophetic task of the church must include a thoughtful and creative yes to options for political and social renewal, and that it needed a Theology of Reconstruction.” Walshe, *Prophetic Christianity*, 138.

⁸⁴ Villa-Vicencio, C. *A Theology of Reconstruction: Nation-Building and Human Rights*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 27.

⁸⁵ Walshe, *Prophetic Christianity*, 138.

2.1.3.3. Ethnic and Racial Tension

At the same time as the ANC was involved in the negotiations with the National Party there was rampant Black on Black violence, fuelled by the conflict and a number of points of disagreement between the ANC and another Black led organization, the Inkatha Freedom Party (*hereafter*, IFP). Ironically Dr. Mangosuthu Buthelezi, Chief Minister KwaZulu, had formed the IFP and a former ANC youth league member, with the aim of furthering the exiled ANC inside the country.⁸⁶ Buthelezi had studied with key leaders of the ANC at Fort Hare in the 1940s and had been expelled with other ANC activists because of his political activities at the University.⁸⁷ However there developed some differences in the methods of resistance between the exiled ANC and the IFP. The ANC had adopted the armed struggle and guerrilla tactics and Buthelezi did not agree with violent methods and sabotage. The second problem developed when the ANC decided to call for internationally imposed economic sanctions to put pressure to the government. Buthelezi was opposed to this method, arguing that it brought more suffering to Black people.⁸⁸

Thirdly, there were allegations that the IFP had formed covert alliances with the NP (and government structures) and was receiving money, training and arms from the security forces. Therefore the IFP was seen to have sold out to the system and Buthelezi was declared a traitor by the political organisations, including the ANC. The last blow came when Buthelezi embraced ethnic politics and declared the IFP a Zulu political party and wanted the independence of the homeland of KwaZulu under its monarchy. The ANC and its alliance saw Buthelezi as an obstacle to the liberation process and the relationship between Buthelezi and Mandela became strained, the conflict filtering down to the broad membership of the two organisations.⁸⁹

⁸⁶ Temkin, B. *Buthelezi: A Biography*, (London: Frank Cass, 2003), 140.

⁸⁷ Buthelezi claimed that he formed the IFP at the advice of Oliver Tambo and other exiled leaders of the ANC. The IFP used the same colours as the ANC.

⁸⁸ Temkin, *Buthelezi*, 140.

⁸⁹ Crawford. R. *Journey into Apartheid* (London: Epworth Press, 1989), 107. To make things worse, Mandela comes from the Xhosa ethnic group and Buthelezi is a Zulu and this added an ethnic dimension to conflict, so that it was not only at party level but also on ethnic ones. Many lives were lost in the violence that came out of this conflict. The violence was in the townships and hostels. To be specific, there were huge conflicts between township residents who were perceived to be sympathetic to the ANC and hostel residents, most of whom were members of the IFP. Areas that were most affected by this conflict were townships in Soweto, East Rand, Vaal Triangle, (Boipatong) Durban and hostels such as Nancefield, Jabulani, Meadowlands, Jeppe, Selby and Umlazi. It is also important to note that leaders of the MCSA were deeply involved in the political situation, trying to find solutions and promoting peace. Stanley Mogoba, then Presiding Bishop of the MCSA, was National Chairperson of the National Peace Secretariat: Peter Storey was Vice-Chairperson of the Witwatersrand Branch, and Mvume Dandala pioneered and led the Hostel Peace Initiative. These were the same people who led the MCSA in the

There were concurrent problems caused by the divisions between the IFP that was dominated by the Zulu speaking people and the ANC that was dominated by Xhosa speaking people. The political violence affected churches because it was ethnically based; mostly between Xhosa and Zulu speaking people, townships and hostels dwellers and most of these people were members of the churches.

In the face of such conflict Church leaders were busy with intervention strategies, organising prayer rallies, reconciliation conferences and facilitating the negotiation processes between government and the liberation movements.

Alongside conflict within the Black community there was always the threat of White extremist reactions led by organisations such as the Conservative Party (*hereafter*, CP) under the leadership of Dr. Andries Treurnicht. Formed in 1982, the CP was begun by members of the White parliament who broke away from the NP on the issue of the reforms to petty apartheid. They did not agree with the NP's attempts to give Black people political rights in a unified South Africa.⁹⁰ Its support base was for Whites alone, having a strong support base within the South African military. De Klerk's reforms caught the CP unawares.⁹¹

The CP hoped to influence the negotiation process in a way that still maintained White privileges.⁹²

There were also White extremist organisations such as the Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging⁹³ (*hereafter*, AWB) under Eugene Terblanche and the Freedom Front under General Constant Viljoen. These groups united under "The Volksfront" which was an umbrella body of a wide range of White, anti-communist organisations. They were opposed to the formation of a Black government and demanded a separate homeland for Afrikaners. These parties were not in

JNL programme, so that it could be in line with the rest of the ecumenical movement in responding to the socio-political realities that were taking place.

⁹⁰ Mzimela, *Marching to Slavery*, 5.

⁹¹ This was expressed by its leader Dr. Treurnicht after hearing the State President's speech in Parliament when he announced the release of Mr Mandela and the un-banning of political organisations. He stated that this was "the most revolutionary speech I have ever listened to in this parliament during the last 19 years. Un-banning the ANC, the PAC and the SACP was absolutely outrageous, an act, that had 'awakened the tiger in the Afrikaners.'" Linnegar, *Every Step of The Way*, 245.

⁹² In his book, *Third Way Theology*. (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 1993), 120, Anthony Balcomb tells of a conversation he had with Dr. Treurnicht and his wife at the Durban beach front. As they were near the sea and looking at the waves Balcomb asked Dr. Treurnicht if he thought he could turn away the waves? His reply was: "No, Mr Balcomb I cannot turn away the wave, but I can influence it to move towards another direction."

⁹³ *Lit*: Afrikaner Resistance Movement.

support of De Klerk's move to democratise South Africa, which they understood as an act of treachery and betrayal of the Afrikaner nation. They were determined to disturb the negotiation process and the ensuing first democratic elections. They went to the extent of threatening to stir up violence during the elections of 1994. Their threats were confirmed with the assassination of Chris Hanu who was one of the prominent leaders of the SACP and the negotiation process. During the elections on the 27th of April 1994 there were bomb blasts in Soweto. An attempted coup was foiled and those responsible for it are in custody.

2.1.3.4. The Rustenburg Conference

In the face of the sudden political changes and the escalation of violence in the Black community, the SACC convened a conference in the town of Rustenburg in November 1990. It brought together 230 participants representing 97 denominations and 40 church associations, as well as ecumenical agencies such as Diakonia and the Institute for Contextual Theology.⁹⁴ The main aim of the conference was to foster reconciliation in South Africa and to forge a way forward in the ministry of the church after apartheid.⁹⁵ A further key aim, as noted by Frank Chikane was "an attempt to work towards a united Christian witness in a changing South Africa."⁹⁶ The conference was well attended by delegates from most of the denominations in the country even those who were suspicious of liberation theology and had supported the apartheid regime's reforms in the 1980's. These were denominations such as the NGK, the Baptist Union and the Apostolic Faith Mission, the White-dominated Lutheran Churches, evangelicals like the Rhema Churches and a number of AIC churches.⁹⁷ The outcome of the Rustenburg Conference was a document whose aim was to form the basis for the process of reconciliation and healing for South Africa. Amongst the points that were agreed upon in the Conference and were in the document were the following:

- The unequivocal rejection of apartheid as a sin
- The recognition that the conference had met at a critical time of transition, which held out a promise of reconciliation and Christians, were called to be a sign of hope from God, and to share a vision of a new country.

⁹⁴ Chikane, F and Louw, A. (eds) *The Road To Rustenburg: The Church Looking Forward to a New South Africa*, (Cape Town: Struik Christian Books, 1991). See also *Walshe, P. Prophetic Christianity*, 140.

⁹⁵ Chikane and Louw, *The Road to Rustenburg*, 10.

⁹⁶ Chikane and Louw, *The Road to Rustenburg*, 10.

⁹⁷ *Walshe, Prophetic Christianity*, 140.

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- It recognised that there was a need for repentance and practical restitution for God's forgiveness and for justice as a preparatory step of reconciliation.
 - The victims of apartheid were remembered with sorrow, while tribute was paid to those who resisted it.⁹⁸

These were some of the statements that were written in the declaration that emerged from the deliberations of the conference. The declaration became a guide for the church's response to the political and social changes that were taking place in the country after the fall of the system of apartheid.

After the Rustenburg Conference released its declaration the executive of the MCSA released a statement adopting the declaration and went further to instruct its Christian Education department to consult with other departments of the church and prepare study guides for the purpose of assisting Methodist congregations on this journey. The following year (1991) the MCSA proposed the JNL process and two years later in September 1993 the church held a convocation conference to discuss it in depth. It is also important to note that some leaders of the MCSA were also key leaders of the Rustenburg conference. Mvume Dandala, Peter Storey, Stanley Mogoba and the late John Rees were all leaders in the Rustenburg Conference and the JNL process. This led to the two processes influencing each other.

The above scenario laid down the political, ecclesial and immediate contexts of the JNL. Indeed, the JNL was a product of the contextual and ecclesial dynamics that culminated with the transition from apartheid to a democratic society.

⁹⁸ Walshe, *Prophetic Christianity*, 140.

2.2. The emergence of the MCSA

In this section we are looking at the history of the MCSA, the different dynamics it went through over the decades and the JNL programme. When looking at the JNL we will look at its three key stages, the preparatory, convocation and the implementation state. Then we will evaluate its impact. Our interest is to see the role that was played by education (if there is any) in this process.

2.2.1.1. Missionary beginnings

Four streams characterise Methodism's advent in Southern Africa. Stream A consists of the arrival of the first group of Methodists from Britain. These were five soldiers who came with the British troops in 1795 and settled in the Cape. One of them was George Middlemiss. A lay preacher, he soon assembled a group of Methodist for worship with him as preacher.⁹⁹ This community became firmly established in 1812 with the arrival of Sergeant Kendrick, a class leader and lay preacher. Building on the foundation of Middlemiss, the Congregation was soon to number one hundred and twenty eight members, fourteen of who were coloured, this being one of the early mixed congregations.¹⁰⁰

John Kendrick died in 1813 and the congregation made an application for the British Conference to send a minister. In 1814 Sergeant William Blowes took Kendrick's responsibilities as preacher and leader of the congregation.

Stream B is marked by the arrival in 1816 of Barnabas Shaw, a man regarded as the father of Methodist mission stations in the Eastern Cape. Sent by the Wesleyan Missionary Society, his sole task was to control all Methodist missionary activity originating from England.¹⁰¹ He

⁹⁹ Balia, D. 1991. *Black Methodists and White Supremacy in South Africa*. Durban: Madiba Publishers 1991),14. He rented a house in town and held regular Methodist services for two hours a week to hold prayer meetings. Lay people, who were members of a class meeting, first brought Methodism to South Africa. Middlemiss died in 1812 leaving a small Methodist congregation behind without a leader and preacher. Watson, D. *The Early Methodist Class Meeting*. (Nashville: Discipleship Resources 1992); Watson, D. *Forming Christian Disciples* (Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 1995).

¹⁰⁰ Theilen, U. 2002. *Gender, Race, Power and Religion: Women in the Methodist Church of Southern Africa in Post-Apartheid Society*. Metuchen: Peter Lang, 46.

¹⁰¹ Elphick, R. and Davenport, R. *Christianity in South Africa*. (Cape Town: David Philip, 1997), 54. The first official Methodist missionary to arrive in the Cape was the Rev. J. McKenny in 1814. He was refused permission however by the Cape Government to set up mission work, and hence after some sixteen months left for Sri Lanka.

defied the Colonial government by starting his own mission work without the required government permission. He moved from the Cape to Namaqualand establishing missionary work in that area.

Stream C began in 1820 when 4,000 English, Irish, Scottish and Welsh settlers arrived in the Eastern Cape. Among them were three hundred and forty four members of the Wesleyan church. They came with a Methodist chaplain by the name of Rev. Samuel Shaw (not related to Barnabas Shaw) who had been sent by the General Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society. He began his work among the early settler community of Grahamstown, developing Methodist works throughout the Cape, and founding mission stations throughout the former Transkei.¹⁰² By 1834 six such stations had been established in the Eastern Cape. Many of South Africa's leaders including former President Nelson Mandela and others received their education from distinguished Methodist institutions such as Clarkbury and Healdtown.¹⁰³

Missionaries who did not come through the British Conference but through other Methodist Agencies, such the Wesleyan Methodist and the Primitive Methodist Church, characterise stream D. Methodism in the Transvaal arrived with Samuel Broadbent who founded a mission station among the Tswana in 1822, at Makwasi, just North of the Vaal River near present day Klerksdorp and he represented the arrival of stream E.¹⁰⁴ Thus began a unique relationship between the missionaries and the Black chiefs.¹⁰⁵

All Methodist missionaries in South Africa came from England, although different churches and agencies sent them. They established work in different parts of South Africa, being supported by their different sending agencies. In January 1931 three South African branches of Methodism, namely, the Transvaal and Swaziland District of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Great Britain, the Primitive Methodist Missions in the Union of South Africa; and the Wesleyan Methodist of South Africa, united by private Act of Parliament and became the

¹⁰² Elphick and Davenport, *A History of Christianity in South Africa*, 54. He was the first to receive the government offer of a clerical stipend.

¹⁰³ Le Roux, H. *The Local Congregation Empowering the Urban Poor With Special Reference to John Wesley's Social Ethics*. Unpublished Ph.D Thesis, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg. (2001),56.

¹⁰⁴ *Methodist Almanac*, 1986, (Jeppestown: Methodist Church of Southern Africa, 1986), 193. He was also among the first missionaries to start working with both White and Black people.

¹⁰⁵ Balia notes that, "for the local leaders the missionary gave political rights and a channel of communication with the government. For the missionaries belief was the only way to bring the barbarous heathens to civilisation, thus improving their civilisation, morals and habits. Balia, *The Black Methodists and White Supremacy*, 14.

Methodist Church of Southern Africa.¹⁰⁶ The MCSA belongs to the tradition of English-speaking churches, which means that the church has its roots in the British-liberal tradition, and by extension was in opposition to the Nationalist Afrikaans government. The MCSA is a member of the SACC. It fought apartheid through the internal pressure and persuasion it received from the Black Methodist Consultation (*hereafter*, BMC) a consultative body of Black Methodists.¹⁰⁷

2.2.1.2. Black mission agents

Like the Congregational and the Presbyterian Churches, Methodism is characterised by its ability to transform its subjects into agents of change and transformation. As a result, the growth of Methodism is not only due to the work of White missionaries, but also to Blacks who worked as missionary agents. This was particularly true in the early days of missionary work when Black Methodists became indigenous missionaries, planting Methodism in their communities. Arthur Attwell in his book *The Growing of the Saints* notes that:

It must not be assumed that the White missionaries alone were responsible for the conversion and conservation of African members.... It is noteworthy that throughout the century of missionary advance it was often African converts who enthusiastically initiated new work in remote areas.¹⁰⁸

Although Methodism grew as a result of the work of these Black converts, full credit was never given to them, neither were they accepted as the equals of their White colleagues. Despite their outstanding work, White missionaries did not trust them on account of them being Black.¹⁰⁹

Three such Black missionary agents who are very important to the growth and history of Methodism in its early days are David Magatha, the first Black Methodist to build a church in his hometown of Potchefstroom in the 1860s,¹¹⁰ Samuel Mathabathe, a native preacher from the Northern Transvaal who in 1869 began work within his community and founded the first

¹⁰⁶ Theilen, *Gender, Power, Race and Religion*, 65.

¹⁰⁷ Elphick and Davenport, *A History of Christianity in South Africa*, 54

¹⁰⁸ Attwell, A. *The Growing of the Saints*, (Pretoria: Unisa Press, 1992), 15.

¹⁰⁹ Gabriel Setiloane expresses this well when he states "The missionaries could not trust the African converts to preach and teach without their supervision because they could never dissociate Christianity from their Western culture and civilisation." Theilen, *Gender, Race, Power and Religion*, 56.

¹¹⁰ Theilen, *Gender, Race, Power and Religion*, 55.

Methodist Church in the Northern Transvaal.¹¹¹ The MCSA only recently recognised his contribution as a Methodist Evangelist¹¹² and Robert Mashaba was the first to begin Methodist mission work in Mozambique. In 1882 he built a church and school in Delagoa Bay and worked for a long time without any assistance from the South African Methodist Missionaries.¹¹³ Mashaba was among those indigenous missionaries to spread Methodism among their tribes, often without the financial assistance of Western Mission societies.

One of the early examples of the struggle for the recognition of indigenous ministry in the Methodist church was the formation of Unzondelelo (Endurance), by Black evangelists in Natal, who felt that the church had no interest in so-called native ministry. Unzondelelo was set up as a mission fund for Black people (mostly Zulu) engaged in mission work, and who did not receive financial support from the mother church.¹¹⁴ Its aims were summarised as “an ardent desire, an intense passion, and an irresistible impulse to save souls, combined with practical endeavour.”¹¹⁵ The deliberations at its meetings were mostly about the need for native ministry and concern about the lack of funds to support full-time evangelists for the work among Blacks. This was coupled with the pressure they exerted on the church to ordain Black people to minister to their own people. In one meeting when missionaries were being evasive about the issue of ordaining Black people, the Missionary agent, Nathaniel Matebule openly challenged the White missionaries. He protested by asking:

Why did you not ordain the old teachers as Ministers? The first missionaries passed away without a Native Ministry. You may pass away also, without doing it. The English Missionaries are not enough to occupy Natal, and my heart is painful because of the condition of this land. In Fiji the missionaries ordained converts, and the work prospered greatly. When one hears that we desire to form another Church. This is not our aim. You do not wish the work here to be great! We have now been six years at Driefontein, and have 100 members. Who did that work? The Natives themselves. The Missionary lived at Ladysmith.¹¹⁶

¹¹¹ Theilen, *Gender, Race, Power and Religion*, 55.

¹¹² *Wesleyan Missionary Notices*, London, 1883, 256-259. Cited in Balia, *Black Methodist and White Supremacy*, 18. Reflecting on Mathabathe's work, the editor of the *Wesleyan Missionary Notices* could write, “Unknown, unpaid, unvisited, unrecognised by any church, for we did not know of his existence and we were not yet in the land, yet remaining steadfast to Methodism, and patiently witnessing for Christ in the midst of distress and persecution as bravely as any of the early Christians did” *Wesleyan Missionary Notices*, 256-259.

¹¹³ Millard, J. *Malihambe*. (Pretoria: UNISA, 1999), 34.

¹¹⁴ Unzondelelo has remained in existence in KwaZulu-Natal and serves the Zulu community only. Other ethnic groups have tried to be part of it, but they have not been able to understand it nor to buy into it. There was also very little attempt to extend it to the rest of the MCSA.

¹¹⁵ Balia, *Black Methodists and White Supremacy*, 36.

¹¹⁶ Balia, *Black Methodists and White Supremacy*, 41

This statement shows the dissatisfaction that Black people had about the lack of interest shown by White Methodist missionaries in promoting native agency in the church. The missionaries met this attack by Matebule with more excuses, retaliating by taking over the control of Unzondelelo, giving it a different name “called altogether” and writing regulations to govern it.¹¹⁷ The Black members of Unzondelelo did not accept this new name; neither did they give up the leadership of Unzondelelo.

It took time for White Methodist missionaries to succumb to the pressure to ordain indigenous clergy. The first Methodist ministers to be ordained were Charles Pamla, James Lwana, Charles Lwana and Boyce Mama. All four were ordained by the Conference of 1871, being the first graduates of Healdtown theological institution.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁷ Balia, *Black Methodists and White Supremacy*, 35.

¹¹⁸ Millard, J. *Malihambe*, 63.

2.2.1. Social Issues in the MCSA

Having its genesis in the Cape, the Methodist Church ministered to mainly White settler congregations, but it was not long before it moved inland to minister to Black people. Elphick and Davenport note “the Methodists established themselves firmly not only as Ministers for White immigrants but also as missionaries among the blacks.”¹¹⁹

As with most mainline congregations, the history of the MCSA is very ambiguous as far as issues of racism are concerned. Nelson Mandela notes that the MCSA lived between two worlds: that of Black and White people:

The Methodists were the most adventurous and influential of the missionaries who had penetrated the Eastern Cape at the same time as the British armies – sometimes in league with them, sometimes at odds.¹²⁰

As the years went by its attitude towards racism varied according to the leadership of the day. The church however opposed the Group Areas Act of 1958, declaring itself to be “one and undivided.”¹²¹

2.2.1.1. Cessations and breakaways

The racial tensions remained a bone of contention in the Methodist church from the beginning of its missionary work, to the present day. It has led to schism and division. As a result, the Methodist church was among the first to experience secessions, when its preachers broke away and formed a number of African independent Churches (AICs).¹²² The racial struggle between White missionaries and native agents continued and led to the breakaway of early Methodist ministers to form separate churches.¹²³

The important question is why did these people leave? Exploration of this question leads inextricably to the political tensions that have been part and parcel of the MCSA. Leaders such as Nehemiah Tile broke away and formed the Tembu National Church; James Dwane

¹¹⁹ Elphick and Davenport, *A History of Christianity in South Africa*, 54.

¹²⁰ Simpson, A. *Mandela: The Authorised Biography*. (Johannesburg: HarperCollins Publishers, 1999), 15.

¹²¹ Methodist Church of Southern Africa, *Minutes of Conference*, 1955, 214.

¹²² Balia, *Black Methodists and White Supremacy*, 43.

¹²³ Attwell, *The Growing of Saints*, 216.

formed the first Ethiopian church and Mangena Mokone broke away to form the African Methodist Episcopal Church AME. These breakaways did not stop, but continued into the twentieth century when some members broke away to form the Bantu Methodist Church in 1923.¹²⁴

In 1978 the MCSA experienced another breakaway, which came in the form of a banning order by the Transkei homeland government. This was fuelled by political as well as ethnic factors. It came after a decision by the Methodist Conference, not to send messages of goodwill to the President of South Africa or the President of the Transkei homeland government, thereby sending a strong signal of disagreement about apartheid policy. Paramount Chief Kaizer Matanzima, who himself was a Methodist lay preacher responded by banning the MCSA from the Transkei.

This was a very painful experience for the church because this is where it had started its work in the 1820's when it arrived in South Africa, the Methodist church in the Transkei holding the largest membership among the Xhosa people. A number of ministers of the MCSA were given forty-five hours to leave the Transkei and those who were left behind established a new church known as the United Methodist Church.¹²⁵

2.2.1.2. Geographic circuits

In 1976 the Methodist Church began a strategy of building geographic circuits.¹²⁶ Circuits had been divided on racial lines because of language barriers. However, this was seen as something that had encouraged racism and the maintenance of the status quo. The church therefore committed itself to breaking down such barriers and resolved to combine and form single circuits. This was to enforce the Methodist commitment that it was a “one and

¹²⁴ Sundkler, B. *The Bantu Prophets of South Africa*, (Oxford: Lutterworth Press, 1947), 43. Bengkt Sundkler tells the story of this breakaway: “The Bantu Methodist Church or the ‘Donkey Church’ founded on the Rand in 1932-3 is one of the most spectacular secessions in recent times... The interesting point about it is the role of the broad mass urbanised church people in the upheaval. There was an unmistakable nationalist spirit, which fired leaders and followers with enthusiasm for the break, as well as dissatisfaction with the financial policy of the Mission. Within a year of the formation of the church there was a split into two main sections, the Bantu Methodist Church and the Bantu Methodist Church of South Africa.”

¹²⁵ In 1985 when the new leader of the Transkei homeland, General Bantu Holomisa came to power, he un-banned the MCSA in the Transkei. As a result those who had joined the United Methodist Church were welcomed back. In reality, however, it has been difficult to bring everyone back to the MCSA.

¹²⁶ A “Circuit” is a Methodist term referring to a group of Methodist churches in a geographic area.

undivided church” as the church had declared at its 1958 Conference. The following convictions formed the motivation for the Geographic circuits programme:

- (1) Geographic circuits are consistent with our stated mission policy of “becoming a one and undivided church.”
- (2) Uniting our people in racially integrated circuits and Societies is a necessary expression of the true nature of the church of Christ, and an integral part of our mission strategy.¹²⁷

The drive for geographic circuits was met with resistance from White churches who viewed Black congregations as financial burdens because they were poor. Black churches did not like the idea of geographic circuits because they were afraid of being absorbed by the White churches in terms of worship and culture. As a result the push for geographic circuits has not been that successful.

2.2.1.3. Training of Ministers

Racism has also manifested itself in the training of ministers. From the very beginning, the Methodist training of ministers was separated according to race. White ministers were trained at Rhodes University, Grahamstown while Black ministers were trained at the Federal Theological Seminary for Southern Africa (FEDSEM).¹²⁸ This trend was only overcome in the 1980s, when Black ministers were sent to train at Rhodes University, although a majority continued to be trained at FEDSEM. With the collapse of FEDSEM in 1992, the MCSA resolved to train its ministers in one institution at Pretoria, John Wesley College.

2.2.1.4. The Black Methodist Consultation

Black clergy, who refused to leave the church as a result of political tensions, but wanted to transform the church from within, formed the Black Methodist Consultation (*hereafter*, BCM).¹²⁹ Formed in 1975 in Bloemfontein as a direct response to the exclusion of Black people by White decision makers in the MCSA, its key leaders included Ernest Baartman,

¹²⁷ *Minutes of Conference*, 1976: 316.

¹²⁸ Mabuza, W. “Thoughts on the Church.” in Gerloff, *Mission is Crossing Frontiers*, 105.

Andrew Losaba, Enos Sikhakhane, and Khoza Mgojo, all of who were proponents of the Black Consciousness Movement.¹³⁰

The founders of the Black Methodist Consultation observed that although Blacks formed seventy-five percent of the total membership of the MCSA, they were “carefully excluded in the decision-making courts of the church.”¹³¹ Its stated aim therefore was to “reflect on the ministry of the church from a Black perspective and more particularly, to assess the role and contribution of Black people in the leadership structures of the church.”¹³² It also produced sermons that would germinate political consciousness, so that Black Methodists could be led to take relevant action in their local context. It argued that education in the church must never depart from “Black awareness” for Black consciousness was to be the initial starting point of any education. Members of the BCM further pledged themselves to work for the “dismantling of all old traditions and customs which are a reproach to the word of God; and the elimination of racism and the structures of the injustice in the life and witness of our church.”¹³³

Earnest Baartman, the first chairperson of the BMC stated:

Our Blackness comes from God. It stretched from the wretchedness of the earth into the Trinity.¹³⁴

The BCM has remained a pressure group in the MCSA, continuing to represent the aspirations of Black Methodists. As a result of its work the MCSA has been in the forefront in breaking down racist structures, equalisation of stipends, unity and reconciliation in the church and the stationing of ministers across-racial lines. The most significant contribution of the BCM was the development of a cadre of Black leaders, most of who are in leadership

¹²⁹ The BMC is a formation within the MCSA, comprising of Black members only. It sought to represent the aspirations of Black people in a church whose leadership historically was predominantly White.

¹³⁰ A White colleague, who is a Methodist minister shared with me that he was part of a group of White people who went to Bloemfontein with the aim of showing their solidarity with Black clergy who were forming the BMC, yet their assistance and solidarity was refused.

¹³¹ Balia, *Black Methodist and White Supremacy*, 89.

¹³² This manifested itself in the uneven way in which Black and White ministers were treated when they were transferred from one congregation to another. A Black minister would be sent from one church to another, without any consultation, while a White minister would be consulted with properly and a negotiation made before being transferred. See, Balia, *Black Methodists and White Supremacy*, 89.

¹³³ The members of BMC argued “We need to accept the fact that we are Black and set our goals in the pilgrimage of Blackness in relation to our Black situation.” Balia, *Black Methodists and White Supremacy*, 89.

¹³⁴ Balia, *Black Methodists and White Supremacy*, 90.

positions in the church.¹³⁵ The work of the BMC was not only to address the racial imbalance in the MCSA, but also the gender imbalance.

2.2.1.5. Gender

The position of women in the MCSA has only been addressed in the last four decades. One of the early attempts by the church to address the issue of gender was in 1875 at the *Unzondelelo* meetings where White missionaries raised the issue of *ilobolo*, which they wrongfully interpreted as the *selling of wives*.¹³⁶

Women in the MCSA have created spaces for themselves and lobbied for their recognition. It is noteworthy that the MCSA was the first to start the Women's Manyano, a movement began in the 1870s in Dundee, Natal,¹³⁷ although the church only gave them recognition in 1921. Women's organisations in the MCSA are divided according to racial lines e.g., Women's Manyano for Blacks, Women's Auxiliary for Whites and Women's Association for Coloured Women. These three groups have struggled to merge and become one, but they have agreed to work together on some programmes. They all fall under the umbrella of the Methodist Women's Network.¹³⁸ One of the resolutions of the JNL was the opening up of spaces for women to exercise their ministry in the church as leaders, as well as foster unity between these divided organisations.

The second aspect related to gender is that the MCSA started ordaining women only three decades ago. In 1980 the first women minister was admitted to study by the church and was ordained five year later in 1985.¹³⁹ Today, there are over one hundred women ministers in the MCSA. Women began to move into the leadership structures of the church, starting at the local level as society and circuit stewards. The highest position in the MCSA is that of Bishop

¹³⁵ Today, the MCSA has nine Black bishops out of a total of eleven, due to the contribution of the BMC. The BMC was a key player in the establishment of the JNL process.

¹³⁶ Balia, *Black Methodist and White Supremacy*, 38. Rev. Frederick Mason who was chairperson of the district at the time urged Black Christian men to give this "heathen" custom up and stand behind the church in urging government to give the protection needed by the daughters of Christian men, who for conscience sake threw aside this custom of heathenism.

¹³⁷ Gaistkell, D. "Power in Prayer and Service: Women's Christian Organisations." in Elphick, R. and Davenport, R. *Christianity in South Africa* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1997), 242

¹³⁸ Theilen, *Gender, Race, Power and Religion*, 80.

¹³⁹ The MCSA was one of the first mainline churches to ordain women; they followed the lead of the UCCSA, which started as early as the 1930s.

and Lay-President (which is the equivalent of a Presiding Bishop). Black women hold both positions respectively.¹⁴⁰

2.2.1.6. Political Engagement

South African Methodism has always been involved in political issues. It began by being involved with tribal issues in its early years of missionary work. It was also part of the Cottesloe Conference on combating racism. Its schools produced many of today's political leaders, be they clergy or lay. Most of its Conferences passed radical resolutions on political matters. Hewson notes a curious contradiction in two significant facts about South African Methodism: it has supplied leaders of both African and religious disunity and South African Christian co-operation.¹⁴¹ When Barnabas Shaw first arrived in the Cape, he broke the rules not only by starting his missionary work without permission from government, but also by preaching among the natives, something that was against the will of the Cape government.¹⁴² This was a form of resistance towards the racial colonial laws of the Cape government.

When the Nationalist Party government instituted the Group Areas Act of 1955, the MCSA declared itself to be a "One and undivided church."¹⁴³ This was a form of resistance against the apartheid laws. This was followed at its Conference in 1981 by that called "Obedience 81," a measure aimed at discerning the way forward for ministry of the church in the midst of oppression. The conclusion was that obedience to God required the MCSA to continue its opposition to apartheid.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴⁰ Miss Lindeni Madlala holds the position of Lay-President. Purity Malinga is the Bishop of the Natal Coastal District of the MCSA, the first women Bishop of the Methodist church and also the first female bishop of a mainline church.

¹⁴¹ Attwell, *The Growing of Saints*, 213.

¹⁴² Edmunds, A. *The Story of the Founding of Methodism in South Africa*, (Palmerton: The Mission Printing Press, 1936), 8.

¹⁴³ Minutes of Conference, Methodist Publishing House, 1955,212.

¹⁴⁴ *Minutes of Conference*, (1981), 370

2.2.2. Previous programmes of the MCSA

The JNL was not the first programme the MCSA has instigated as a means of responding to the political situation. A number of assemblies had been significant in the life of the MCSA.

2.2.3.1. One and Undivided

One was at the conference of 1958, held soon after the imposition of the Group Areas Act.¹⁴⁵ Methodists came together for a week in their annual Conference to pray and listen to God. It was at this assembly that Methodists discerned the voice of God calling them to defy the Group Areas Act by declaring the church to be a “One and Undivided Church.”¹⁴⁶ It is not surprising therefore that the MCSA at its Conference that year (the highest decision-making body which meets annually) dealt with the role and position of the church in the approaching New South Africa.

2.2.3.2. Obedience 81

In 1981 the MCSA held a weeklong conference at Wits University, Johannesburg.¹⁴⁷ There were 800 people in attendance representing the broader MCSA. Its aim was to discern God’s word for the Methodist people in a context of conflict, characterised by racial divisions.¹⁴⁸ It concluded by adopting the statement that God wanted the church to continue its prophetic ministry against the policy of apartheid.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁵ Marais, D. *South African: Constitutional Development*. (Pretoria: Southern Book Publishers, 1989), 243. The Black (Urban Areas) Amendment Act of 1955 was aimed at the removal of Black people from White urban areas into Black townships and rural areas. Donovan Marais called this the “large-scale provision of accommodation of Black servants in White residential areas, the so-called White-by-night Act.”

¹⁴⁶ This slogan was used to encapsulate the vision of the MCSA not to succumb to the pressure of the Group Areas Act, which sought to divide people on racial lines.

¹⁴⁷ Ironically this is the same venue where Cottesloe had been held twenty years earlier.

¹⁴⁸ *Minutes of Conference*, (1981), 75.

¹⁴⁹ *Methodist Almanac*, (1986), 196. The resolution of the Conference concluded by observing that: “In listening to the cries of those in our body that endure our land’s apartheid laws and other discriminatory practices and attitudes, we know that we have touched only the edge of their pain. What we have heard convicts us that every Methodist must witness against this disease, which infects all our people, and leaves none unscathed in our Church and country. We call upon every Methodist to reject apartheid. We have experienced how hard it is to abandon-long hold prejudice and long-felt bitterness. But we have see God work this miracle in us. It happened because we continued to search for each other even at our time of deepest division and despair.”

A statement was released that concluded with a commitment of intent by the MCSA, renewing its determination to continue fighting the system of apartheid by supporting the ecumenical movement's resolutions against the system and supporting its victims.

2.2.3.3. Order of Peacemakers

The MCSA also formed an organisation called the Order of Peacemakers, whose job it was to fight against apartheid and the violence, which engulfed South Africa at the time. This organisation motivated a number of young White males to become conscientious objectors to compulsory military service.¹⁵⁰ The aim of the order of Peacemakers was to provide pastoral care and support for those who express or choose a non-violent witness toward military or security structures and any other form of organised and coercive violence. It encouraged and assisted in the process of conflict resolution. It also worked for a true and costly expression of reconciliation.

Despite all the above attempts by the MCSA it remained a church that was racially divided and needed to find a way forward for its ministry. The events of 1990 compelled the MCSA to begin the JNL programme as a way of furthering the process of healing, nation building, reconciliation and shaping the mission of the church in a new democratic dispensation.

2.3. The Journey to the New Land Programme

From the above discussion we have seen the broad context that led to the development of the JNL. The discussion has raised a number of issues that made the adoption of the JNL programme an imperative for the MCSA. In gathering information about the JNL I used a number of methods. The methods I used are as follows:

¹⁵⁰ *Minutes of Conference*, (1991), 272.

Gathering of primary and secondary data

Primary data are defined by Bless and Higson-Smith as data collected by the researcher for the “particular purpose of the research.”¹⁵¹ This is in line with the view of Howard and Sharp, who attest that primary data are those which the researcher collects himself/herself.¹⁵² As encouraged by the Intervention Research model, this research project incorporates both qualitative and quantitative methods of gathering data.¹⁵³ Retrieval of archival data was not a problem. The leadership of the MCSA was very helpful in making their records available for analysis. The Staff of the *New Dimension* where most of the records and articles of the church are kept were also most helpful. Other libraries were also most obliging in sourcing documents. The documentation included the following:

- (1) Minutes of Conference of the MCSA from the 1950s to 2004;
- (2) A few books on the work of Methodist missionaries;
- (3) Missionary Review pamphlets;
- (4) Christian education materials, books, daily almanacs and faith and life educational materials;
- (5) Minutes of meetings held on the JNL process;
- (6) Tapes of the Bible studies and address at the JNL convocation in 1992;
- (7) Reports of the facilitator training that were conducted throughout the connexion.

Higson-Smith regard secondary data, as that “data collected by other investigators in connection with other research problems”¹⁵⁴ In terms of secondary data the unpublished report of research done by the Methodist, David Newby on the impact of the JNL was helpful to this study. Peter Storey and Ross Olivier’s book on the JNL,¹⁵⁵ articles on the JNL programme from the *New Dimension* were additional secondary sources utilised in this study.

¹⁵¹ Bless and Higson-Smith (1995), 99. See also, Sanderson, N. (2000) Exploring the Determinants of Curriculum Change at Sekusile Adult Education Centre 1998-2000. (Masters in Education Research Project. University of Natal, School of Education).

¹⁵² Howard, K and Sharp, J. *The Management of a Student Research Project*. (Beckenham: Croom Helm 1985), 122.

¹⁵³ Rothman L and Thomas, C. *Intervention Research Model* (1994), 13. See also Tuckman, *Conducting Educational Research*, 372.

¹⁵⁴ Bless and Higson-Smith, (1997), 99.

¹⁵⁵ Both wrote books on the JNL. *New Dimension* is the official Newspaper of the MCSA.

In organising the data I began by reading the documents that I had collected and identified the data that was relevant to the research questions. This was followed by the identification of data relevant to the questions, which was then categorised, into broad themes, for example goals, content and methods of education. This also required me to develop a file where I kept the organised material. Miles and Huberman who present a useful set of analytic processes for the analysis of qualitative data shaped most of my documentary analysis work.

Interviews: formal and non-formal interviews

A large amount of the data was collected through formal and informal interviews. These were conducted with a variety of people, a majority of whom were members of the MCSA. I conducted ten formal interviews with people who had been participants in the JNL programme. The advantage of this approach was that the topic and issues to be covered were specified in advance in a clear outlined form.¹⁵⁶ A questionnaire was also sent to 200 persons by email, of which the research received ten replies. Thirty non-formal interviews with clergy, laity, church leaders, youth and women were conducted. Open-ended questions were deliberately included as to how they saw the JNL process and education in the church.¹⁵⁷

2.3.1. The Convocation of 1993

The JNL began with a call for the gathering of the Methodist people. In this section we examine the background to and experience of the convocation of 1993.¹⁵⁸

2.3.1.1. Historical development of the JNL

The Journey to a New Land Programme started with a floor debate at the Methodist Conference of 1991. The question that had been discussed was the role of the MCSA in a new

¹⁵⁶ Tuckman, B. *Conducting Educational Research*. (Forworth: Harcourt Brace, 1994), 375. See also Bless, C. and Higson –Smith. *Social Research Methods: An African Perspective* (Lusaka: Juta, 1995), 56.

¹⁵⁷ Storey, P. *Journey Begun: The Story of a Church in a New Land*, (Cape Town: Salty Print 1994), 1.

¹⁵⁸ Olivier, *The Next Step*; Mgojo, K. and Irvine, G. *Let The Flame Burn: A Mission Handbook for Methodists in Southern Africa*, (Woodstock: Salty Print, 2001); MCSA Education Department and The Methodist Publishing House, *On The Way: Study Material for Small Groups Journeying Towards 2000*, Volume 2, (Cape Town: Methodist Publishing House, 1995); Storey, *And Are We Yet Alive*; Molomo, L. R., *Rev. M. S. Mogoba: A Biography*, Cape Town: Salty Press, 1998.

South Africa. Speakers at the Conference recalled that in the midst of apartheid the MCSA had assembled to listen and discern what God wanted them to do as a church in their ministry, and to take a stand against apartheid.¹⁵⁹

There was common agreement that a similar assembly or convocation should be called to set the course for a new era.¹⁶⁰ The process was to be called a Journey to a New Land.¹⁶¹ This is made clear by the vision statement, as given by Peter Storey when he states that:

The vision statement of the convocation shows the participatory and dialogical nature of the envisaged meeting of the JNL. It stated that our vision is the participation of every Methodist in a shared process of listening to God and discerning his guidance, listening to one another and owning together our co-responsibility for becoming an authentic church in the shaping of a new land.¹⁶²

The aims of the convocation were more detailed and sought to root the MCSA in what was happening in South Africa and the role that it should play. Mike Chapman writes,

The Journey to the New Land was an attempt by the Methodist church to be relevant to the changing times, a movement from an undemocratic institution to one that was democratic as the country was doing.¹⁶³

2.3.1.2. The goals of the JNL Convocation

The goals of the JNL Convocation are well stated in Storey's words:

Our vision is the participation of every Methodist in a shared process of listening to God and discerning his guidance, listening to one another and owning together our co-responsibility for becoming an authentic church in the shaping of a new land.¹⁶⁴

In the preface to the book on the JNL by Ross Olivier, Peter Storey defined the journey as a

bold initiative aimed at re-inventing this great church, so that Methodism would be equipped to meet the challenges of a transformed sub-continent and a new millennium"¹⁶⁵

¹⁵⁹ Storey, P. *Journey Begun: The Story of a Church in a New Land*, 1.

¹⁶⁰ Storey, *Journey Begun*, 1.

¹⁶¹ This came from the biblical paradigm of the Exodus from slavery to freedom inspired by the journey of the Israelites from captivity in Egypt to freedom in the new land of Canaan. Storey, *Journey Begun*, 2.

¹⁶² Storey, *Journey Begun*, 2.

¹⁶³ Storey, *Journey Begun*, 1.

¹⁶⁴ *Dimension*, (December 1992), 3.

¹⁶⁵ Oliver, R. *The Next Step: The Continuing Story of a Church in a New Land*, 1.

The MCSA found itself in a society that was changing rapidly where people were confronted by changes and demands from most aspects of their lives e.g., social, political and economic. There were interests that concerned both White and Black people in the church. However there were also those that confronted Black people alone. Most members wanted to get rid of racism in the church and make the church an authentic African church. An authentic African church is one that reflects the unique character of African culture. The church as a whole wanted to follow up on social concerns and preserve its important role in society.

2.3.1.3. Process to the JNL Convocation

The initial date set for the convocation was July 10-18, 1992. Conference appointed a committee to make the necessary preparations. After the committee had completed its work, they discovered that there was lack of interest from the general membership of the church. Resistance to the process was voiced in many quarters, many feeling they were not adequately consulted.¹⁶⁶

The BMC sent a message to the preparation committee voicing their dissatisfaction with the top-down approach that the committee had adopted for the consultation. Hence it suggested,

If our people are to really own what comes out of this, stop planning from the top-down. Let the people themselves write the agenda and then it will be their journey too.¹⁶⁷

The meeting had to be postponed, so that a new process of consultation with all stakeholders could begin. In November 1992 a two-day workshop was held in Johannesburg to seek a way of reviving the vision of the JNL that would be held the following year, in July 1993. At this workshop people were invited to participate and the previous mistakes addressed. People began to send their submissions on issues they felt needed to be addressed in the MCSA. By July 1993 nearly 14,000 submissions had been received from people at the grassroots level, many of which formed the agenda of the convocation.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁶ Storey, *Journey Begun*, 3. The convocation had to be postponed because people did not respond on time, citing lack of consultation especially the Black membership of the church, which was under the leadership of the Black Methodist Consultation (BMC).

¹⁶⁷ Storey, *Journey Begun*, 2.

¹⁶⁸ Theilen, *Gender, Race, Power and Religion*, 70.

The convocation took place in Benoni July 23, 1993, during the MCSA Annual Conference. Mindful of the concerns voiced earlier, the facilitators used a more dialogical and consultative process, where the people discussed their submissions and together forged a way forward for their church and convocation. As a result an improvement in the general attitude towards the JNL convocation was felt. After an exhaustive process of discussion, the convocation came up with a programme, which they saw as the journey the MCSA needed to undertake.

2.3.1.4. The outcomes of the JNL Convocation

The highlight of the JNL convocation in 1993 was the adoption of the *Message of the JNL*, which was seen as an important step towards the transformation of the church. The message read thus:

Methodists from six countries in Southern Africa came together on the East Rand in the midst of violence and the struggle for empowerment. We believe that God is calling us to participate in an experience of the Holy Spirit, which renews us inwardly, and send us out in mission. We have listened to the hopes and dreams of our people and also to their pain and fears. We have heard the groaning of our sub-continent. We have also begun an experience of God's transforming power, which releases us from bondage to structures and enables us to celebrate people in all their rich variety. We have covenanted with one another to be instruments of this experience.¹⁶⁹

A commitment from the whole church to the implementation of the JNL process followed, which read thus:

We commit ourselves, trusting in God alone for grace: To enable the whole church, at every level, to participate in the renewal of its life and its ministry to the world; to overcome those influences, traditions and institutions in church and society which inhibit full participation and renewal for all our people; to promote and to protect the right of all people to be heard and to use their gifts in the life of the church and its witness to Christ in the world.¹⁷⁰

At the conclusion of the JNL convocation, the church adopted the principles and strategies of the JNL process. This committed the church:

- To rediscovering our heritage as Christians and Methodists and to grow in Christian experience through prayer Bible study, worship, fellowship and education;

¹⁶⁹ *Minutes of Conference*, (Cape Town, Methodist Publishing House, 1993),337.

¹⁷⁰ *Minutes of Conference*, (1993), 374.

-
- To develop a lifestyle which expresses Christian values;
 - To discover and express UBUNTU (I am because of others and I am for others);
 - To facilitate a process of confession, healing and forgiveness as we grapple with our prejudices about those who are marginalised;
 - To affirm the value of the family as the primary arena in teaching, caring and growth;
 - To renew our structures to serve both the mission of the church and its people;
 - To value and enhance the gifts and ministry of all God's people-women and men, laity and clergy, young and old;
 - To support our youth and to encourage them to make their distinctive contribution to the life and mission of the church;
 - To affirm our African heritage, especially in the ministry of worship;
 - To channel our resources (spiritual, natural, cultural, human and financial) in ways which make credible our call for unity;
 - To support the peace process and the search for justice;
 - To urge our societies to engage in development programmes;
 - To compassion and ministry to those who suffer from AIDS.¹⁷¹

2.3.2. Six Calls of the JNL

The broad aims of the JNL were linked with specific outcomes that the church hoped to achieve. These were known as the "Six Calls of the JNL." These were designed to serve as guidelines for all Methodists in what the Church leadership called the "re-inventing" of the Church.¹⁷²

2.3.2.1. First call: A deepening of the spirituality for all members

Methodists voiced their concern at the lack of knowledge and experience of God. Peter Storey says that:

¹⁷¹ *Minutes of Conference*, (1993), 373.

¹⁷² Theilen, *Gender, Race, Power and Religion*, 70.

A message from the local churches was that in spite of a plethora of activities going on—people were hungry to know God and to experience growth.¹⁷³

The deepening of spirituality refers to the church's task to teach its members how to pray, read the Bible and how to live out the Christian life according to the teachings of Jesus Christ. Accordingly, the convocation resolved to “give priority to the development of a spirituality that will strengthen its inner resolve to impact society for Christ.”¹⁷⁴

Congregations voiced a call for a deepened spirituality and walk with God. This would be achieved through the rediscovery of the Methodist heritage of growing in Christian experience through prayer, Bible study, worship, fellowship and education. This was to be accompanied by a call for an “Authentic African Church.” A committee was established to turn this dream into a reality. The CE department of the MCSA published material, through the faith and life programme for devotion and reflection on the JNL process.¹⁷⁵ Retreats were held in Son Valley and Common Ground, both of which are Methodist retreat centres.

2.3.2.2. Second call: Shift from Maintenance to Mission: The focus should be more on pastoral work and less on maintenance

There was a concern that the church seemed to be concerned with maintaining itself, (its hierarchy and structures), instead of carrying its mission into the world. For this reason, a call was made for the church to be mission-minded instead of inward looking. The realisation that the church was preoccupied with maintenance at the expense of doing God's mission was not new. The JNL reminded the church of its weakness and implored it to seek solutions. The church proved that it was serious about addressing this problem by changing its structures, and holding its Conference every three years, rather than annually. As a result, at the “First Triennial Conference” held in 1998, important structural changes were made, replacing some departments by the Office of the presiding bishop, whose task is was to “drive” the mission of the church. It established the Connexional Executive and appointed a Coordinating

¹⁷³ Storey, *Journey Begun*, 4. Seen from the CE perspective this was a call for education in the church, so that people could grow in their faith. It is ironical that nothing was done to promote CE in the church. There was however the establishment of a CE Office, which produced pamphlets and booklets.

¹⁷⁴ *Minutes of Conference*, (1993), 374.

¹⁷⁵ The materials were written in English, which made it virtually impossible for non-English speakers to use them. The reason for not translating them to African languages was that it would be very expensive.

Committee whose job it was to run the day-to-day operations of the MCSA in the interim, until conference re-convenes.

2.3.2.3. Third call: Priesthood of all believers: The re-enforcement of lay ministry

Another crucial insight that emerged at the JNL convocation was the realisation that the clergy dominated the MCSA. The clergy's role in the MCSA was based on the shepherd-flock pastoral model and this needed to change.¹⁷⁶ Ordinary people in the Methodist church voiced their concern that they were not given enough space, training and opportunities to be involved in the life of the church. The convocation resolved to challenge the church to make use of the "*doctrine of the priesthood of all believers*."¹⁷⁷

The strategy to achieve this call was "by enabling the whole church, at every level, to participate in the decision-making process at all levels of the church."¹⁷⁸ This was done at the Connexional and districts levels where lay people were given space to participate and hold high positions in the church, which previously had been the sole domain of the clergy. As Theilen observes:

Behind this call lies the philosophy of Methodism that all believers are potentially ministers, whether they have studied theology or not.¹⁷⁹

This call became a direct challenge to some ministers who held onto the old models of ministry that encouraged domination and alienation of lay people from participating in the leadership of the church.

¹⁷⁶ In the shepherd-flock model the Minister leads and the people follow without making any contribution to the vision of the church. It is the opposite of the all member-ministry approach.

¹⁷⁷ Storey, *Journey Begun*, 5.

¹⁷⁸ *Dimension*, (October 7, 1993) 4.

¹⁷⁹ Theilen, *Gender, Race, power and Religion*, 71. Ten years later David Newby commented about this new development, "we now have a lay president of conference...Some people see this as merely symbolic but the lay president in the Church is now making a meaningful contribution in the leadership of the church and that something that I think is very important. It's an indication that we take the ministry of lay people serious and we're beginning to empower people. We're looking at lay representation in synods. It's been pushed...it used to be minister dominated-now 2/3 of the synods tend to be lay people, 1/3 ministers. We are looking for balances that way."

2.3.2.4. Fourth call: The abolition of racism, the Methodist Church being “one and undivided”

This call came as a concern predominantly raised by Black Methodists who were tired of talking about unity, but still remained separate. The convocation made it clear that the church had resisted apartheid but it still had a long way to go to overcome the divisions in its own fellowship.¹⁸⁰ Despite declaring the MCSA a “one and undivided church” the church was divided along racial and economic lines. Examples of this were replete, particularly in previous White suburbs, where Methodist churches had a predominantly White membership and were characterised by having more financial and human resources. On the other hand, the majority of Black churches, situated in the townships were characterised by a lack of financial resources. The financial imbalance in these churches manifested itself when it came to the allocation of ministerial staff.

There were also class divisions between Black, rural and poor churches. In spite of the geographic circuits programme that had been started earlier, most church circuits had resisted unifying into multi-racial ones. Some which had experienced disagreements especially around issues of money, language and meetings times. As a result, they returned back to racial circuits.¹⁸¹

This nullified the strategy, which had been instituted as an attempt to unite the MCSA, erstwhile divided by the policy of apartheid. The JNL put the issue of unity back on the agenda and encouraged churches to continue working towards unity.

2.3.2.5. Fifth call: Re-discovery of servant-leadership

Lay people voiced out their feelings of being marginalised in the church.¹⁸²

The call was received for ministers to be trained on the servant-leadership model, so that they could lead churches in a more Christian way. The complaint was that most ministers were using authoritarian and anti-dialogical models to run their churches and this was crippling the

¹⁸⁰ Olivier, *The Next Step: The Continuing Story of a Church in a New Land*, 4.

¹⁸¹ The Geographic circuit which was started in the mid 1970s, aimed at bringing together neighbouring Black and White societies to form a multi-racial circuit as a way of reinforcing unity within the MCSA. *Minutes of Conference*. (Cape Town, Methodist Publishing House, 1976), 370.

¹⁸² See Storey, *Journey Begun*, 5.

mission and life of the church. The process of democratisation taking place within the country was not without influence. The MCSA thus found itself willing to change its structures from hierarchical or even autocratic forms to more democratic ones. All church members were encouraged to participate in the church or “to give the Methodist Church back to God.”¹⁸³ As a result of this call, structural adjustments have been made at local and Connexional church level. Locally, the congregations themselves now hold elections of society stewards and other lay leaders. At the district level, any member in good standing is permitted to nominate any minister within the connexion for the position of bishop.

2.3.2.6. Sixth call: Setting the Ordained Ministers free for teaching, preaching and spiritual guidance

The sixth call was for the church to set the ordained ministers free for their primary vocation of preaching, teaching and spiritual guidance.¹⁸⁴ There had been a concern that a wide range of duties and other responsibilities, which made it difficult for them to perform their primary pastoral responsibilities, overburdened ministers. Instead they had to perform administrative duties, disciplinary actions etc., all of which could be left in the capable hands of the laity. The church therefore committed itself to freeing its ministers from these responsibilities, so that they could be set apart for the purpose of preaching, teaching and spiritual guidance. The laity was encouraged to take initiative in the church and be given the space to lead the church. The Rev. David Newby comments:

The sixth call was for ministers to be set free to their primary vocation and this is tying in with the other calls. But ministers have become more and more apart from the sense that ministers had become autocratic and kind of demigods in places. Then there was also the feeling that ministers had become bureaucrats. And that they just pushed pieces of paper around and spend their whole lives in meetings ceased to fulfil that which they have been set aside for. And so the first five calls were quite threatening to the clergy, and they still do feel afraid because the congregations kind of see it as an opportunity to overthrow them and there is this whole power struggle... But as I see in the sixth call --and as lay people we begin to say: when can our minister be a minister? We want our minister to do ministry.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸³ Theilen, *Gender, Race, Power and Religion*, 73.

¹⁸⁴ Olivier, R. *The Next Step: The Continuing Story of a Church in a New Land*, 4.

¹⁸⁵ Interview May 21, 2003.

2.3.3. The implementation process

After the JNL convocation had adopted the commitments and resolutions of the convocation, the conference then appointed a Transformation Committee, whose responsibility it was to monitor the implementation of the JNL in the districts, circuits and societies of the MCSA throughout Southern Africa.¹⁸⁶ The church also embarked on the running of workshops throughout the church structures and regions on the aims and objectives of the JNL.¹⁸⁷

2.3.3.1. Appointment of the JNL Coordinator

The next phase of the JNL programme was characterised by the appointment of the coordinator of the programme. The MCSA felt it necessary to appoint the Rev. Ross Olivier as a full-time Coordinator of the transformation process, which meant co-coordinating and implementing the JNL programme and helping the church with its transformation processes. Three reasons made Olivier the most suitable candidate for this job.¹⁸⁸ He had always been sympathetic to the views of the Black membership of the church and was seen as an ally of the BMC. He was accepted by the membership at large, both Black and White. The White membership of the church appreciated his experience of ministering in a multiracial context and the Black membership respected the fact that he had been involved in the struggle against apartheid, till he got his “baptism” (arrest and restriction).¹⁸⁹ However there were people that did not support him and the work he was doing. This became clear when he began to receive death threats from some people who did not like the transformation process that the church was going through.¹⁹⁰

Olivier told a meeting of the MCSA that he had received death threats from members of the church who did not like the JNL process. He did not divulge the culprits who threatened him, nor their race.

His job description was:

¹⁸⁶ Minutes of Conference (1994), 375.

¹⁸⁷ The JNL workshops were facilitated by the Co-ordinator of the JNL process and by other trained people within the districts and circuits.

¹⁸⁸ <http://www.vst.edu/p>

¹⁸⁹ I remember that the BMC used to sarcastically refer to him as the Egyptian who led the Israelites out of Egypt!

¹⁹⁰ *Dimension*, (July 20, 1995), 14.

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- (1) To investigate ways to enhance the JNL process;
 - (2) To assess the overall progress of the implementation of the JNL, and to determine priorities both on the basis of our collective vision as well as the differing contextual situations/needs in the regions/synods;
 - (3) To avail him to enable, assist in, or give momentum to the JNL activities at every level of the church;
 - (4) To facilitate the implementation of the JNL at all levels of the church, by communicating with districts, circuits and societies.

2.3.3.2. The re-structuring of the Annual Conference

The fourth phase of the implementation of the JNL was the re-structuring of the church's constitutional and administrative bodies in order to enable the processes of transformation. While this was going on, the districts were also implementing the aims of the journey at local level. The transformation of this body was on the basis of the vision of the journey, which aimed at addressing the major weaknesses in the functioning of this body, all of which had been identified by the Transformation Committee as part of their overall analysis of the church. These weaknesses were related to the conference business, procedures, and overall lines of communication.

The problems identified were as follows:

- (1) Lack of high-level participation by most delegates of the conference;
- (2) Too much focus on the maintenance work of the church instead of mission and growth;
- (3) Confusion and bureaucracy in the roles of the MCSA denominational departments.¹⁹¹

The Transformation committee brought radical proposals to the church in the spirit of the journey.

These were as follows:

¹⁹¹ Storey, *Journey Begun*, 21.

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- (1) The local ministry of the church is paramount. The church will give greater emphasis to growth in spirituality, to mission, and to justice, service and reconciliation; it will give greater recognition to the laity and, while conference gives spiritual leadership, it will transfer decision-making as near to the Circuit as possible;
 - (2) Conference shall meet triennially, the next Conference being in 1998, for 3 to 4 days in order to provide leadership and vision for the church;
 - (3) The number of ministers in conference will be reduced to half the number of lay representatives and there will be two youth representatives from each District;
 - (4) A Connexional executive, comprising of bishops and elected lay members, will manage the business of the church in the meantime;
 - (5) Conference will have a lay President as an honorary position to give recognition to the importance of the laity;
 - (6) Conference and the Synods will meet in one unitary session of laity and clergy. A board of Ministries will manage the work of the Departments dividing it into few units;
 - (7) In Circuit and Society the laity will be given greater involvement and power.¹⁹²

The changes that were proposed by the Transformation Committee were accepted, yet not without rigorous debate. Efforts to follow through on the restructuring of the church were maintained for sometime. Districts, synods, circuits and societies embarked on their own initiatives for transforming their committees, meetings and the manner in which the local churches functioned.

2.3.3.3. Leadership development

Conference had resolved that Districts would need to form Continuation Committees whose main task would be to implement the journey in their churches. Olivier travelled to all thirteen districts of the MCSA, training those who were to implement the JNL programme. He used the Methodist newspaper, *Dimension* to answer questions that were asked by people all over the country. He also wrote a book titled *The Next Step* whose aim it was to remind people of

¹⁹² *Minutes of Conference*, (1995) 309.

the six calls for renewal that has arisen out of the journey, and the important principles that must guide our thinking about structural change.¹⁹³

Olivier worked as coordinator of the JNL programme until 1998 when he was appointed to the position of General Secretary of the MCSA. His position was subsequently relinquished and the Transformation Committee disbanded. The thinking was that the work of the JNL would go on at district and local church level. In the same year the church began a fund-raising programme called the Millennium Campaign. This occupied the church in such a way that it brought premature closure to the intentional focus and implementation process of the JNL.

2.4. An Evaluation of the Journey to the New Land

The interviews that were conducted gave a picture of the responses of people to the implementation process. During the research process I drafted a questionnaire that I distributed to two hundred ministers. Only ten of them responded to my questionnaire. I also conducted formal and informal interviews with a number of people who were in the leadership of the MCSA at national level and others were involved in the leadership of the local Methodist churches and had the responsibility of implementing the JNL programme. From the responses and remarks made by the interviewees I concluded that there was a mixture of enthusiasm and indifference, which marked the implementation process.

2.4.1. The successes of the Programme

If there was any positive impact made by the JNL programme it was very minimal. However, I have observed that the JNL programme would have been a resounding success had education been taken seriously during its implementation stages. From the responses that were received from the interviews one can see that the successes that were achieved were those that did not need any education but rather the changing of structures and activities with the depth of knowledge and change of mindsets.

¹⁹³ Olivier, *The Next Step*, 2.

2.4.1.1. Conference

Among the respondents to the questionnaire sent out and the formal interviews conducted, especially with clergy, there were those who felt very positive about the impact made by the Journey. Those who believed that the JNL made a contribution argued positively that the structure of the church had changed to include more women and youth and even racial equity had improved dramatically. They also alluded to the fact that the agenda of synods, which used to be business orientated, has now changed to be more concerned with mission than the maintenance of the bureaucratic structures of the church.¹⁹⁴ Conference was changed from meeting annually and its composition of four hundred members, most of whom were elites of the church, had been changed.¹⁹⁵

2.4.1.2. Spirituality

Over the years there has been a growing acceptance of African culture and spirituality in the church. Here I am not evaluating the depth of spirituality as the call had aimed. I am, however referring to the fact that there appears a greater acceptance of African culture and attire experienced within the church. In Methodist gatherings there are now cultural evenings where people are encouraged to dress in African attire, and practices such as beating of drums and praise singing are encouraged. To a certain extent therefore, there has been an incorporation of African spirituality into the life of the MCSA. This is not to respond to the question of how Methodist spirituality has deepened, but simply to note there has been improvement.

¹⁹⁴ Committees are now much more representative than they were before the Journey. Every committee of the church must have youth and women representatives. The laity has more control of the church in that they can now invite a minister of their own choice, instead of being bound to the choice of the bishop. The church has appointed a women Bishop. It also has the office of a lay president who is an equal to the presiding bishop. The position of lay president is held by a lay person and is the equivalent of the Presiding Bishop. Currently Lindeni Madlala holds this position and the Bishop is Purity Malinga, who is the Bishop of the Natal Coastal District of the Methodist Church. Both come from marginalised backgrounds in that they are Black and are not married. Finally, there has been growth in the number of women ministers in the MCSA.

¹⁹⁵ Conference now meets every second third year and the number of delegates has increased from four hundred to three thousand so that it could draw as many members as possible.

2.4.1.3. Mission and maintenance

A number of churches began to focus on mission of the church instead of maintenance of the institution. As a result many Methodist churches have a number of projects ranging from soup kitchens, shelters for the homes, pre-schools and other programmes.

2.4.1.4. Empowerment of the laity

Another important contribution the JNL made concerned the position of lay people in the church. It helped people to become aware that the laity is important to the life of the church. Positions that used to be the domain of the clergy such as president of the Young Men's Guild, Women's Manyano and Secretaries of Synods were opened to the laity.¹⁹⁶ Even the position of the Presiding Bishop is paralleled with that of a Lay President who is an honorary president of the church.¹⁹⁷ There have been significant changes in the composition of committees and representatives in the various structures of the church. Women and youth now have more representatives in committees. As a result Methodist rules now require that women form a minimum of 40% of every leadership level and structure within the church.

2.4.1.5. Unity

As a result of the JNL circuits, which were the most visible sign of disunity in the church, came to be seen as vehicles for building racial unity. Those who were committed to the cause of creating racially integrated circuits set about this task enthusiastically but with very little success. Others were more sceptical and preferred to remain within their comfort zones until they were compelled by the Transformation Committee to do otherwise. Conference judged the success or failure by the extent to which it was successful in building racial harmony and co-operation within the circuit.

These are some of the indications where the journey was successful in some areas but by and large it is clear that it was not able to bring transformation in all areas of the church as had

¹⁹⁶ *Methodist Yearbook*, (1994), 322.

¹⁹⁷ *Methodist Yearbook*, (1999), 380. The Minutes of Conference were changed to a Yearbook because the conference took place once every three years. The Yearbook would report on the state of the church and the work of the Connexional Executive (Management Committee of the church) on an annual basis.

been expected. This failure is attributed mainly to the lack of emphasis on education, as we shall now see.

2.4.2. The failures of the programme

Despite the minimal successes that have been discussed, the JNL has sustained a number of failures. Lamenting the lack of progress in the transformation of the MCSA in 2002, former Presiding Bishop of the MCSA Mvume Dandala said that:

I am concerned that it appears that we have not yet all heard the emphasis of the call of the Journey. For instance, debates relating to the place of the lay members of the church and the ordained ministry tend to evoke responses marked by selfish interest.¹⁹⁸

Dandala's lamentation about the lack of transformation in the MCSA despite the initiatives that came with the Journey, points to the problem that the JNL has not succeeded in transforming the Methodist church. The failure of the church to transform itself even though they had embarked on the JNL programme, therefore informs the proposal I am making, that education has to be taken seriously if the church is to transform itself.

The following subsection seeks to show the failures and posits the argument that they were the result of the lack of intentional education. Three points relating to the educational nature of the programme have been made by some of the interviewees. These concern *goals*, *contents* and *method* of the programme.

2.4.2.1. Goal: Lack of clarity

The first problem with the JNL is that church members did not share its goals. The aim of the JNL Programme was to transform the Methodist church so that it would be able to minister to the new South Africa that was emerging in a transforming society. Peter Storey, former Methodist bishop of Johannesburg and leader of the JNL programme, said that the JNL was aimed at:

Re-inventing the church (Methodist) so that Methodism will be equipped to meet the challenges of a transformed sub-continent and a new millennium.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁸ *Dimension*, (January, 1997), 5.

This was the dominant view of the leadership, and especially the TC, on the goals of the JNL. In the responses of interviewees, one is confronted by conflicting answers and understandings of what the goals were. There was no uniformity in the understanding of the aims of the journey; each person emphasised what appealed to them. Most respondents said it was to discern the vision of God, correct problems in church structure, and equip the MCSA to be more effective in the new South Africa. Some understood it as mobilising the church to address obstacles that stood in the way of doing its mission. One respondent said that:

The aim of the journey was to mobilise the church for mission and expansion in the New South Africa, to dismantle the misunderstanding that only ordained clergy did the work of the church, to make all Christians aware that they are called to do part of the work of God and thus to free those who are ordained to get on with the part of their work to which they were specifically gifted and called to do. To journey from maintenance to mission and stop the church just talking without action...It was a trumpet call to action.²⁰⁰

For others, it was an attempt to democratise the church. For instance, one respondent said that:

It was an attempt to mobilise the greatest number of Methodists in decision-making to help form the vision and action of the MCSA for a new land, post liberation. This process, it was hoped would be extended into the future decision-making processes so that the MCSA would be able to evolve in appropriate directions based on the will of the people on the ground.²⁰¹

Some respondents thought it was a form of CE aimed at training people on the need to change the structures of the church. One respondent notes that:

The JNL was a form of Christian Education, which was aimed at educating the church, so that it can transform itself. It was an educational programme.²⁰²

There were those who did not see it as a form of CE but as a process of renewal. They argued that the process and the programme were not the same and must not be confused. Hence one correspondent argued,

It was not a form of Christian Education, but rather as a Part of Christian education. The form did not change, just the content.²⁰³

¹⁹⁹ In Olivier, *The Next Step*, 1.

²⁰⁰ Interview, July 20, 2004.

²⁰¹ Responses to Questionnaire, June 10, 2004.

²⁰² Responses to Questionnaire June 15, 2004.

²⁰³ Interview, June 20, 2004.

Others, especially Black ministers and members of the BMC saw it as a subversive strategy by the White church to maintain its power within the MCSA.²⁰⁴

These responses reveal that there was no coherent understanding of the goals of the programme. This lack of coherence shows clearly the need for the process to be participatory from the beginning so as to increase ownership. This was explicit from the reasons that were given by the BMC for the lack of enthusiasm by the people during the run up to the convocation.²⁰⁵

Secondly, while the leadership of the church saw the JNL as a crucial moment for the MCSA to reposition itself in an emerging South Africa, it was not clear how their vision related to the ordinary membership at the grassroots level of the church. It is important to note here that the leaders of the MCSA were also in the leadership of the ecumenical movements and had been part of forums where such issues were dealt with. For these people, the JNL process was a prophetic moment for the MCSA and could not be avoided. There was discontinuity in terms of understanding the content of the JNL between those in leadership and the general membership of the church. For example, in the mindset of the leadership, unity in the MCSA meant racial unity, where Black and White had equal powers and representation. For ordinary Black Methodists however it meant wresting power from Whites who had been in control of the church. For White members it meant change that took into consideration their interests as a minority group within the church. These were some of the issues raised, but they were not well addressed.

Thirdly, the BMC was suspicious of the JNL process, seeing it as an attempt by White people to further entrench their control of the church. Once it agreed to be part of the process, it used the JNL as a means of legitimating its long call for justice, equality, and an equitable sharing of resources within the church. The BMC supported the JNL process as long as it provided an enabling environment to push its agenda.

The White church did not understand the JNL in these terms. For them it was a means of restructuring the church for mission and deal with White guilt. The White membership supported it as long as it guaranteed them a place in the church and offered forgiveness and

²⁰⁴ Interviews June, 20 2004.

²⁰⁵ Storey, *Journey Begun*, 12.

reconciliation. The leadership wanted to see a united, multi-racial and multi-ethnic MCSA, without getting to the roots of the problem.

Fourthly, some in the church saw the JNL as an attempt at the structural renewal and democratisation of the MCSA, a strategy that would prepare the church for a post-liberation South Africa. For this group the programme had nothing to do with changing people's minds, hearts and resources but rather with the structures of the church. Linked to the above was a concern from the people that the church seemed to be taken up with maintaining itself as regards its hierarchy and structures, instead of continuing its mission in the world. It was therefore called to be mission minded instead of inward looking. In support of the need to renew the mission vision of the MCSA, Ross Olivier argues that:

Present structures (of the Methodist church) are based on a secular (not New Testament), institutional (Parliamentary) model rather than dynamic mission priorities. Church government must be re-invented, offering more authentic paradigms for doing mission.²⁰⁶

Finally, some rejected the programme because it threatened their positions in the church. This ranged from Whites who felt that the church was going to be controlled by Blacks; and secondly, clergy, who felt that the JNL gave too much power to the laity. These groups found sympathisers across racial lines. During the interviews they voiced their discontent with the programme and felt that it was doomed to fail, due to its determination to democratise the church and thereby give power to the laity who they considered knew nothing about the running of the church. One such respondent said:

The JNL was bound to fail; it called for ministers to surrender their administrative responsibilities to lay people, who know nothing about church administration. It also called for us to allow lay people to celebrate communion, people in rural congregations cannot agree with that. It is therefore not a surprise to me that this programme failed totally, it could not make it, and it was too radical for our people especially in the rural places. In my church it never worked, we could not even start it.²⁰⁷

2.4.2.2. Content: mixed and diverse agenda

By the time of the July 1993 Convocation some 14,000 submissions had been sent to the committee. They addressed issues that came from people at the grassroots level and were to

²⁰⁶ Olivier, *The Next Step*, 3.

²⁰⁷ Interview held with the Rev. Enoch Ndlaku on the May 25, 2004 in Pietermaritzburg. Rev Ndlaku is a Methodist minister in the Eastern Cape. It is also noteworthy that it is within the Eastern Cape region that the JNL encountered its greatest opposition.

form the agenda of the convocation. From the interviews I conducted I concluded that there were a number of opposing and diverse agendas within these submissions. My conclusions were confirmed by sentiments echoed by a White ordained minister in the MCSA. She noted that some of her clergy colleagues did not agree with the aims of the Journey, because as she remarked:

Some of my colleagues felt threatened because they felt that the laity was going to take some of the work they should be doing-so everyone needs to be a worker in God's field.²⁰⁸

Even leaders of the church at the executive level differed in their attitudes towards the JNL process. As a result people were not committed to the process in its totality. One bishop indeed refused to implement the JNL programme in his district, but nothing was done to hold him accountable to the church.²⁰⁹

The diverse fears and misconceptions that people had about the JNL could have been addressed if there had been sufficient education for the broad membership of the church. Their fears were genuine and went deep, exposing their insecurities. These could have been addressed, but the Convocation failed to deal with their fears of loss of power, job insecurity and political agendas. This required an educational approach to the programme that would deal with change management and engage people in rigorous education on why change was necessary and how as individuals and community they fitted into the whole process. Unfortunately the church did not give thought to the educational aspect of the JNL, but looked for an implementation strategy. One of the reasons given is that the church did not have enough time to devote to this process. It deemed the process urgent. It was a *kairos*, a momentous task that needed to be addressed immediately.

The church should have seen the JNL as a process or *chronos*, one that needed time and process that needed to journey with the people. The RCC, in respect to its Pastoral Plan had taken ten years of reflection and consultation. In contradistinction, the MCSA took one week! A further four years or so were taken to implement the programme. As a result the programme lacked in education, because education takes time, it is a process.²¹⁰ The mistake the church made was that it was impatient, and wanted immediate results. The lack of any intentional

²⁰⁸ C. Morgan Interview, July 20, 2004.

²⁰⁹ The Clarkbury district under the leadership of Bishop Don Dabula refused to implement the JNL, arguing that it was a White men's product and would never work in a Black Methodist church.

²¹⁰ Tye, *The Basics of Christian Education*, 123.

education worked against the programme because it was not planned in a clear curriculum outline form so that people could teach it as a full unit. Ministers were encouraged to teach it in any fashion they chose. There was much selecting, picking and judging before people could know everything. What they learned is what the minister wanted them to know.

The research revealed that people were not committed to the entire JNL programme, but only to those aspects which they liked. An example of this was the inability of interviewees to name the six calls of the journey. Most named three or four, and forgot the rest. When asked why, they argued that it was because they remembered those with which they were in agreement with.

The content of the JNL was not the same for all people. The leadership understood it differently from the ordinary members. The leadership was interested in the transformation of the church so that it could transform society. The ordinary members of the church however had other aspirations that came from their daily struggles for reconciliation, jobs, empowerment, and spirituality. They hoped that the church would bring these things into being and that they would be in charge of the church. For White members of the church, the process was seen as an opportunity to preserve their position of power both in the Church and in a democratic South Africa. The church, however, did not create enough space for these personal concerns and aspirations. Before the church could establish consensus it decided to embark on an implementation strategy and this led to the ignoring of many genuine concerns, needs and aspirations.

There were good reasons why the church was not able to do enough education work during the JNL process. One was limitation of funds. Ross Olivier shared that “the lack of funds was limiting the training of facilitators and production of material.”²¹¹

The level of commitment from people in the process soon waned, because they did not own it and it did not address their issues. For a number of people the content of the programme was irrelevant to their context and needs, thus they soon became de-motivated and apathetic. This is a lesson for any educational programme to succeed: It needs to be contextually relevant; it

²¹¹ *Dimension*, (February 1994), 8.

must be built on genuine aspirations; its content must be generated from local concerns and issues.

2.4.2.3. Method: Lack of facilitation skills

A discussion of the methods used during the implementation process of the JNL reveals there was a general lack of training in facilitation skills. This no doubt contributed to the failure of the programme.

One observation received concerning the JNL process noted that there was much enthusiasm and participation from participants when a dialogical approach was utilised. Conversely, when an anti-dialogical approach was used there was a marked lack of enthusiasm and participation. The JNL was understood as a process that needed facilitative methods if it was to encourage the participation of people and ultimately their empowerment. This process was important because it was an essential part of the people's empowerment. Agreeing with these sentiments Peter Storey could state, "It was the way things happened, rather than *what* happened, that "made the difference."²¹² Athol Jennings who was one of the facilitators would later write:

Our past experiences of these events have programmed us to expect to carry back the *content* of talks and discussions. We pass on the summaries of *what* we discussed and the recommendations we have formulated... this convocation has followed a new way.... Because of the obsession with talking and the competitive nature of our humanness we find it difficult to listen and co-operate. Yet this is precisely what the process was about: *listening* and *cooperating*.²¹³

Mvume Dandala who was also a facilitator saw this process as one that had empowered people to such an extent that the church faced the problem of what to do with such newly empowered people:

The problem before us was a consequence of the fact that the process of empowering people to raise issues, identify concerns and propose new directions was working too well. It was a problem of success rather than a problem of failure.²¹⁴

²¹² Storey, *Journey Begun*, 13. Peter Storey was one of the key players as convener of the preparations committee; his point of view was no doubt influenced by the role he played.

²¹³ Storey, *Journey Begun*, 12.

²¹⁴ Storey, *Journey Begun*, 12.

The above comments make the point that the process itself empowered people; it contributed to the successes of the Convocation. This shows us the importance of method in any educational or renewal exercise.

The lesson that can be learnt here is the importance of the method of education. The method needs to be liberating and empowering for both the learner and the educator.²¹⁵ It is important to use appropriate means and methods of education for transformation if it is to prove successful.²¹⁶ At the end of the day the means of education justifies the ends. The reason the convocation was successful is because a dialogical method that was employed.

A second observation is that although the method used was participatory it was challenged by certain power dynamics and that raised questions concerning the political nature of education. The method promoted participation of people at all levels of the MCSA. Participants were drawn from all levels of the church: societies, circuits, and synods until it reached the conference level. As people shared and participated in the discussions they experienced empowerment, grappling with issues that mattered to them, and seeking workable solutions. As one layperson put it “My group made me feel I was being listened to. This let me feel part of the church again.”²¹⁷

While facilitation was used at the Convocation level, this was often not filtered down to the local level. Nearly all churches used an anti-dialogical model, relying on preaching and newsletters, only in a few cases was a dialogical method employed.²¹⁸ When respondents were asked why a dialogical model was not used, they argued that they did not know about it. They blamed the church for not imparting this model to those expected to teach the aims of the JNL. As a result they used an anti-dialogical approach, which failed to encourage the full participation of local congregations. This shows the importance of using a facilitatory approach in education if participation of all people is to be encouraged. Facilitatory models encourage dialogue between the educator and the learners so that there can be mutual co-operation and effective education.²¹⁹

²¹⁵ Groome, *An Introduction to Christian Religious Education*, 115.

²¹⁶ Seymour, J. (ed) *An Approach to Christian Education*, (Nashville: Abingdon, 1997), 34.

²¹⁷ Storey, *Journey Begun*, 8.

²¹⁸ Interview, May 2003.

²¹⁹ Tye, *The Basics of Christian Education*, 68.

Lamenting the fact that the journey did not make a significant impact in the transformation of the church and blaming the lack of facilitation skills, David Newby could comment:

It is sad that the JNL did not make any significant impact on the renewal of the church. The reason is that the church did not train its leaders on change management. The JNL was a transformational tool, that the church chose to use, but it did not prepare those who were to use it with facilitation skills and those are vital in a programme that seeks to manage change. I do not think that the JNL achieved anything; I think it was a failure; it could have done better than it did. I have no doubt that if people had been encouraged to use the facilitation approach when implementing the Journey to the New Land it would have been successful.²²⁰

In the report of the JNL process produced by David Newby, he notes two main reasons for the failure of the JNL programme. *Firstly*, the JNL aimed at changing structures without changing the people. By this he meant that the JNL was aimed at changing the MCSA structures by making them more democratic, representative and conducive for the mission of the church. The church, however, was oblivious of the complementary need to change people as well as structures. Newby observed:

Change management requires that you change the people first then structures will be changed easily.²²¹

Secondly, Newby notes the failure was due to clergy holding onto power and control within the church, and not being used to participatory methods of leadership. As a result they used authoritarian methods of leading the JNL process in their congregations and these became obstacles to successful implementation of the programme as whole.

Some respondents relate that the programme was implemented solely through preaching and teaching which is a top-down approach. Most blame the poor training that was used, in putting the journey into action. Facilitators had little or no training at all in education, so they could not get their message across. Few respondents were positive about the methods used in the implementation of the programme. In some churches there was lack of consultation, the leadership just changed structures in the name of implementing the JNL process without consulting the congregation. As one respondent put it:

²²⁰ David Newby, formerly a Methodist minister, is now consulting for the Uniting Reformed Church of Southern Africa in their own journey of renewal, a process similar to the JNL. Interviewed June 29, 2003. Pietermaritzburg.

²²¹ Kumalo files, responses to interview June, 2004.

Essentially some structural changes were made but these were premature. A consultative process and visioning was never done at a circuit level and so Circuit structures became an exercise of moving furniture. Some societies have implemented visioning processes without grappling with the real issues, and so the process has lacked integrity. For instance, decisions about structure were taken without including the whole congregation. Structures were created as if this would suffice. JNL is not about structures; it is about democracy and trusting the process of God's Spirit amongst the people. Within the District unskilled facilitators were charged with the responsibility of managing complex processes. Because they lacked the skills and competency they were easily co-opted by individuals who had other interests.²²²

Linked to the question of an appropriate education model, the Journey is blamed for confronting people with too much information they could not grasp. As one interviewee stated:

But on the other hand, to confront people with so much information is difficult to grasp Ministers were either stuck in the past as their people-or threatened by the process, that what should have been an effective conduit became a bottle neck.²²³

One of the results of apartheid is that it excluded some people from education and provided others with inferior education.²²⁴ Together with poverty and job reservation this meant that many people were never afforded the opportunity to acquire business skills, hence appropriate expertise was limited.²²⁵ This history had a detrimental effect on the church and the JNL process. As people began to implement the journey process, new leadership responsibilities were placed on them. Some ministers who had been used to chairing meetings of semi-literate congregations now found themselves chairing meetings filled with high-powered business people used to certain ways of doing things. Minimal training was given to help people cope; the meetings and workshops became an awkward experience leaving many people frustrated. It was not long before people began longing to remain as they were.

The above shows the failure of the church to take the *method* of education seriously. It reveals that a lack of training in facilitation skills was the main problem. It also shows that although sometimes the church has brilliant programmes, because of its tendency to underestimate the importance of education, it fails to implement them.

The respondents made it clear that, although the 1993 Convocation adopted a dialogical, participatory and facilitative method, the implementation process did not. Instead, those who were tasked with implementing the journey went back to old models of education built on

²²² Kumalo files, responses to the survey, June 6, 2004.

²²³ Kumalo files, response to interview, June 20, 2004.

²²⁴ Asmal, K. (ed) *Nelson Mandela: From Freedom to the Future*, (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball Publishers, 2004), 6.

²²⁵ Gumede, W. *Thabo Mbeki and the Battle for the Soul of the ANC*, (South Africa: Zebra Press, 2005), 22.

what John Westerhoff calls the “school-instructional paradigm,”²²⁶ or in Paulo Freire’s language, “banking methods of education.”²²⁷ The reason for this retreat to traditional methods of education is that the church did not impart facilitation skills to the coordinators of the JNL. As a result they resorted to old methods that did not encourage participation and dialogue. This in turn led to the lack of the enthusiasm that had been evidenced during the convocation. Part of the educational process is the evaluation of any programme or curriculum that has been given to people. Its aim is to measure the success and failures of the programme, so that it can be improved. The MCSA did not undertake any evaluation of the JNL. Reminiscing about this Newby could say:

No one was set aside to collect stories of success and failures in order that we might learn from each other. This is why it was possible for us to continue “banging our heads against a brick wall” believing that our system was right and that our people were just sinful and resistant to change. One of the benefits of the journey process is that it has released a host of stories about success and failures in ministry. Our stories are a precious treasure...An anthology of our stories, together with comment and interpretation by gifted analysts would have helped us to avoid repeating the same mistakes over and over again. If there was flaw in the journey process it has been that we have not collected, analyzed and disseminated the stories of people on the ground.²²⁸

The conclusion that must be drawn therefore is that no matter how good the intentions and contents of a church programme are, if education for transformation is to be successful, it needs a transforming education model. To educate for change and transformation requires a conscious educational model and the use of methods that encourage the maximum participation and dialogue of the learners in the teaching and learning event.²²⁹

2.4.2.4. Conclusion: The lack of a conscious educational strategy

This study argues that the failure of the JNL process was as a result of the church’s failure to realise that the JNL needed to be accompanied by an intentional education strategy. If the church had understood the importance of education it would have been able to embark on educating people on the need for transformation. This would mean that the church would consider all the pivotal components of an educational programme namely: *goal*, *content* and *methods*. This would have enabled the church to train people and prepare them for the sweeping changes that would take place as a result. It would make sure that people owned

²²⁶ Westerhoff, *Will Our Children Have Faith?* 47.

²²⁷ Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 58.

²²⁸ Kumalo files.

²²⁹ Palmer, *The Courage to Teach*, 115.

common goals in the transformation process. It would also have used transformational methods of education, which would have positively impacted the process by enabling more people to participate in it.

The above discussion confirms what we noted in chapter one, namely that education is an indispensable necessity for the church. If the church is going to continue its ministry and mission from one generation to another, it needs to take education seriously.²³⁰ We have also concluded that strategies of the church need education to accompany them if they are to bring benefit to the church as a whole.

From the analysis of the JNL it is clear that CE was not taken seriously. Even though training on the goals and objectives of the JNL and its implementation strategies were undertaken, it did not include the impartation of teaching and facilitation skills. It also did not include the theological motivation necessary for people to understand the JNL process. As a result, the implementation was not successful because of a patent lack of knowledge and skills on the part of those entrusted with its implementation. As people lacked facilitating skills they reverted to traditional methods of education that were autocratic and anti-dialogical. This became an obstacle to the successful implementation of the programme and led ultimately to resistance and rejection of the JNL in many Methodist congregations.

Linked to this analysis is the fact that clergy and laity had diverse views on the aims of the JNL. Some members of the church felt that its specific purpose was to disadvantage them and as a result they resented it out of hand. Although a detailed study of the programme reveals that this was not so, people were not imparted with sufficient knowledge to understand it correctly. Although knowledge alone would not have changed people *per se*, at least it could have persuaded a significant number who had wilfully chosen not to accept it because of their entrenched positions. Insufficient knowledge meant that entrenched positions could not be challenged. All this resulted from the general lack of interest in education by the church.

In our analysis of the methods used to implement the JNL it was clear that some people used anti-dialogical methods, while simply implementing changes in the church without consultation or discussion around the Journey. This led to a number of problems and resentments, creating minimal impact for the JNL process in the church.

²³⁰ Brueggemann, *The Creative Word*, 3.

A discussion with the theorists of Christian education has shown the need for the church to take CE seriously. The church has been seen as an “education,” meaning that it cannot do without education.²³¹ Education theorists have shown that CE must be approached from the experience or story of the learners.²³² All Christian educators alike complain about the lack of CE in the church and argue that there is an urgent need for the church to recover the teaching office.

Christian educators have argued that the purpose of CE is “mission.” It has been suggested that the Bible itself is an educational book, “giving knowledge about God to people.”²³³ It has also been suggested that there is a relationship between scripture, the church and education. We have also been made aware that the overall aim of CE is to bear witness to the Kingdom of God. This manifests itself through the formation and nurturing of the Christian community, which then participates in the formation of the world according to the principles of the Kingdom of God.²³⁴ This leads to the transformation of a world run in opposition to the will of God, to one shaped and influenced by the presence of the Kingdom of God.

The JNL process has shown us that strategies of transformation require educational models to enable people to participate.²³⁵ For any mission strategy to succeed it has to be accompanied by an education strategy. As we have seen from the JNL process, without intentional education, the church is unable to achieve its desirable aim. The JNL is a case in point.

Conclusion

This chapter discussed the pedagogical weakness of the JNL programme. It began by critically reviewing the historical-political context of the South Africa and the church thereof. The insights and perspectives that come from the historical context provide a firm foundation for the purpose and relevance of the study. Thereafter three major aspects make up this chapter.

²³¹ Hauerwas, S. *Resident Aliens*. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1989), 114.

²³² Wimberley, *Story Telling*, 34.

²³³ Brueggemann, *The Creative Word*, 3.

²³⁴ Groome, *Sharing Faith*, 24.

²³⁵ Tye, *The Basics of Christian Education*, 112.

First, we have explored the political and ecclesial background of the JNL. This comprised an exploration of themes such as; the emergence of the MCSA, social issues in the MCSA and other programmes that the MCSA attempted previously.

Second, it discussed the JNL programme. This was done through exploring the following themes; the process leading to the convocation of 1993, the six calls of the JNL and the implementation process.

Third, the chapter closed with an evaluation of the JNL programme. Here it looked at the successes and failures of the programme. Coupled with these were the reasons given for the failure. Taking all this into consideration, three main conclusions were made:

- 1) The church must be an educating community. The moment it neglects this aspect of its life, it places itself in a situation of difficulty regarding its mission in the world.²³⁶
- 2) The church is not just for the clergy, but also for the laity. Clericalism needs to be rejected, if we are to avoid any sense of resentment by the laity.²³⁷
- 3) Christian Educators must be trained in modern methods of education, and must be helped to reject traditional approaches to education e.g. the school-instruction paradigm.²³⁸

As we have seen, there were a large number of weaknesses within the JNL process. The literature review in chapter 1 has highlighted the importance of CE in the life of the church, and provided some clues about key elements that should have been included in the process. These concerns set the agenda for anyone concerned about the transformative power of the gospel in South Africa and for the work of the Church, and the MCSA in particular.

The rest of this chapter thesis responds to the agenda, from within a Methodist and South African context, and so our first concerns are to explore the contribution of Wesley to CE (chapter 3) and then to learn from some thinkers on adult education on the Southern African context (chapter 4). In chapter five we will bring these concerns together in a coherent model of Christian Education for Social Transformation.

²³⁶ Osmer, R. *A Teachable Spirit: Recovering the Teaching Office in the Church*, (Louisville: Westminster /John Knox Press, 1990), 5.

²³⁷ Tye, *The Basics of Christian Education*, 113.

²³⁸ Westerhoff, *Will Our Children Have Faith?* 16.

CHAPTER 3

JOHN WESLEY AND ADULT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Introduction

The exploration of the work of the MCSA in South Africa and the dynamics that led to the setting up of the JNL process demonstrates it has become necessary to look at the founder of Methodism. John Wesley is known of having brought continuity between social issues, education and faith, however the MCSA seem to have lost that important tradition in its JNL programme. In this chapter we are going to look at Wesley's approach to education and social transformation with the hope of discovering insights on how the MCSA can revive its educational ministry.

This chapter consists of *three* parts. *Part one* will discuss John Wesley's background, and the emergence of Methodism. *Part Two* will examine Wesley's involvement in education. *Part Three* will highlight Wesley's legacy in the field of education by examining the merits of Wesley's educational approach, and then as well as identifying the weaknesses of his approach. This will lead us them to engage in dialogue with contemporary theorists of adult education in Southern African.

3.1. Wesley and Methodism: An overview

In this section I offer a brief examination of Wesley's family background, and his involvement in the rise of Methodism.

3.1.1. Biographical notes

John Wesley was born in England, May 24, 1703 against a "turbulent religious and political background."¹ He died in 1791.² Wesley came from a family of Dissenters and Puritans. His maternal grandfather, Dr Annessely, served as the "patriarch of dissent" and his paternal

¹ Marquardt, *John Wesley's Social Ethics*, 19.

² See Le Roux, "The Local Congregation Empowering the Urban Poor," 25.

grandfather, John Wesley, was a strong Puritan who had problems with the Established (Anglican) Church, in which he served as minister.³ His father, Samuel Wesley was also a priest in the Church of England, and his mother Susannah was a very committed Church leader and mother of seventeen children. His family was very poor; a large family and a poorly remunerated living ensured this.⁴ His mother used very strict methods in bringing up and educating her children. This would later shape Wesley's way of dealing with children and those under his leadership.

Wesley lived during eighteenth-century England. His world was not too religious, and atheism was rife. England was pocketed with small villages and farmlands. Its population was in the throes of shifting to industry and urbanisation, and thus was undergoing a process of rapid transformation from an agricultural to an industrial and urbanised community.⁵ Describing the level of atheism of England in the eighteenth-century Europe, Daniel Defoe wrote that:

No age since the founding and forming of the Christian Church was ever like, in open avowed atheism, blasphemies and heresies, to the age we now live in.⁶

The historian J. Plumb in his book *England in the Eighteen Century* analysed the social decay of England during the early years of Methodism, whereby,

There was an edge to life in the eighteenth century, which it is hard for us to recapture. In every class there is the same taut, neurotic quality- the fantastic gambling and drinking, the riots, brutality and violence, and everywhere and always a constant sense of death. At no point did the Anglican or Dissenting churches of the day touch this inner tragedy of man, which was the emotional release; it brought a sense of purpose and a field for the exercise of both will and power.⁷

³ Collins, K. *John Wesley: A Theological Journey* (Nashville: Abington, 2003), 21. Collins gives a detailed biography of John Wesley including both his paternal and maternal spiritual legacies, showing that he came from a tradition of radicals. This explains Wesley's conflict with the Established church. It also explains for his schools being built on the strong traditions of dissenting academies. See also Davies, R. *A History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain*, 281.

⁴ Collins, K. *John Wesley*, 18.

⁵ Decay and filth were some of the characteristics of these communities.

⁶ Tuttle, R. *John Wesley: His Life and Theology*, (Michigan: Francis Asbury Press, 1978), 35.

⁷ Plumb, J. *England in the Eighteenth Century*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1950), 90. I am aware that John Wesley and most of the scholars who wrote about him and his theology use sexually-exclusive language.

3.1.2. The Rise of Methodism

In this context John Wesley was the catalyst in the emergence of a Christian revival, which became known as Methodism.

When discussing the JNL programme, it is important that we have a good grasp of the historical developments of the MCSA.

The brothers, John and Charles Wesley, are inseparably responsible for the start and development of the Methodist Movement.⁸ John Wesley summed up the beginnings of Methodism as follows:

In November 1729, four young gentlemen of Oxford, Mr. John Wesley, Fellow of Lincoln College, Mr. Charles Wesley, student of Christchurch, Mr. William Morgan, commoner of Christchurch, and Mr. Kirkham, of Merton College, began spending evenings in a week together, in reading, chiefly the Greek Testament. The next year, two or three of Mr. John Wesley's pupils desired the liberty of meeting with them: and afterwards, one of Charles Wesley's pupils. It was in 1732 that Mr. Hingham, of Queens College, and Mr. Broughton of Exeter, were added to the number. To these, in April, was joined Mr. Clayton, of Bracon-Mose, with two or three of his pupils. About the same time, Mr. James Harvey was permitted to meet with them and in 1735 Mr. Whitefield.⁹

Their aims were to grow in Christian piety. Kenneth Collins in his book on the life of John Wesley states that:

From the very beginning this little religious society had focused on works of piety such as prayer, reading Scriptures, and receiving the Lord's Supper as important means of grace; but with the addition of John Clayton to the group, there was also an increasing emphasis on keeping the fasts on Wednesdays and Fridays of the ancient church.¹⁰

They started visiting prisoners, supporting their families, had communion regularly and were concerned by the unchristian lives of those at the university. The name Methodist was given to them sarcastically for their devotion to the Bible and living methodically. They were called a lot of other names such as Sacrament Arians, Biblicists, and Enthusiasts etc.¹¹ Wesley's purpose was not to start a new church *per se*, but rather build a renewal movement within the Established Church (The Church of England). It began as a prayer group that was cynically called the 'Holy Club' or Methodists or Enthusiasts by outsiders because of the way they

⁸ Attwell, A. *Wesley's World*, (Cape Town: Christian Education Department, 1995), 1.

⁹ *Minutes of the Methodist Conferences, from the first held in London by the Rev. John Wesley A.M., in the year 1774*. (London: Epworth Press, 1931).

¹⁰ Collins, K. *John Wesley: A Theological Journey*, 44.

¹¹ Townsend, W. *A New History of Methodism*. (London: Hodder Stoughton, 1909), 440. See also, Hulley, *Wesley: Plain Man for Plain People*, 6.

conducted their lives at the college and their devotion to sacraments and prayer.¹² As time went on, the group became involved in social work activities such as taking care of prisoners and sick people.¹³ It was understood as a revival movement within the Established Church, but the two could not be joined together because of class and doctrinal differences. The emphasis on Methodist belief was that “salvation is by faith alone.”¹⁴ Methodism grew rapidly in England as a result of the open-air field-preaching strategy that was begun in Bristol by George Whitefield and continued by John Wesley, his selected appointee.¹⁵

Even though Wesley had been trained, ordained and had gone to Georgia as a missionary to the American Indians he had a quest for faith. In a conversation with Peter Bohler (a friend of his brother Charles) he shared his frustration over his lack of personal faith:

Immediately it struck into my mind, leave off preaching. How can you preach to others, if you have not faith yourself? I asked Bohler, whether he thought I should leave it off or not. He answered, “By no means”...Preach faith till you have it; and then because you have it, you will preach faith.”¹⁶

Relief from this frustration came in May 24, 1738 when he had a conversion experience. In his autobiographical account, Wesley relates that in the days just prior to his “Aldersgate experience” his spirit was marked by “strange indifference, dullness, and coldness, and unusually frequent lapses into sin.”¹⁷

In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther’s preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change that God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given to me that he had saved me, that he had taken away my sins, even mine and saved me from the law of sin and death. I began to pray with all my might for those who had in a more special manner despitefully used me and persecuted me.¹⁸

Having felt this personal assurance of salvation, Wesley would always refer to this experience as the most important event in his Christian pilgrimage. Wesley’s ministry led poor people to

¹² Williams, C. *John Wesley: A Theological Journey*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2003), 42.

¹³ Theilen, U. *Gender, Race, Power and Religion: Women in the Methodist Church of Southern Africa in Post-Apartheid Society*, (Metuchen: Peter Lang, 2005), 34.

¹⁴ Balia, D. *Black Methodists and White Supremacy*, (Durban: Madiba Publishers, 1991), 12.

¹⁵ Hulley, *Wesley: Plain Man for Plain People*, 54. In looking for a suitable replacement at Bristol, George Whitefield, knowing of Wesley’s indefatigable spirit could write him, informing of the crowds that attended his open-air preaching,—estimated to be forty to fifty thousand—stating, “you must come and water what I have planted.” Dallimore, A. *George Whitefield: The Life and Times of the Great Evangelist of the 18th Century Revival*. Volume One, (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth, 1970), 271.

¹⁶ *The Works of John Wesley*, Vol. 1, 86.

¹⁷ Wesley, J. *The Journal of John Wesley* (London: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1930), 102.

¹⁸ Wesley, *The Journal of John Wesley*, 102.

recover their dignity and live sober lives as he urged them to stop drinking, laziness, drunkenness, gambling and encouraged industriousness. On the other hand, it changed the social institutions as he attacked slavery, political corruption, bribery and other social injustices in his public preaching and writings.¹⁹

3.1.3. The goals of Methodism

Wesley's goal of establishing spiritual revival is found in his doctrine of Christian Perfectionism. He explained this by saying that "Methodism was raised up by God to spread scriptural holiness throughout the land."²⁰ The doctrine of entire sanctification can be regarded as Methodism's chief contribution to Christian thought.²¹ It is also known as "Perfect Love," Scriptural Holiness, or Christian Perfection.²² Scriptural Holiness describes the life of Christian perfection and holiness as the supreme goal to which Christians aspire.²³

In Wesley's historical context, this was most important and necessary if the Church was to continue its existence and regain credibility in an atheist world that had lost interest in the message of the gospel. Eighteenth-century England was the era of atheism and immortality. Wesley argued that personal salvation was available to all people, both the rich and poor, slaves and free. To deal with the immorality and the need for righteousness, Wesley offered an ethic of Christian self-realisation. He observed:

On the other hand, to say that man can do all things through Christ strengthening him and that Christians are so far righteous as to be 'lively portraiture of Him' that they are appointed to serve.²⁴

Wesley's main goal of personal revival was the transformation of an individual's life from the rigors of atheism. He believed that the religious person was a good person because s/he relied

¹⁹ Balia, *The Black Methodists and White Supremacy*, 13. Balia notes that "Wesley worked for the reform of the prisons systems, the abolition of child labour, the establishment of schools and hospitals, and was tireless about his conviction that 'there is no holiness but social holiness.'"

²⁰ Backhouse, H. (ed) *A Plain Man's Guide To Holiness: John Wesley* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1988), 122. See also Maddox, R. (ed) *Rethinking Wesley's Theology, For Contemporary Methodism* (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1998), 67.

²¹ See Sangster, W. E. *The Path to Perfection: An Examination and Restatement of John Wesley's Doctrine of Christian Perfection.* (London: Epworth Press, 1943), 143.

²² Attwell, A. *The Rise of Methodism* (Cape Town Salty Print 1995), 2. Christian Perfection was understood as a process of growth in Christlikeness, which Christians should aspire to, and work towards until they die.

²³ Attwell, *The Rise of Methodism*, 3.

²⁴ Cannon, R. *The Theology of John Wesley with Special Reference to the Doctrine of Justification* (Nashville, Abingdon, 1984), 22.

on God's grace that restored and maintained their goodness. For Wesley, the revival of moral standards within society required the transformation of people's inner lives rather than a civil revolution. Cannon summed up Wesley's position by saying that:

The religious man, for Wesley, is always the good man: and if the Author of true religion provides the only power which can generate goodness in human life, then it is likewise true that goodness itself is that quality which defines religion, which provides it with content and with meaning and which is the highest insignia of its worth and its claim to the allegiance of all the races of mankind.²⁵

Arthur Attwell observes four elements that gave rise to the characteristic Methodist ethos. These are important, as they sum up the heart of Methodism, and provide a useful summary for us:

(1) *The dominant personality of Wesley.* Attwell makes the point that "throughout its formative period Methodism was completely dominated by the autocratic figure of the founder."²⁶ Wesley had the last word in all matters, be they spiritual or temporal. This shows the autocratic approach that Wesley used both in his leadership and education.

(2) *The enthusiasm with which the doctrine of holiness was preached and practised.* This doctrine called for people to trust in Christ alone for their salvation. The understanding was that the Holy Spirit should eventually bring the believer to entire victory over all wilful sin. This is one of the areas that brought tension between Wesley and Anglicanism. In reality Wesley's doctrine was not offering anything new to what the Church of England offered or taught except that the English establishment took its religion moderately and casually. Wesley took it very seriously and called for utter devotion to God.²⁷

(3) *Methodism as a specialist religious society: A "gathered community."* The church of the eighteenth century did not require devotion by its membership. As long as members observed three things: holy baptism; confession of the creed; admission to Communion, they were regarded as full members of the church.²⁸ The Methodist society requirements were both stricter and wider than those of the established church. They required only one thing, "an

²⁵ Cannon, R. *The Theology of John Wesley*, 231.

²⁶ Attwell, *The Rise of Methodism*, 4.

²⁷ Attwell, *The Rise of Methodism*, 5.

²⁸ Marquadt, *John Wesley's Social Ethics*, 129.

entire earnestness in the life of faith” or as Wesley puts it “a sincere desire to be saved from sin.”²⁹ The Methodist requirement for membership went further than those externals of water baptism, creedal confession and Communion, to that of a personal relationship with God. This personal relationship was taught through the doctrine of Christian Perfection.³⁰

(4) *Closely-knit fellowship groups: The Class Meetings.* The fellowship of Methodists was a major part of the experience of the life of the church. The band had authentic fellowship and mutual accountability for those who belonged to the band-meeting or class meetings, as they were popularly known.³¹

The above four points give us a glimpse into the unique ethos of Methodism that contributed to its growth and influence in eighteenth-century England. It is here that we get an indication of what Methodism can contribute to the contemporary South African church. From the above we can draw a conclusion that the three most important factors that led to the growth of the Methodist movement were:

- (1) Fellowship or community;
- (2) Mutual accountability;
- (3) Christian nurturing.

By the time of John Wesley’s death in 1789, Methodism had grown to 298 000 members, and had established a number of schools and churches.³²

²⁹ Attwell, *The Rise of Methodism*, 7.

³⁰ Backhouse, *A Plain Guide To Christian Perfection*, 122.

³¹ Attwell, *The Rise of Methodism*, 8.

³² Hulley, L. *A Plain Man for Plain People*, (Cape Town: Salty Print, 1987), 83. I have consulted a number of works on the life, work and theology of John Wesley. These include: Attwell, A. *The Growing of Saints: Determinative factors in the rise and development of Methodism*, (Pretoria: UNISA, 1989); Beck, B. *A Retrospect: The Future of the Methodist Theological Traditions* (Nashville: Abingdon Press 1984); Bonino, M. *Wesley’s Doctrine of Sanctification From A Liberationist Perspective: Sanctification and Liberation. Liberation and Theologies in the light of the Wesleyan Tradition.* (Nashville: Abingdon 1981); Carter, C. *Man, and the Crown of Divine Creation: A Contemporary Wesleyan Theology.* Volume One, (Grand Rapids: Francis Asbury Press, 1990); Curnock, N. *The Journal of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M.* Standard Edition, Eight Volumes, (Bicentennial Issue, London: Epworth, 1938); Davies, R. *Methodism*, (London: Epworth, 1976); Dickson, K. *The Methodist Witness and the African Situation: Sanctification and Liberation. Liberation Theologies in the Light of the Wesleyan Tradition.* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1981); Fowler, J. *John Wesley’s Development in Faith: The Future of the Methodist Theological Traditions.* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1985); Henderson, D. *Instructional Theology: A Contemporary Wesleyan Theology*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Francis Asbury Press, 1984); Maddox. *Responsible Grace.: John Wesley’s Practical Theology.* (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1994); Hulley, L. *Wesley: Plain Man for Plain People.* (Cape Town: Salty Print 1987); Jeffrey, M (ed) *A Burning and a Shining*

3.1.4. The Education Context

This social context of England had clear educational implications for the people, and these will be visible when we discuss Wesley's educational involvement. Wesley came from a society that drew a dichotomy between intellectualism and spirituality. In response to the question of dichotomy he proposed a middle path, which argued that the two must not be opposed to one another, but rather they should complement one another. People were obsessed with the correct method of importing knowledge and were critical of emotions, which they labelled as *enthusiasm*.³³ Wesley saw no need to separate intellectualism from spirituality, but rather saw "knowledge and vital piety going together."³⁴ This is how Wesley resolved the problem between faith and reason for himself and his followers.

The contemporary debate followed Aristotelian thinking which argued the primacy of reason over faith. In contradistinction, Platonist thinking argued for the primacy of faith, which leads to reason. Wesley believed the latter, but went on to argue that because reason is important it cannot be rejected. Both are required. For him knowledge followed faith, thus making knowledge to be religious because it comes as a result of faith. As a result he believed that one of the purposes of education was to build up the faith that one already has so that it can grow to maturity. Education for Wesley was not just for the accumulation of knowledge, but also for the building of faith.

This understanding led to direct confrontation with the Church of England. Although the Church denied (at least in its Articles on Religion) that natural theology was the only route to faith, it was nonetheless Aristotelian in its approach to God. Wesley was critical of the Church

Light: English Spirituality in the Age of Wesley. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987); Maddox, R. (ed) *Rethinking Wesley's Theology: For Contemporary Methodism*. (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1998); Marsh, C. and Craskel, J. (eds) *Methodism and The Future, Facing the Challenge* (London: Cassel, 1999); Marquardt, M. *John Wesley's Social Ethics: Praxis and Principle*. (Eugene: Wimpf and Stock Publishers 1992); Meeks, D. (ed) *The Future of the Methodist Theological Traditions*. (Nashville: Abingdon Press); Meeks, D. *Wesleyan Perspectives on the New Creation*, (Nashville: Kingswood Books); Outler, A. *John Wesley*. (New York: Oxford University Press); Rack, D. *The Reasonable Enthusiast: John Wesley and the Rise of Methodism*. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992); Rhys, E. (ed) *The Journal of John Wesley*, (London: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1960); Tuttle, R. *John Wesley: His Life and Theology*. (Michigan: Francis Asbury Press, 1978); Wesley, J. *A Plain Man's Guide To Holiness*, (London; Hodder and Stoughton, 1988); Williams, C. *John Wesley's Theology Today: A Study of the Wesleyan Tradition in the Light of Current Theological Dialogue*. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993); Willimon, W. *Why I am a United Methodist* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990).

³³ Tuttle, *John Wesley: His Life and Theology*, 33.

³⁴ Jackson, T. (ed) *The Works of John Wesley*. Third Edition, 14 volumes, (Massachusetts; Hendrickson Publishers 1984), vol. viii, 298.

especially when it came to engaging with secular society and intellectual discourse.³⁵ Wesley rejected its Aristotelian approach:

Although it is always consistent with reason, reason cannot produce faith in the scriptural sense of the word. Faith according to scripture is an “an evidence or conviction” of things not seen. It is divine evidence, bringing a full conviction of an invisible eternal world. It is true, there was a kind of shadowy persuasion of this, even amongst wiser heathens; but this was little more than faint conjecture; It was far from a firm conviction which reason, in its highest state improvement, could never produce in any child of man.³⁶

As a result, the Church of England was impoverished and impotent against the onslaught of secular philosophy. Wesley observed, “Few clergymen cared to discourse on the subject; and if they did they generally expected that a few weak reasons should eradicate at once strong and deep-rooted prejudices.”³⁷ Consequently, there was a lot of dissatisfaction and doubt concerning the truth of the Christian faith. This was exacerbated by the fact that local parishes were all too often held “in plurality” with Ministers serving churches as one of a number of jobs that they held and drew income from. The local church was therefore left in the hands of “ill-educated, underpaid and half-starved curates.”³⁸ Wesley goes on to say that the rectors purposefully kept good relationships with the wealthy merchants who enabled them to enjoy relatively comfortable lives.

This motivated Wesley to engage in an education programme that could serve the church by effectively defending the Christian faith against the radical intellectualism that was rampant at the time.³⁹

3.2. Wesley’s involvement in education

In this second section of chapter three we will focus on Wesley’s involvement in and understanding of education. The situation in England at the time was such that education was reserved for the privileged. As Marquardt states, “The most famous schools of that time, the

³⁶ Tuttle, *John Wesley: His Life and Theology*, 103.

³⁷ Jackson, *The Works of John Wesley*, vol. ii, 349.

³⁸ Jackson, *The Works of John Wesley*, vol. ii, 349. This was a passionate call to work and listen to the poor, which was not an easy thing to do in a society that devalued poor people.

³⁹ Jackson, *Journal*, vol. i, 460.

so-called public schools were in fact distinguished private schools with humanistic curricula, open only to children of well-to-do families.”⁴⁰

To understand his involvement in education adequately there is a need to begin by examining Wesley, basic theological system and anthropology, which formed the foundation of his pedagogy.

3.2.1. Wesley’s basic theological system and anthropology

As noted above Wesley must be studied in context. He preached and taught against the background of eighteenth century scientific knowledge and his personal frame of reference. Carter notes that the purpose of his education was shaped by the fact that:

He was primarily an evangelist and moral reformer, rather than a systematic theologian per se. As such, he, like all reformers, found it necessary to paint the picture of gross sinfulness in the darkest hues in order to awaken the consciences of sinful and degenerate Britons... Wesley was pragmatic, rather than systematic.⁴¹

When it came to his understanding of humankind’s physical being, early Greek pluralistic philosophers such as the Pythagoreans influenced Wesley. As a result, he struggled with the difficulty of a spiritual mind (or soul) interacting with a physical body. For him, the soul receives its inward principle of governance and motion “from God.”⁴² In understanding the source of humankind’s sinful nature he drew a sharp contrast between what he termed “liberty and the will.” He understood liberty as “a property of the soul,” whereas the human will was associated with the physical side of human beings.⁴³

Wesley argued that:

Liberty is a power of self-determination; which, although it does not extend to all our thoughts and imaginations, yet extends to our words and actions in general, and not with many exceptions.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ Marquardt, *John Wesley’s Social Ethics*, 51.

⁴¹ Carter, “*Man, the Crown of Divine Creation*”: *A Contemporary Wesleyan Theology*. Volume 1, 221. See also, Williams, “Nurturing Perceptive Faith,” 69.

⁴² Jackson, *The Works of John Wesley*, vol. vii, 226.

⁴³ Williams, “Nurturing Perceptive Faith,” 72.

⁴⁴ Jackson, *The Works of John Wesley*, vol. vii, 228.

Wesley believed that humankind's power over the mind was limited, because by nature humankind was corrupt, and unable to control the mind to do good all the time. For this, humankind needed the assistance of the grace of God in order to make moral choices. Wesley wrote:

Although I have not an absolute power over my own mind, because of the corruption of my own nature; yet, through the grace of God assisting me, I have a power to choose and do good, as well as evil. I am free to choose whom I will serve; and if I choose the better part, to continue therein even unto death.⁴⁵

Here lies the foundation of his theology of prevenient grace, which is God's grace that goes before us. Liberty was the human freedom to choose God's will. This was the foundation of the source of good or evil. Leonard Hulley takes this point further when he argues "without this liberty it would be nonsensical to speak of anyone as a moral agent."⁴⁶

Wesley's emphasis on humankind's proclivity towards sinfulness did not mean he denied humankind was created in God's image. Indeed, Wesley believed that humankind possessed God's image within them:

Man was created in the image of God: Because he is not mere matter, a clod of earth, a lump of clay, without sense or understanding; but a spirit like his Creator, a being endued not only with sense and understanding, but also with a will exerting itself in various affections. To crown all the rest, he was endued with liberty; a power of directing his own affections and actions; a capacity of determining himself, or of choosing good or evil.⁴⁷

For him being created in the image of God meant that:

Man was made in the image of God. But God is Spirit: So therefore was man. (only that spirit, being designed to dwell on earth was lodged in an earthly tabernacle)... He was, after the likeness of his creator, endued with understanding; a capacity of apprehending whatever objects was brought before it, and judging concerning them. He was endued with a will.... And lastly, with liberty, or freedom of choice; without which all the rest would have been vain, and he would have been no more capable of serving his creator than a piece of earth or marble; he would have been incapable of vice or virtue, as any part of the inanimate creation.... In these, in the power of self-motion, understanding, will and liberty, the natural image of God consisted.⁴⁸

Wesley was of the view that when created in the image of God, humankind possessed original righteousness. Collin Williams notes that Wesley:

⁴⁵ Jackson, *The Works of John Wesley*, vol. vii, 229.

⁴⁶ Hulley, *Plain Man for Plain People*, 73.

⁴⁷ Jackson, *The Works of John Wesley*, vol. vi, 215.

⁴⁸ Jackson, *The Works of John Wesley*, vol. vi, 242.

Defines original righteousness in terms of man's relation to God. The real image of God in man—that which separates him from the animal beneath—is not so much his capacities as his relation to the creator.⁴⁹

This high picture of humanity was disturbed by the fall of humanity in Adam. Explaining the impact of the fall Wesley said:

The meaning of the fall is that man has fallen away from this relationship so losing his original righteousness and totally distorting the meaning of his existence.⁵⁰

For the purpose of this study it is sufficient to note that Wesley saw that we could in no way earn or work out our own salvation. The salvation of humankind is due entirely to the gracious intervention of God in Christ. Through this intervention, the grace of God works in the hearts of humankind, calling us back to God. Salvation then, in Wesley's terms, is *prevenient grace*, followed by the desire for repentance, *or convincing grace*, whereby having accepted God's forgiveness for sin in Christ, *through grace* we work out our salvation in fear and trembling. Of this, Wesley wrote:

Afterwards we experience the proper Christian salvation whereby, through grace, we are saved by faith consisting of those two grand branches, justification and sanctification. By justification we are saved from the guilt of sin, and restored to the favour of God; by sanctification we are saved from the power and root of sin, and restored to the image of God. All experience, as well as scripture, show this to be both instantaneous and gradual.⁵¹

Despite the fact that Wesley had built his doctrine of salvation on the Protestant view of sin, he developed a deeper understanding by reviving Augustine's notion of *prevenient grace*. Wesleyan Latin-American liberation theologian Miguez Bonino echoes these sentiments by stating that:

Wesley's anthropology was worthy of human beings. Although he accepted in principle the inherited Protestant view of man, based on his perspective of original sin, his own experience and good British common sense led him to revive it by reviving the Augustinian idea of *prevenient grace*. Thus he could establish a responsible human subject, which could enter into a meaningful relationship with God.⁵²

Wesley's task as both preacher and Christian educator was to enable people to place their faith in God so that they could experience the grace of God that is the source of salvation. His

⁴⁹ Williams, *John Wesley's Theology*, 48. I have also noted that Wesley used exclusive language, although I use inclusive language and that is how I understand him.

⁵⁰ Williams, *John Wesley's Theology*, 48.

⁵¹ Jackson, *The Works of John Wesley*, vol. vi, 107.

⁵² Bonino, M. *Towards a Christian Political Ethics*, 81.

approach to education was “totally subservient to his evangelical zeal.”⁵³ This was exacerbated by the reality that every instructional system might be described as an attempt to shape its learners into the image of its own anthropology. Whatever the philosophy, it will treat the learner in a way that is consistent with its answer to that central determinative question: what is the essential nature of humankind.⁵⁴ This assumption lies behind Wesley’s thoughts on education, to which we now turn.

3.2.2. The scope of Wesley’s educational work

Wesley’s approach to education was built on a three-pronged base,

- (1) Church-based education;
- (2) School-based education; and
- (3) Civic-based Christian education.

We will examine each of these in turn.

3.2.2.1. Church-based Christian education

Perhaps the primary focus of education for Wesley was church-based education, where he pioneered the idea of the class meeting. He used this method to minister and care for the rapidly growing members of the Methodist movement. He tells the story of how the idea came about as a way of collecting money to repay debts:

Initially as Wesley met with members of the society at Bristol struggling to find ways of settling debts incurred by the buildings, a suggestion was made by Captain Foy that every member paid a penny a week until debts were settled. Another pointed out that this is going to be difficult, as people couldn’t afford this amount. Captain Foy suggested that he would take the eleven poorest and meet with them weekly and if they could give anything he would accept that, and make up any shortfalls himself. He further suggested that other class leaders (as they came to be known) do the same.⁵⁵

The main functions of class meetings were as follows:⁵⁶

⁵³ Williams, “Nurturing Perceptive Faith,” 81.

⁵⁴ Henderson, *Instructional Theology*, 837.

⁵⁵ Wesley, *Journal* vol. 1, 122.

⁵⁶ Knight, H. *The Presence of God in the Christian Life: John Wesley and the Means of Grace*. (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1992), 97.

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- (1) They met to talk and pray weekly on Thursday evenings. Wesley says this was in order to pray together, to receive the word of exhortation and to watch over one another in love so that they might help each other to work out their salvation.
 - (2) They watched over one another so that they could be accountable to one another concerning their discipleship.⁵⁷
 - (3) They were mutually responsible for one another and they helped each other; Wesley saw this as an essential characteristic of true Christian fellowship.
 - (4) They accepted Wesley as a spiritual director. Knight says, “as the movement grew in size, the role of the spiritual director was increasingly shared but it remained a constant feature of Wesley’s communities.”⁵⁸
 - (5) Most importantly it was in the class meetings that Methodists started to experience the means of grace. The classes themselves were understood as general means of grace, because they enabled people to experience and grow in their knowledge of God.
 - (6) To see each person in his/her class once a week; to inquire how their souls prosper; to advise, reprove, comfort, or exhort them:
 - (7) To receive what their souls are willing to give towards the expenses of the society; and
 - (8) To meet the assistant leader and the stewards once a week.

Wesley himself placed an educational emphasis on the reasons behind the class meetings, arguing that although there had been a lot of preaching, many people had fallen back into sin because they were not put into classes. He said that:

I was more convinced than ever that the preaching like an Apostle without joining together those that were awakened and training them up in the ways of God, is only begetting children for murder. How much preaching there has been for these twenty years all over Pembrokeshire! But no regular societies, no discipline, no order of connexion; and the consequence are that nine in ten of the once awakened are now faster asleep than ever.⁵⁹

The aims of the classes were extended from that of collecting money to encourage Christian faith and Christian living. It was here that people helped one another to be accountable to their faith in God. Henry Knight says that:

The concern for the Christian life evident in these communities (classes) as more particularly a concern for those affections, which characterise that life: a living faith, an expectant hope, a humble love for God and one’s neighbour. They were checks against both presumptive claims for

⁵⁷ Watson, *The Early Methodist Class Meetings*, (Nashville: Discipleship Resources..) 134.

⁵⁸ Knight, *The Presence of God in the Christian Life*, 99.

⁵⁹ Williams, C. *John Wesley’s Theology*, 67.

the Christian life, despair and complacency in pursuing that life. Above all, members were made continually aware that they lived their lives in the presence and at the same time in the midst of a world in which God had been forgotten.⁶⁰

As the classes continued, Wesley brought in the further dimension of sharing and knowing one another. This led to the formation of the classes in London. He said that:

They (Methodists) agreed that there could be no better way to come to a sure, thorough knowledge of each person, than to divide them into classes, like those at Bristol, under the inspection of those in who most confide. This was the origin of the classes at London, for which I can never sufficiently praise God: the unspeakable usefulness of the institution having ever since been more and more manifest.⁶¹

Classes became a very important part of the growth of Christians in their journey of faith, understood as they were with worship and communion. For Wesley, if classes were going to work, they needed to be entrenched upon the psyche of people and monitored as part of the discipline of the church He says that:

So I met the society and read the rules. I desired everyone to consider whether they were willing to walk by the rules or not in particular in meeting their class every week unless hindered by distance or sickness and being faithful at attending the church and sacraments.⁶²

Wesley went as far as to refer to class meetings as sacraments of “Christian conferencing.”⁶³ Through attending class meetings and receiving education, members of the church were taking part in one of the sacraments of the church.

Over and above the class meeting system Wesley developed the praxis-theology of salvation by grace through faith. He was convinced that in order for Christians to grow and mature in their faith, there was a need for them to receive instruction in their faith. As discussed above this education was marked by the goal of building faith aimed at leading members to *Christian Perfection*. The content of his teaching emphasised the way God had taken the initiative to save humanity and how humanity was required to accept that salvation.⁶⁴ His method of education in the church varied from sermons, class addresses, pamphlets and the provision of literature.⁶⁵

⁶⁰ Knight, *The Presence of God in the Christian Life*, 6. The class meetings were suggested by Captain Foy, a lay person. Wesley simply accepted the idea and improved on it.

⁶¹ Williams, “Nurturing Perceptive Faith,” 56.

⁶² Jackson, *Works*, vol. iii, 138-168.

⁶³ Knight, *The Presence of God in the Christian Life*, 187.

⁶⁴ Maddox, *Responsible Grace*, 117.

⁶⁵ Marquardt, M. *John Wesley's Social Ethics*, 68.

3.2.2.2. School-based education

Wesley taught his people from the beginning to be vitally interested in education. For him, education was implicit in his evangelical technique. Hence, although Britain was faced with acute illiteracy, this was not the case within Methodism because of the effect of the Sunday school movement and the force of evangelism. He wrote:

Another thing, which had given me frequent concern, was the case of abundance of children. Some, their parents could not afford to put to school; so they remained like “a wild ass’s colt.” Others were sent to school and learned at least to read and write; but they learned all kind of vice at the same time: so that it had been better for them to have been without their knowledge than to have bought it at so dear a price...At length I determined to have them taught in my own house, that they might have an opportunity of learning to read, write and cast accounts (if no more), without being under almost a necessity of learning heathenism at the same time.⁶⁶

Ordinarily, to have access to schools and good education, people needed to belong to the middle class. Marquardt gives us a glimpse of the situation when he says that:

While the nobility could maintain private teachers in their courts and castles, the masses of the children of ordinary people, unable to pay the cost of schooling, remained largely without any regular formal instruction.⁶⁷

Linked to this is the commonly held opinion among rich and poor alike was that the most important task of a poor child poor was to earn money as early as possible and not to “waste time in school.”⁶⁸ The seriousness towards education, which Wesley left as his legacy, was considered long after his death when the Methodist Conference ruled that each Sunday school should be connected with a particular chapel under the oversight of the local minister. A commission reporting to Conference on this work expressed the wish for the establishment of “church schools and education that may begin in an infant school and end in Heaven.”⁶⁹

Wesley provided school-based Christian education through the building of a number of schools such as Kingswood, Epworth and others. These were but an extension of the Sunday school system, which provided not only church education, but also covered such subjects as mathematics, reading, writing and art.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ *Journal*, 7:21.

⁶⁷ Marquardt *John Wesley’s Social Ethics*, 50.

⁶⁸ Marquardt, *John Wesley’s Social Ethics*, 50.

⁶⁹ Davies, R. *The Works of John Wesley* (Nashville: Abingdon Press 1989), 285. From infant to heaven expresses Conference’s dream for a life-long education, which is for young and old alike. It is important to note in England Sunday school does not refer to Children’s church only, but also to adults, who attend Sunday school before going to church.

⁷⁰ Collins, *John Wesley*, 123.

Most adults had missed school due to economic and social problems. Wesley's commitment to education was not limited to children, but included adults as well. He wanted to educate them for both humanitarian and evangelistic reasons. Marquardt says that:

From the outset this educational work was not limited to children. Adults, too, were the objects of Wesley's efforts to impart substantive knowledge. Wesley wished to develop them into knowledgeable Christians, who not only felt the assurance of God's love, but also grasped for themselves rationally the consequences of faith for their lives.⁷¹

He called for the education of adults who had not had the opportunity of going to school in their childhood. These were illiterate miners and simple people, most of whom were Methodists. Wesley wrote in his journal that:

I proposed, in the usual hours of the day, to teach chiefly poorer children... The older people, being not so proper to be mixed with children (for we expect scholars of all ages, some of them grey-headed) will be taught... either early in the morning, or late at night, so that their work may not be hindered.⁷²

Marquardt explains the reason for Wesley's commitment to adult education in that "he wished to develop them into knowledgeable Christians, who not only felt the assurance of God's love, but also grasped for themselves rationally the consequences of faith for their lives."⁷³ Marquardt says that this occurred in three ways:

By special school courses for adults, by availability of inexpensive and suitable literature, and by sermons and conversations in the classes and societies.⁷⁴

Wesley also established libraries in London and Bristol for his preachers. These consisted of works of divinity, philosophy, history, poetry, the classics, and Biblical Hebrew. He was one of the first editors of schoolbooks, and was the first to experiment with a parent-teacher association. Wesley wrote to one of his preachers telling him "Preach expressly on education at least once in the year when you preach on Kingswood."⁷⁵

⁷¹ Marquardt, *John Wesley's Social Ethics*, 50.

⁷² *Journal*, 2: 323; cf. *Letters* 1:340.

⁷³ Marquardt, *John Wesley's Social Ethics*, 55.

⁷⁴ Marquardt, *John Wesley's Social Ethics*, 55. It is interesting to note that in Wesley's day adult education was not yet popular, especially among the poor and oppressed. Wesley can be counted as one of the pioneers of this work.

⁷⁵ Davies, *Methodism*, 178. He commanded them to preach at Kingswood because this was one of the first Methodist schools, having boarding school for boys and girls, an orphanage and an adult education school.

Commenting on Wesley's publishing work and the impact it made to the illiterate Heitzenrater says that:

The wide variety represented in his (Wesley's) own tracts, as well as their collected libraries, is a good indication of their own concern for the mind, body and soul of the people. It was however, only one facet of an emerging organisational network that could offer spiritual nurture, physical assistance leadership training and other support services for those in connection with the Wesley's.⁷⁶

Although some churches were involved in public education they did not see their involvement as a vital part of their mission. Wesley did not only provide education by opening schools, but he went further to articulate the importance of education for evangelism.⁷⁷ He also understood formal education as important for the well-being of the poor. Formal education served the purpose of enabling people to read the scriptures. Wesley went on to urge the Methodist people to read widely if they were going to be good Christians. This emphasises the link between education and faith maturity, as Kelly shows:

He [Wesley] was convinced that no one could be a thorough Christian without wide reading, and he urged his preachers to devote to reading at least five hours a day...He also enjoined them to stuff their saddle-bags with books for the laity.⁷⁸

3.2.2.3. Civic-based Christian education

Wesley's education can also be referred to as civic-based Christian education because of its focus on civic matters. Although Wesley claimed to be non-political, he did in fact contribute to the political debates of his society. He made statements on different issues such as slavery, poverty, economics, health, education and politics. His goal was always to teach his followers the theological stance they needed to take as far as civic issues were concerned. He was of the view that the church could not stand aloof on such issues but was always required to make statements and give guidance. As a result he wrote tracts and pamphlets as a means of giving guidance and education on these issues. As far as slavery was concerned he wrote a numbers of articles in his widely read magazine known as *Thoughts on Slavery*. He entered into long debates with the church leadership, theologians and politicians, disputing the validity of slavery and describing it as a sin against humanity. His involvement culminated in a letter he wrote to William Wilberforce encouraging him to continue with his fight against slavery and

⁷⁶ Heitzenrater, R. *Wesley and the People Called Methodists*. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995), 157.

⁷⁷ Williams, "Nurturing Perceptive Faith," 112.

⁷⁸ Kelly, *A History of Methodism in Great Britain*, 17.

articulated the theological significance of his campaigning for its end and the universal emancipation of slaves.⁷⁹

The importance of the work done in education by Methodism is emphasised by the British educationalist, Thomas Kelly:

The success of Methodism was significant for adult education in many ways, and first and foremost because of the great moral reformation brought about by those who came under its influence. The change was so dramatic that it would be difficult to credit if there were not ample evidence...the process of self-improvement was greatly assisted by the structure of Methodist Societies themselves, which... became the basis of the church class meeting.... The weekly meeting for mutual examination and encouragement in the faith was a great training ground in the arts of democracy. Even the humblest and most illiterate might aspire to the position of Class Leader.⁸⁰

Their education was a continuous growth. The assiduity with which many of these leaders undertook to improve the standard of their intellectual life is one of the notable features of the revival.⁸¹

Mourning the lack of CE in contemporary Methodism Peter Storey has stated:

Most of our churches still do not teach Sunday school and where they do, the materials used are not Wesleyan, but fundamentalist or conservative evangelical...Only a small percentage of our congregations have a consistent adult teaching ministry of any kind.⁸²

From the above discussion we can conclude that Wesley's lesson for the contemporary church in South Africa is that it has to revitalise its educational ministry. The three aspects of Christian education that early Methodism embarked on in its early days are still valid and necessary for the church to consider. The church's involvement in education would enable it to nurture the faith of its members, make a contribution in addressing the backlog in providing quality public education to the poor and disadvantaged, and also to make a prophetic contribution to the public debates that are going on in our society. We will now turn to the critical examination of Wesley's approach to education, focusing on his understanding of the *goal, content and method* of education.

⁷⁹ See Outler, *John Wesley's Diary* 14.

⁸⁰ Kelly, T. *A History of Adult Education in Great Britain from the Middle Ages to the Twentieth Century*, (Liverpool: University Press, 1962).

⁸¹ Kelly, *A History of Adult Education in Great Britain*, 72.

⁸² Storey, *And Are We Yet Alive?* 1.

3.2.3. The Goal of education: Faith

Wesley's goals of education were the development of a mature faith, which in turn leads to Christian Perfection. The two are inseparable but they complement each other.

3.2.3.1. Faith

The English established church of the eighteenth century did not require devotion of its membership. As long as members observed three things: holy baptism, confession of the creed and admission to Communion they were regarded as full members of the church.⁸³ The Methodist society's requirements were both stricter and wider than those of the established church. They required, "an entire earnestness in the life of faith or as Wesley puts it a sincere "desire to be saved from sin".⁸⁴ Wesley's requirements struck at the heart of what he considered to be Christian: a personal relationship with God. This personal relationship with God was taught through the doctrine of Christian Perfection.⁸⁵ The journey to Christian Perfection started with faith. Wesley understood faith as:

Trust in Jesus, and trust in God through Jesus. Secondly, it is not a matter of intellectual agreement about the truth of a collection of facts or ideas; it is an attitude of the heart... As Paul writes if you confess that Jesus is Lord and believe that God raised him from death, you will be saved.⁸⁶

The aim of Wesley's theology of grace was the spiritual transformation of the individual, from a life of sin to a life of holiness. This was achieved by turning back to God in faith. Itumeleng Mosala summarises Methodist theology by saying that:

Methodist theology...with its doctrines of sanctification was committed to the creation of a holy people. The only requirement was turning to faith.⁸⁷

Reflecting on Wesley's purpose of theology and education Thomas Langford says:

Theology is important as it serves the interest of Christian formation. Theology is never an end, but always a means for understanding and developing transformed living. There was little speculative interest involved in Wesley's theological investigations. He consistently turned

⁸³ Marquadt, *John Wesley's Social Ethics*, 129.

⁸⁴ Attwell, *The Rise of Methodism*, 7.

⁸⁵ Backhouse, *A Plain Man's Guide To Christian Perfection*, 122.

⁸⁶ Wesley, *A Plain Man for Plain People*, 55. See also, Holway, J. *Sermons on Several Occasions by the Reverend John Wesley, M.A.* (Worcester: Moorley's, 1987), 3.

⁸⁷ Williams, "Nurturing Perceptive Faith," 44.

theological reflection to practical service. Theology, in his understanding was to be preached, sung and lived.⁸⁸

Wesley believed that salvation was by faith alone. Therefore it was important for him to develop a theology that articulated and built faith by teaching it to his people.

3.2.3.2. Sanctification

Wesley's goals of establishing spiritual revival are found in his doctrine of sanctification. He observed, "Methodism was raised up by God to spread scriptural holiness throughout the land."⁸⁹ The doctrine of Scriptural Holiness can be regarded as Methodism's contribution to Christian thought. It is also known as 'Perfect Love or Christian Perfection'.⁹⁰ Scriptural Holiness describes the source of the idea: the Bible; Perfect love describes the expression of the idea: daily relationship; Christian Perfection is the goal to which we aspire.⁹¹

The doctrine of sanctification provides the foundational and theological motivations for Wesley's commitment to education. He educated so that people could reach the stage of entire sanctification, sometimes referred to as Holiness or Christian Perfection. This doctrine underlies the philosophic basis of Wesleyan education. Explaining Christian perfection Wesley said:

Entire sanctification is that work of the Holy Spirit, subsequent to regeneration, by which the fully consecrated believer, upon exercise of faith in the atoning blood of Christ, is cleansed in that moment from all inward sin and empowered for service. The resulting relationships are attested by the witness of the Holy Spirit and are maintained by obedience and faith. Entire sanctification enables the believer to love God with all his heart, soul, strength, and mind and his neighbour as him and prepares him for greater growth in grace.⁹²

The Christian who is perfect is free from sin, not according to the objective standards of justice, but according to the measure of personal relationships with Christ.⁹³

He went on further to say that:

⁸⁸ Langford, T. *Practical Divinity: Theology in the Wesleyan Tradition* (Nashville; Abingdon 1983), 14.

⁸⁹ Backhouse, H. (ed) *A Plain Man's Guide to Holiness: John Wesley*, 122. See also, Maddox, R. (ed) *Rethinking Wesley's Theology, For Contemporary Methodism*, (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1998), 67.

⁹⁰ Attwell, A. *The Rise of Methodism*, 2. Christian Perfection was understood as a process of growth towards Christ-likeness, which Christians are called to aspire to and work towards until they die.

⁹¹ Attwell, *The Rise of Methodism*, 3.

⁹² Church, H. *Theological Education That Makes A Difference* (Blantyre: Christian Literature Association, 2002), 30.

⁹³ Williams, *John Wesley's Theology*, 178.

This doctrine encourages seeking of a “high Christian life” of “victory over” or cleansing from intentional or voluntary sin. This is usually achieved in a “second blessing” or a crisis experience subsequent to conversion. In the more classically Wesleyan expression of the doctrine, this crisis is embedded in a gradual process of growth.⁹⁴

Wesley also understood perfection or sanctification as the image of God in people. He said that:

The opinion concerning it at present, I espouse merely because I think it is scriptural. If therefore I am convinced it is not scriptural, I shall willingly relinquish it. I have no particular fondness for the term.... But I still think that perfection is another term for holiness or the image of God in man.⁹⁵

For Wesley’s world and Church this was very important and necessary if the Church was to continue its existence and regain credibility in an atheist world that had lost interest in the message of the gospel. Eighteenth-century England was an age of atheism and immorality. With regard to the need for salvation, Wesley argued that it was available for all people, the rich, poor and slaves. To deal with immorality and the need for righteousness, Wesley offered an ethic of Christian self-realisation. He observed:

On the other hand, to say that man can do all things through Christ strengthening him and that Christians are so far righteous as to be ‘lively portraitures of Him’ that they are appointed to serve.⁹⁶

This doctrine called for people to trust only in Christ for their salvation. His understanding was that the Holy Spirit should eventually bring the believer to entire victory over all wilful sin. What was new with Wesley’s doctrine was that unlike the English established church, that took its religion moderately and casually, Wesley’s doctrine of Christian perfection took religion very seriously and called for utter devotion to God.⁹⁷

The goal of salvation according to Wesley was the believer’s growth in faith. For him, growth was the inner work of sanctification by the Spirit, thereby deepening the believer’s understanding and relationship with God. For Wesley, sanctification signified the process of being made holy or growing in Christ-likeness. Hence, Wesley understood growing in faith as being an important step towards holiness. But this did not come through faith, which was the

⁹⁴ Dayton, D, “The Holiness Churches: A Significant Ethical Tradition” *The Christian Century*, 262.

⁹⁵ In Jackson, T. *The Divine Purification and Perfection of Man: A Contemporary Wesleyan Theology*. Volume 10, (Grand Rapids: Francis and Taylor, 1984), 552.

⁹⁶ Cannon, *The Theology of John Wesley*, 22.

⁹⁷ Attwell, *The Rise of Methodism*, 5.

prerequisite for knowledge. It was followed by reason or knowledge, thus enabling the process of growth. Wesley held that faith and knowledge are in tension with one another.

3.2.4. The Content of Education

Having discussed the *goals* of Wesley's education, we now turn to discuss the *content* of Wesley's educational approach.

3.2.4.1. Personal holiness

Wesley recognised humanity's dependence on God's grace for salvation but he did not simply assume passivity on the part of the recipients of this offer. He recognised God's involvement in assisting humanity respond to God's grace. Humanity has to participate in its own salvation by responding and accepting the offer of salvation that God has given. Wesley argued that even the inclination and ability to respond to God's saving action depended on God's renewing work of salvation; human participation in this process is not automatic.⁹⁸

For Wesley, humanity's fall in Adam had enormous implications for education in the church. God took the initiative to reconcile with humanity and thus humanity is required to respond to God's offer of salvation. For humanity to respond they need to be taught. One of the ways that humanity can respond to God's grace is if humanity is helped to know God and what God has done to reconcile humanity to God. In this doctrinal schema there is an implicit requirement for a model of education that will enable this to take place. The solution comes with the awareness that through prevenient grace God calls humanity to Gods'-self and thus humanity is enabled and inspired to respond to God's grace for salvation. This salvation is possible because God has taken the initiative to save humanity from the sin of self-centredness that came as a result of the fall. Hence, through prevenient grace, God has provided a way of salvation that is accessible to all humanity, not just an elected few (as in Calvinist thought) because all are in need of salvation.

Wesley's doctrine of perfection can be understood as his special contribution to education. In this doctrine Wesley places strong emphasis on "nurtured growing." This is not to assume that Wesley believed people to be perfect, in fact he believed the very opposite' Indeed, in a

⁹⁸ Maddox, *Responsible Grace*, 83.

sermon preached on “Christian Perfection” Wesley argues that Christians are not perfect by providing five cogent reasons to the contrary:

- (1) Christians do not possess perfect knowledge, for “they are not as perfect in this life as to be free from ignorance.”⁹⁹ The overall effects of the fall have left their imprint and knowledge of God is thereby imperfect.
- (2) Christians are not free from mistakes, whether practical nor moral. This grows out of the imperfection of knowledge. Christians can be sure of the issues of salvation, “but in things unessential to salvation they do err, and that frequently.”¹⁰⁰
- (3) Christians are not perfect in their interpretation of scripture. This is an ongoing search and requires the application of reason. They should not expect any “living man to be infallible.”¹⁰¹
- (4) Christians are not “free from infirmities” both bodily and in terms of their understanding; they may lack creativity and imagination.
- (5) Christians are not free from the influence of temptation. Holiness is not to be seen as judgementalism, but rather should cause us to be humble in our reproach to others.

The five points give some forceful reasons why it is important for the church to nurture people towards Christian Perfection through intentional education and guidance about holiness for they will not get to that state otherwise. These five points are important for education because they are components of knowledge. Knowledge comes about as a result of education, about what it means to live a holy life, and this enables people to know what they believe and how to live out that belief.

Williams notes that:

The Wesleyan interpretation is that the quest for human life is to allow God’s grace to shape us into the kind of mature human beings God intended us to be rather than seeking any goal espoused by the world; Christians seek to be filled with the love of God and neighbour.¹⁰²

Wesley saw salvation as a gradual process that takes place as people grow in their knowledge of God and how to live a holy life. It does not occur once and for all, but people need to gain

⁹⁹ Williams, “Nurturing Perceptive Faith,” 153.

¹⁰⁰ *Works*, vol. v. iii.

¹⁰¹ *Works*, vol. v; iv.

¹⁰² Williams, *Nurturing Perceptive Faith*, 215.54

more knowledge and experience to get to a point of sanctification. Scott Jones agrees with this when he says that:

The second point is that Christian life is “a process” so sanctification or perfection does not happen all at once, rather people are changed gradually from natural persons unaware of their sins, to convicted sinners, to justified believers and entirely sanctified persons.¹⁰³

This is true even in today’s world. God continues to challenge people to grow in holiness; they do not have to stand still after repentance, for there is always a need to continue growing. Williams says that

The larger psychological and sociological contexts in which modern persons now live provide even more scope for the mature person to continue growing, even after entire sanctification is received.¹⁰⁴

This then means that salvation is an ongoing process, which never ends until a person dies. Wesley believed in the unending process of perfection whereby God enables humanity to journey through all their lives. In respect to education this reminds us that education is a continuous process that leads to maturity. From a Wesleyan perspective education never stops but continues, as people seek to grow in knowledge and holiness.

3.2.4.2. Social holiness

Wesley’s teachings influenced social holiness especially with regard to his work among the poor and slaves. Although the primary task of his work was not social, but individual holiness, it nevertheless radically impacted the social situation of eighteenth-century England.

Wesley had a clear commitment to minister to the poor and marginalised people of his day. He even urged his preachers to focus on the poor: “I want you to converse (talk) more abundantly with the poorest people, who if they have not taste, have souls which you may forward in their way to heaven.”¹⁰⁵ He went on to instruct his preachers “do not confine your conversation to genteel and elegant people.”¹⁰⁶ His sympathy towards the poor was because

¹⁰³ Jones, S. *United Methodist Doctrine*, 215.

¹⁰⁴ Williams, *Nurturing Perceptive Faith*, 235.

¹⁰⁵ Tuttle, *John Wesley: His Life and Theology*, 25.

¹⁰⁶ *Works*, vol. xii. 301. This was a passionate call to work with and listen to the poor which was not an easy thing to do in a society that devalued poor people.

Wesley himself came from a poor background and was rescued by the scholarship that he received to get good education at Oxford. He recalls this by saying:

I entered Christ Church, the most distinguished college in Oxford, on June 24, 1720. I was determined to learn as well as I could but I was extremely poor.¹⁰⁷

Another social involvement that he engaged was with his ministry to slaves. Wesley lived in an age when the practice of slavery was at its highest level and was accepted both in society and in the church. He worked and lived in Bristol, which was the third largest city in England and the centre of the slave trade, whereby English goods were exchanged for slaves in West Africa.¹⁰⁸

The established church in which Wesley grew up and ministered “tolerated slavery and the slave trade without any objection.”¹⁰⁹ In fact, the church supported slavery on biblical grounds by disputing Paul’s call to Christian slave owners to emancipate their Christianised slaves. An example of this is an article that was written by Edward Gibson, Bishop of London, who was responsible for the British colonies. He could write:

The freedom which Christianity gives is a freedom from the bondage of sin and Satan...but as to their outward condition, whatever their being baptised and becoming Christians makes no manner of change in it.¹¹⁰

Marquardt observes that:

In this statement the bishop uses Paul’s theological rationale to deliberately refrain from fundamentally altering the contemporary social structure. However, as it’s typical of the church’s line of thinking, the argument is detached from its original apocalyptic context and employed to generally justify the status quo.¹¹¹

Wesley strongly criticised American slavery for denying slaves their basic human rights. He denounced this system in a letter written to William Wilberforce encouraging him to continue his fight against slavery:

¹⁰⁷ Tuttle, *John Wesley: His Life and Theology*, 57.

¹⁰⁸ Tuttle, *John Wesley: His Life and Theology*, 28.

¹⁰⁹ Marquardt, *John Wesley’s Social Ethics*, 68.

¹¹⁰ Marquardt, *John Wesley’s Social Ethics*, 69.

¹¹¹ Marquardt, *John Wesley’s Social Ethics*, 69.

Go on, in the name of God and in the power of his might, till even American slavery (the vilest that ever saw the sun) shall vanish away before it.¹¹²

In his teaching he argued that natural law meant every human being was created in the image of God, and as such possessed *de facto*, basic human rights. He elaborated on this by saying:

Neither captivity nor contract can, by the plain law of nature and reason, reduce the parent state of slavery; much less can they reduce the offspring. It clearly follows that all slavery is irreconcilable to justice as to mercy.¹¹³

His commitment to slaves was another element that informed and shaped his praxis-theology. This extends to his understanding of education, its *goals* and *content*. It remained as something he preached and wrote about, yet he did not conscientise slaves to work towards their own emancipation. Nevertheless, Wesley wrote that he had conversed about God individually with Black slaves, whom he had met in South Carolina; further, he planned preaching services especially with the Black slaves in mind and instructed them in the foundations of the Christian faith. He collected funds for a school securing, literature and established contact with ministers active among the Black slaves. Finally, Wesley saw to it that educational work could be conducted among the slaves.¹¹⁴

Wesley opposed slavery by “preaching openly against it in mixed congregations of both the oppressors and the oppressed,”¹¹⁵ calling for salvation for all. He set Fridays apart as a day of fasting and prayer for the poor, outcasts (including slaves) so that they could be freed, although he was pessimistic “considering the wealth and power of their oppressors.”¹¹⁶ His opposition to slavery came to a climax with the magazine “Thoughts upon Slavery” published in 1774. He dismissed slavery as something evil that should not be practiced. He called it “the vilest under the sun.”¹¹⁷ He also preached against drunkenness and other social sins that were prevalent during his time. He encouraged the upholding of family values in marriage. He also addressed unemployment by encouraging people to start self-help programmes.¹¹⁸

¹¹² Collins, *John Wesley*, 209.

¹¹³ Collins, *John Wesley*, 211.

¹¹⁴ Jackson, *Journal of John Wesley*, vol. i, 350f. 352f. 413. 415; See also, Marquardt *John Wesley's Social Ethics*, 71.

¹¹⁵ Tuttle, *John Wesley: His Life and Theology*, 27.

¹¹⁶ Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley*, vol. iv, 408.

¹¹⁷ Rack, *The Reasonable Enthusiast*, 362.

¹¹⁸ Marquardt, *John Wesley's Social Ethics*, 71.

Marquardt argues that throughout his ministry, Wesley strove for the transformation of society. He says that:

With astounding freedom from prejudice, people of another race, to whom most of the English populace denied equal worth and equal rights, thus were received as sisters and brothers in the faith, persons to whom the gospel of God's love applied without restriction. Here a certain parallelism to the Pauline communities is unmistakable.¹¹⁹

The point that has been made in this section is that the content of Wesley's education supported the development of social holiness, or as he preferred to call it "the spreading of social holiness."¹²⁰ It rose from his conviction that there was a connection between individual holiness and social holiness. For Wesley, the responsibility of the church was to preach the gospel with the hope that it would foster holiness, which for him was a life focused in God.

To conclude this section it is important to note that these two points were not held in isolation from each other but they were in constant tension. Wesley believed that there was a need for individual holiness, for transformed individuals would bring about social holiness. The challenge Wesley faced was that these individuals were members of society at large and therefore affected by the unholy practices of that society. We shall return to this question of structural transformation below.

3.2.5. The Method of Education

Wesley's methods of education and training are important for the study of CE for they disclose his theological and anthropological assumptions. Wesley's approach to educational methods was influenced by a number of factors, not the least being his mother's methods of educating children of which Wesley obviously had intimate knowledge and held through to his later years.¹²¹ In 1732, Wesley asked his mother to put into writing her method of educating and training children. Wesley remembers "we were taught to fear the rod, when we turned a year old to cry softly, not to call for anything, but were only allowed to whisper to

¹¹⁹ Marquardt, *John Wesley's Social Ethics*, 73. The puzzling thing, after all the good work done by Wesley among slaves, and laying the foundation of freedom amongst Methodists, the Methodist church in America is one of the most racially divided churches. During my visit to the US, a Black minister of Brentwood United Methodist Church told me that the membership of the Methodist church was mainly White, there being very few Blacks because of perceived discrimination.

¹²⁰ Hulley, *Wesley: Plain Man for Plain People*, 51.

¹²¹ Marquardt, *John Wesley's Social Ethics*, 251.

the servants when we wanted anything.”¹²² He continues “we were not permitted to be greedy over food. We were totally forbidden to eat anything between meals.”¹²³ Wesley’s mother understood self-will as the root of all sin and misery, it being her duty as a parent to conquer it.¹²⁴ Consequently, a person’s self-will needed to be broken if they were to do God’s will and grow in faith. This attitude shows itself in the educational methods he used.

3.2.5.1. Participatory

One of the most important contributions made by Wesley in the field of education was the creation of the small group method, known in Methodist circles as the Class System.¹²⁵

It was in the class meetings that discussions on people’s lives and their growth in faith were held and understood. They provided a platform for mutual learning and growth. By this I mean an opportunity for the leader (Wesley in this case) and the ordinary people, (the class members) to share knowledge with one another. It was therefore in these groups that Wesley gained new ideas and issues that needed the attention of the church.

The involvement, however, of lay people in the life of the societies through the class meetings was limited. They simply provided the labour, visiting one another, sharing their experiences and the other activities of Methodism. The making and shaping of Methodist doctrine, polity and practice was the sole domain of Wesley. Thus the participation of ordinary class members was limited. It could be described as “soft participation”.

3.2.5.2. Leader-driven

Throughout its formative period, “Methodism was completely dominated by the autocratic figure of its founder.”¹²⁶ Wesley had the last word in all matters, be they spiritual or temporal. His autocratic approach did not end in the polity of the movement but extended to the educational activities of the church. He even went to the extent of rejecting Jean Jacques Rousseau’s classic romantic approach to education, which emphasised a child-centered

¹²² Marquardt, *John Wesley’s Social Ethics*, 64.

¹²³ Tuttle, *John Wesley: His Life and Theology*, 43.

¹²⁴ Tuttle, *John Wesley: His Life and Theology*, 43.

¹²⁵ Watson, *The Methodist Class Meetings*, 93.

approach. Wesley dismissed this as “frivolous nonsense.”¹²⁷ He did not believe that a child possessed anything good, but rather saw them as sinful beings whose goodness depended solely on God’s grace.¹²⁸ Wesley outlined his educational philosophy by saying that:

Scripture, reason, and experience jointly testify that, in as much as the corruption of nature is earlier than our instructions can be, we should take all pains and care to counteract this corruption as early as possible.¹²⁹

Although the above description is based on Wesley’s approach to the education of children, he also used the same approach towards adult education. Education was aimed at changing human nature from sinfulness to holiness. As Marquardt notes:

It appears consistent and suited that all available means be used to bring them into an unresisting submission to an authority commissioned by God to keep them as much possible under constant supervision. It is not surprising that the educational measures included if necessary, severe punishment.¹³⁰

Having explored Wesley’s method of education, we can conclude that it was leader driven. The teaching and learning situation almost totally depended on the leader, with very minimal participation from the learners or members of the class meeting.

The leader-driven and participation approaches were not held in isolation to one another, but were in constant tension. This can be verified by Wesley’s notion of the class meeting system, thereby allowing ordinary people to participate in the life of the church and their own growth as Christians. At the same time class members were allowed to use their gifts and ministries in the church, thus making a contribution to the life of the movement. This however was done under the strict supervision of Wesley. He alone was responsible for the doctrine, polity, practice and control of the movement. We are therefore correct in understanding this as ‘soft participation’.

3.3. Wesley: The Educational Legacy

Wesley’s approach to education was in some ways ambiguous. It offered both advantages and disadvantages to the community. In this section we will explore his legacy, and conclude that

¹²⁶ Attwell, *The Rise of Methodism*, 4.

¹²⁷ Marquardt, *John Wesley’s Social Ethics*, 28.

¹²⁸ Rack, *The Reasonable Enthusiast*, 353-4. For the romantic approach to education see, Wilhoit, J. *Christian Religious Education*. (Michigan: Baker Books, 1991),76.

¹²⁹ Jackson, *The Works of John Wesley*, vol. ii, 476.

¹³⁰ Marquardt *John Wesley’s Social Ethics*,61.

if the approach of Wesley is to make any contribution in the South African context there is a strong need for it to be brought into dialogue with contemporary educators. This then sets the agenda for chapter four.

3.3.1. The Weaknesses of Wesley's Pedagogy

I begin by examining the weaknesses of Wesley's approach to education.

3.3.1.1. Theological anthropology

His mother's teaching and the pietism he had learned from the Moravians strongly influenced his anthropology, which formed the basis of his educational approach. He argued that the fall had destroyed the "moral image of God" in humankind and that this directly affected our relationship with God. He therefore understood education to contribute to the restoration of sinful humanity, whose relationship with God was broken by sin. Wesley observed:

The bias of nature is set the wrong way: Education is designed to set it right. This, by the grace of God, is to turn the bias from self-will, pride, anger, revenge, and love of the world, to resignation, lowliness, meekness and the love of God. And from the moment we perceive any of those evil roots springing up; it is our business immediately to check their growth, if we cannot yet root them out. In so far as this can be done by mildness, softness, and gentleness, certainly it should be done. But sometimes these methods will not avail, and then we must correct any kind of severity.¹³¹

This assumption became the pedagogical foundation that shaped both his theology and method of education. As a result of these convictions Wesley was critically hard towards his learners. He placed narrow and especially harsh rules upon both the family and the schools. For him the goal and starting point for all education was the correction of corrupted human nature. He said that "the child's will is a will that is basically of the devil, must be broken and obedience imposed upon it."¹³²

Wesley's approach to education was very naive and would not be welcomed in today's world. Marquardt says that:

¹³¹ Jackson, *The Works of John Wesley*, 461 vol 1.

¹³² Marquardt *John Wesley's Social Ethics*, 61.

Wesley has no place in the history of modern pedagogy; his methods of education resemble those in the medieval families and schools, rather than those prevalent in modern times.¹³³

Due to Wesley's narrow understanding of the sinful human psyche, his approach to education was one of invading and conquering the human mind and will. For him there was nothing positive about the human will which you could be used in the process of nurturing people towards perfection. It is therefore not surprising that he used deductive approaches to education, which were very prescriptive in nature.

The problem with his theological anthropology was that it made him blind to seeing the potential of humankind. He failed to recognise the image of God that was inherent in people, and as a result emphasised their inabilities and shortcomings.

3.3.1.2. Content: Social holiness not social transformation

A second problem with Wesley's approach to education was his belief that there was a need to save individuals who would only then be able to influence or transform society. He was oblivious to the fact that individuals are historical beings who are shaped by the context and social structure of the society in which they live.

Although Wesley's education was helpful in the intellectual and spiritual growth of the poor and slaves, it did not encourage them to fight for their emancipation. This was due in the main to Wesley being politically conservative. Although his view of an educational imperative did not exclude basic core teaching subjects such as science, history and mathematics, it excluded political theory.¹³⁴ Wesley did not see the connection between education and politics. Modern creative educators, however, are aware of the inextricable connection between the two. In chapter one we noted how Christian education theorists view education as being political and having a corollary affect upon society.¹³⁵

¹³³ Marquardt *John Wesley's Social Ethics*, 60.

¹³⁴ Williams, "Nurturing Perceptive Faith," 84

¹³⁵ See Freire, *The Politics of Education*, 5, Biko, S. "Black Consciousness and the Quest for a True Humanity." in Motlhabi, M. *Essays on Black Theology*, Johannesburg: University Christian Movement, 1972), 22; Banana, C. *Towards a Socialist Ethos*. (Zimbabwe: College Press, 1987) 28. This is the contribution that the educators offer to Wesley's approach which lacked it. Chapters 1-2 of this study have made us aware that for any church to make any impact in our society, it needs to respond to the socio-political dynamics that happen in South Africa.

Wesley did not see himself as a political person. He had been taught to respect authority and believed that all authority came from God. He had been educated to embrace an apolitical attitude. He said that:

I am a High Churchman, the son of a High Churchman, bred up from my childhood in the highest notions of passive obedience and non-resistance.¹³⁶

Peter Grassow takes the point further by blaming his mother's piety and the pietistic influence of the Moravians for Wesley's lack of revolutionary attitude, and his adoption of an apolitical stance:

His mother's puritan piety, which combined an aggressive religion of the will with a disciplined High Church devotionism, also influenced him away from the exclusive reliance upon the powers of reason that under girded Enlightenment thinking. His questioning of revolutionary ideology accentuated in the late 1730s when Wesley came under the influence of the English Moravians, with their strong criticism of all human initiative in salvation (or politics).¹³⁷

Wesley could refer to himself as apolitical by saying 'I am no politician; politics lie quite out of my province.'¹³⁸ He went on to claim ignorance as far as political issues are concerned:

I grant every cobbler, tinker, porter and hackney-coachman can do this; but I am not so deep learned: while they are sure of everything, I am in a manner sure of nothing.¹³⁹

His ignorance on political issues made his approach to education lack the element of conscientisation needed by oppressed people to empower them to work towards their own liberation. He was very loyal to the establishment and did not criticise it. He even praised the liberty that it gave to some sections of society of which he was part by saying:

We have certainly enjoyed more complete liberty since the Revolution, than England ever enjoyed before; and all impartial foreigners have admired the English Government, unequal as the representation is.¹⁴⁰

He failed to see that only those who enjoyed liberty would believe in the system. Those who lacked political rights were hardly likely to extol the liberty of the English system. He also had a literalist approach to Romans 13 and as a result linked his doctrine of Christian perfection to that of obedience to the King. He wrote that:

¹³⁶ Letter to Lord North (15 June 1775) in Maddox, R. *Rethinking Contemporary Methodism*, 185.

¹³⁷ In Maddox, *Rethinking Wesley's Theology for Contemporary Methodism*, 185.

¹³⁸ Collins, *John Wesley*, 207.

¹³⁹ Collins, *John Wesley*, 207.

¹⁴⁰ *Works*, Vol. ii. 108. See also, Maddox, R. *Rethinking Wesley's Theology*, 185.

Those who are the avowed enemies of Christian Perfection, are in general the warmest enemies of King George and of all that is in authority under him.¹⁴¹

He also attested that:

There is the closest connection...between my religious and my political conduct...the selfsame authority enjoining me to fear God and to honour the king.¹⁴²

Wesley's view, therefore, could not promote social transformation but rather maintained the political status quo. With a few exceptions, (such as slavery, poverty and illiteracy), even his theology of Christian perfection was built on the acceptance of the social system. Hence, when it came to the monarchy and the political system he did not question it or make any attempt to transform it. Although he saw slavery as a social evil, he did not see poverty and illiteracy in the same way. Rather, he viewed them as personal failings that holiness would be able to defeat.

Nevertheless, Wesley laid a firm foundation for his followers not to have any place for private solitary religion. He argued that true religion had social implications for the Christian. His understanding however of these implications was not related to how the individual will actively change society, but rather to the level of holiness that would be visible to others within society. He said:

Solitary religion is not found [in the gospel]. Holy solitaries are a phrase no more consistent with the gospel than 'holy adulterers'. The gospel of Christ knows of no religion but social, but social holiness. 'Faith working by love' is the length and breath depth and height of Christian perfection...and in truth, whomsoever loveth his brethren, not in word only but as Christ has loved him, cannot but be zealous of good works'. He feels in his soul a burning, restless of desire of spending and being spent for them...And at all opportunities he is like his Master, 'going about doing well.'¹⁴³

His emphasis on social holiness must not be confused with his purpose for ministry and education. Education and ministry was not for social holiness but for *Christian Perfection*.¹⁴⁴ To say that Wesley taught and worked for social transformation is a misunderstanding of his thinking work. Education was for the higher ideal of Christian Perfection; social transformation was viewed merely as a side effect. Wesley merely focused education on the

¹⁴¹ Collins, *John Wesley*, 207.

¹⁴² Collins, *John Wesley*, 207.

¹⁴³ Collins, *John Wesley*, 208.

¹⁴⁴ Professor Neville Richardson, recently retired from the School of Religion and Theology at the University of KwaZulu-Natal also hold the same sentiments. For him Wesley did not teach and minister for social transformation, but for Christian perfection. Richardson shared this with me in a personal conversation in Pietermaritzburg, July 2003.

need to change people, with the hope that they in turn would change society. This is where he differs with the modern educators for social transformation who argue that people need to be educated for transformation, but that this transformation goes hand in hand with the transformation of society.

Wesley's belief in the need for the transformation of the individual's life, before that individual can change society is a major weakness in his work and education ethic. He is not aware that personal and social transformation complements one another. He saw the transformation of the individual as the first priority, to be followed by social transformation. His understanding of the importance of the transformation of the individual for social transformation is well captured by the document "Salvation, Justice and the Theological Task of the Seventh Oxford Institute on Wesleyan Theology," when it states:

The organic relation in Wesleyan thought of the individual and social dimensions of the Christian faith offer an important insight...Methodism was born at a time when the individual was emerging as significant...This inevitably affected the ways in which conversion and faith were understood...We must deepen our appreciation of Wesley's understanding of the relation between the individual and social...Genuine salvation for him involves participation in the love of God for the individual, consciously experienced in justification. But this love experienced personally has as its goal nothing less than the creation of a just human creation. Wesley testified that as we love God and are loved by God, our hearts are inevitably opened up to all persons.¹⁴⁵

In his praxis-theology he expresses the fundamental belief that changing society is not possible unless it is preceded by personal transformation. Wesley argued that "without a changed individual society cannot be changed and that an accountable discipleship produces people who under grace can change society."¹⁴⁶

Wesley's understanding of social transformation was limited to the moral standards of people. Looking back at the work of Methodism and commending its view on social transformation Wesley could write:

The drunkard commenced sober and moderate; the whoremonger abstained from adultery and fornication; the unjust from oppression and wrong. He that had been accustomed to curse and swears for many years now swears no more. The sluggard began to work with his hands, that he might eat his own bread. The miser learned to deal his bread to the hungry and cover the naked

¹⁴⁵ Meeks, D. (ed) *The Future of Methodist Theological Traditions*. (Nashville; Abingdon 1985), 88.

¹⁴⁶ Wesley in his preface to *Hymns and Sacred Poems*.

¹⁴⁶ Williams, "Nurturing Perceptive Faith," 45. The temptation is to emphasise the one over the other, but it is not a matter of either or, but on both the individual and the community.

with a garment. Indeed, the whole form of their life was changed: They had “left off doing evil, and learned to do well.”¹⁴⁷

His naivety about political issues was passed on to his pedagogic practices. Thus his education practice did not encourage criticality and active strategies against oppression but rather, gradual growth within the system without challenging it. He believed that people could reach perfection without having to address the socio-political system, although by their piety they would be able to impact society and bring social holiness. Wesley did not recognise the fact that human beings are historical and their lives are shaped and influenced by their socio-political realities. He was also conservative by nature so that it would have been difficult for his education to be emancipatory. Gramsci states “the starting point of critical elaboration is to be in positioning oneself as a product of the historical processes.”¹⁴⁸ On the same note Giroux has argued that an examination of the historical and social constructs of our lives “helps to re-territorialise and rewrite the complex narratives that make up lives.”¹⁴⁹ Vishnathie Sewpal adds that:

Critical and emancipatory education raises important issues regarding how we construct our identities within particular historical, cultural and social relations, with the intention of contributing to a more democratic life.¹⁵⁰

Educators for social transformation point out that a critical understanding of the historical realities that impact society is necessary if education is to be liberatory. By emphasising the importance of these historical realities, the inherent weaknesses of Wesley’s approach to education for liberation are revealed.

In examining Wesley from the experience of social and political oppression, Itumeleng Mosala notes that Wesley’s approach was politically conservative. In disregarding Wesley’s theoretical and ideological framework on the basis that it was dominated by the paternalism of the ruling class in relation to the dominated classes, Mosala in his rather rigorous analysis of Wesley goes on to say:

¹⁴⁷ Jackson, *The Works of John Wesley*, vol. vii, 337.

¹⁴⁸ Gramsci, A. *Selections from Political Writings 1910-1920*. (London: Lawrence and Wishart 1977), 12

¹⁴⁹ Giroux, H. *Theory and Resistance in Education: Pedagogy of the Opposition*. London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1983), 159.

¹⁵⁰ Sewpaul, Reframing Epistemologies and Practice through International Exchanges. Unpublished Paper delivered at the University of Durban Westville, Durban, South Africa (2004), 13.

The fact that Wesley emphasised social holiness: and criticised; solitary religion did not alter the individualistic conservative politics behind his theology. A good example of how the politics of his ideological background constrained the possibilities of his theology can be found in his doctrine of humanity. For Wesley, the human person is an isolated individual capable of being reduced to its soul. The sanctification of this individual consisted of; spiritual awakenings, and movements, and actions and states of a religious and moral type'. Something of the bourgeois ideology of social upward mobility is implicit in this concept of salvation. It is not impossible in our context for some to ask: So what is wrong with that? Therefore let us answer that what is wrong with this is that it takes the status quo as given, rather than as the result of historical movements of the dispossession and displacement of the now poor members of society. For this reason the ideological baggage of Wesley's theology presents enormous difficulties for the economically and socially deprived people of South Africa.¹⁵¹

Mosala is rightfully critical of Wesley's conservative approach, which ultimately leads to a paternalist and autocratic approach to education. A direct result of Wesley's conservative, establishment bias was his "no politics rule" for Methodism. Wesley failed to recognise that people were affected by the socio-economic and political conditions of their context. In order for salvation to be brought to them, their historical conditions and social context needed first to be addressed otherwise their salvation would be without any positive result. If this was not adequately addressed, then the poor get blamed for their situation.¹⁵² Wesley's conservative attitude was most visible when he blamed the Americans in their fight for independence from British rule. His naivety as far as the impact of socio-political issues shaping people's religious experiences is stark. As a result, Wesley's education protocol, which ignored the socio-political realities of people's existence, but concentrated on their spiritual lives, is typical of many present-day evangelical/fundamentalist approaches.¹⁵³

Changing people spiritually, without changing their context does not solve the problem. People are dependent on society but society is also dependent on individuals and this dialectic needs to come to the fore. As a result, individual holiness must go hand-in-hand with social transformation if it is to have any profound impact. Wesley was not aware of the relationship between individual and structural sin. Because of his tendency to use anthropological, instead of sociological terms in understanding people Wesley missed the point that individual holiness was connected to the social environment. For him personal holiness would be

¹⁵¹ Mosala, I. J. 1989. "Wesley Read from the Experience of Social and Political Deprivation in South Africa." *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 68, 86-91.

¹⁵² See also Claerbuault, D. *Urban Ministry*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B Eerdmans, 1983), 163.

¹⁵³ Marquardt, *John Wesley's Social Ethics*, 62. Marquardt concludes his evaluation of Wesley's approach to education by noting that Wesley's impact on the field of education was thus ambivalent: on the one hand, a stimulus to the entire English educational system and the education of an increasing number of children and adults from the underprivileged classes; on the other, an introduction or maintenance of harsh narrow principles in education. This ambivalence can ultimately be traced to the religious basis to which Wesley felt unconditionally obligated.

sufficient to lead towards social holiness in spite of the social challenges that individuals and communities face.

3.3.1.3. Authoritarian or leader-driven methods

Wesley was authoritative in his approach to education. He imposed strict rules at his Kingswood School, which later became the standard for all other Methodist institutions.¹⁵⁴ For Wesley, the prime responsibility of the educator was to conquer the will of the learner by domesticating their minds through education.

In order to form the minds of children, the first thing to be done is to conquer their will, and bring them to an obedient temper. Whenever a child is corrected, it must be conquered...A self-will is the root of all sin and misery...religion is nothing else than doing the will of God, and not our own: That the one grand impediment to our temporal and eternal happiness being this self-will no indulgences of it can be trivial, no denial unprofitable....¹⁵⁵

It is the mind you have to draw out and mould, and fit it for its duties to itself, to mankind and to its Maker. From the Child first and to teach him how to think.¹⁵⁶

His treatment of children extended also to the way in which he acted towards adult members of the movement. Williams notes that:

There is some evidence of this in Wesley's attitude towards the education of the poor and in his determination to maintain, what his detractors called an autocratic stranglehold over democratic potential in Methodism.¹⁵⁷

These same sentiments are supported by Rack who says:

Notoriously, he (Wesley) was an autocratic leader and several of those who fell out with him thought he was ambitious for power and would bear no superior. Nor did he believe that power, either secular or ecclesiastical, came from below.¹⁵⁸

The authoritative approach also manifests itself in the way he built and organised the Methodist movement; there being no evidence of Wesley consulting others or following a process of dialogue. Thompson notes that

It was Wesley who was the superlative energetic and skilful organizer, administrator and lawgiver. He succeeded in combining in exactly the same proportions democracy and discipline, doctrine and nationalism. His achievement lay...in the organisation of self-sustaining mining, weaving and labouring communities; the democratic participation of whole members in the church was both enlisted and strictly superintended and disciplined.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁴ Marquardt, *John Wesley's Social Ethics*, 70.

¹⁵⁵ Jackson, *The Works of John Wesley*, vol. i, 387.

¹⁵⁶ Davies, *Methodism*, 180.

¹⁵⁷ Williams, "Nurturing Perceptive Faith," 43.

¹⁵⁸ Rack, *The Reasonable Enthusiast*, 247.

¹⁵⁹ In Williams, "Nurturing Perceptive Faith," 44.

Even in matters of dispute with his helpers, Wesley was uncompromisingly autocratic. He was also very strict with those in his company who dared to question his teaching and beliefs. An example of this is seen in the way he dealt with George Whitefield whom he ostracised for being a Calvinist (although later they were reconciled). Another strong disagreement occurred between Wesley, Thomas Maxfield and George Bell. Maxfield questioned Wesley's teaching on justification and Bell leaned towards antinomianism. Wesley personally expelled them both from the movement.¹⁶⁰ He used what Paulo Freire calls an "anti-dialogical approach."¹⁶¹ Those who challenged or questioned his decision were either sidelined or expelled from the movement.¹⁶² Our context in South Africa requires the adoption of democratic, participatory and dialogical methods of education in the church, because there is a direct relationship between the goal of education and the methods of education. This we could call 'strong participation'. Wesley's model encouraged soft participation, which we must reject. Our context requires maximum and rigorous participation from everyone if they are going to institute change.

Having reviewed Wesley's three weaknesses as far as his educational approach is concerned; the question must be asked why we do not abandon his approach completely. Instead of abandoning Wesley we need to interpret him against our context, and use those positive elements of his educational methodology that are relevant for our situation as models of education in a transforming society. Despite the number of weaknesses that we have seen in his model, we have also come across a number of useful insights that form his legacy that we can use for our context as long as we interpret them so that they become relevant to it.

3.3.2. The strengths of Wesley's Pedagogy

Having discussed the weaknesses of Wesley's legacy we are also aware of the contribution that he makes in the area of education that is appropriate for our contemporary society. We will now turn to examine those matters.

¹⁶⁰ Collins, *John Wesley: A Theological Journey*. (Nashville: Abingdon Press 2003), 203.

¹⁶¹ Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 64.

¹⁶² Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 52.

3.3.2.1. Revitalisation of the educational ministry of the church

The eighteenth century English church lost its educational ministry especially with reference to the education of the poor and marginalised. One of the most important contributions that Wesley made was to revitalise the educational ministry of the church, by placing education front and centre on the agenda of the church just as the Reformers had done a few centuries before.¹⁶³ He identified what I have called the three aspects of Christian education: *church-based*, *school-based* and *civic-based* Christian education.

3.3.2.2. Education is for all people

The contribution that Wesley has made to the contemporary church is his emphasis on the universal nature of salvation. He summarised the inclusive nature of the gospel by saying that salvation was for *all* people.¹⁶⁴ This conviction enabled him to believe in the equality of all. The content of Wesley's theology of grace was a simple one, "salvation is for all people and it is a free gift from God."¹⁶⁵ This message was well summarised by Wesley in four short statements developed for the people called Methodists:

- (1) All people need to be saved;
- (2) All people can be saved;
- (3) All people can know that they are saved;
- (4) All people can be saved to the uttermost.

This conviction was expressed in the class meeting system, which accommodated all people. Wesley challenged social issues in order that people were able to see that all were equal before God. The wealthy that held the land, power and education were no better than the poor, underpowered and uneducated.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶³ Osimer, *A Teachable Spirit: Recovering the Teaching Office of the Church* (Louisville : Westminster/John Knox Press, 1990), 138.

¹⁶⁴ Maddox, *Responsible Grace*, 75

¹⁶⁵ Attwell, A. *The Growing of the Saints* (Pretoria: UNISA 1992) p.120

¹⁶⁶ Williams, "Nurturing Perceptive Faith," 14.

He approached the gospel from a theology of grace, emphasising that God's grace is available to all. He said that

Allowing that all the souls of men are dead in sin by nature, this excuses none, seeing there is no man that is in a state of mere nature; there is no man, unless he has quenched the Spirit that is wholly void of the grace of God. No man living is entirely destitute of what is vulgarly called natural conscience. But this is not natural: it is more properly termed, prevenient grace...Every one, unless he is one of the small numbers whose conscience seared as with a hot iron, feels more or less uneasy when he acts contrary to the light of his own conscience. So that man sins because he has not grace, but because he does not observe the grace which he hath.¹⁶⁷

Marquardt adds that:

In evangelistic and pastoral praxis Wesley did not distinguish between White and Black, free and slaves; people from both groups were won to the Christian faith by his preaching. Slaves were baptised and admitted to the Lord's Supper together with White persons. Similarly in America Methodist preachers and slave owners gathered slaves into "classes" and accepted them into their congregations.¹⁶⁸ Through his ministry to the slaves Wesley challenged the status quo of slavery and racial prejudice. So that it actually became possible for him to baptize a slave owner together with his/her slaves as he did in 1760.

From a Wesleyan theological perspective this means that education both in church and society must be inclusive of all people. No one must be left out because of his/her social status, class, colour, or creed. Education must involve all people and afford everyone an opportunity to participate in it. For Wesley, this culminated in his understanding that all people deserved good education, hence when Wesley took over Kingswood school from George Whitefield it had functioned as a school for sons of colliers and miners only. Wesley changed it by including their daughters, extended it as boarding school for orphans, girl children and adults.¹⁶⁹ Education in the Methodist movement and schools thus crossed lines of gender, class and age. As Marquardt puts it, "the explanation for this success springs primarily from Wesley's view, shaped by basic ethical and theological convictions that all persons are of equal worth."¹⁷⁰

Wesley's lesson for the South African church is that its involvement in education must be informed by its theological assumptions or beliefs. The church needs to offer education to all without allowing social boundaries to dictate the terms of such involvement. At the moment the Methodist church has difficulty to offer its educational ministry on the basis of parity.

¹⁶⁷ Jackson, *The Works of John Wesley*, vol. vi, 512.

¹⁶⁸ Marquardt, *John Wesley's Social Ethics*, 71; See also, *Journal*, vol. iv, 149f., 292; vol. vii, 144.

¹⁶⁹ Marquardt, *John Wesley's Social Ethics*, 67

¹⁷⁰ Marquardt, *John Wesley's Social Ethics*, 50. In fact this inclusively is also found in his theology of "universal salvation."

Access to the ministry of the church is dictated by the financial strength of each congregation. This has meant that those congregations which that have financial resources (mostly White and middle class) have access to Christian education, while poor congregations and under-resourced congregations (mostly Black), have no access to the educational ministry of the church. Even in those congregations where the church offers education, the tendency has been to concentrate on children's Christian education. Christian adult education has been neglected, with the exception of Bible studies, most of which are run by leaders who are not trained in the methods and science of Biblical interpretation.

Wesley's egalitarian approach to education is a challenge to the MCSA to find ways of providing the educational ministry of the church across barrier lines such as gender, class and age. He teaches the contemporary church that education in the church must be based on the theology of the universality of salvation.

3.3.2.3. Class meetings: Formation of teaching and learning community

The rapid growth of Methodism must be credited to Wesley's genius of developing the class meeting system that provided an open space for Wesley's theology to be broadly taught and practiced in every Methodist society.¹⁷¹ Class meetings became the foundation of Methodism.¹⁷² In many ways the social problems and challenges that faced the poor and marginalised became the backbone of Methodist class meetings. The impact of the class meeting system as a space for nurturing spiritual growth, fellowship and the confession of sins to one another was enormous. The greeting of Methodists: "How is it with your soul? What good have you done? What sin do you want to confess" offered members of the class meeting an opportunity to share their feelings and experiences be they good or bad.¹⁷³ The classes became a mechanism where people learned to take responsibility for one another. They were taught about the Christian faith, reprovved and even reminded of the need to care and share their possessions with the poor. Most members of the classes were poor; hence it is

¹⁷¹ Society refers to the "local church." They were called societies because they were never intended to be parishes independent of the Church of England. They should rather be viewed as a renewal movement within the Established church. Indeed, they were very close to the life of the community and society at large.

¹⁷² These came as a result of a few incidents where converts were found drunk, others having beaten their wives. The idea developed from merely collecting money to a way of checking on how each was progressing spiritually. Today educationists encourage the use of small groups as an effective way of teaching and learning. Unfortunately in this respect, the MCSA has lost its vigour. The societies have become a system of bureaucracy and administration rather than a place of learning and Christian nurturing as they were originally intended.

¹⁷³ Watson, *The Early Methodist Class Meetings*, 93.

not surprising that Wesley encouraged them to give to others who were as poor as they. The class leader would visit members, collecting what people wanted to give to the movement.¹⁷⁴

Wesley wrote that:

It is the business of a leader to see each person in his class, once a week at the least in order to inquire how their souls prosper: to advise, reprove, comfort, or exhort, as occasion may require: receive what they are willing to give towards the relief of the poor.¹⁷⁵

Kwesi Dickson, an African theologian echoes his agreement to the successes of Methodism's approach when it comes to empowering and releasing the local people for leadership through the class system. Reflecting on the outworking of Methodism and its structures Dickson could write:

The Methodist system of organisation is such that it encourages people to think and act for themselves...the class meetings, which encouraged free discussion and a sense of social responsibility by engendering the feeling that each member had a responsibility for the others...and in general the organisation of the Methodist societies which placed the minister in the position of the first amongst equals and hence fostered a spirit of give and take, with its consequent mutual strengthening—these are the characteristics of mutual Methodism as it has been experienced in Africa.¹⁷⁶

In support of these sentiments Williams observes that for Christian education, transformation should be done in community, instead of isolation.¹⁷⁷ He says that:

This must be a praxis that seeks, with the support of the faith community, to recognise, encourage and support the recovery of the image of God in all people. The recognition of the image of God in each person, calls any educative approach to be aware that when we approach any person we are treading on "holy ground": it demands that we offer people infinite respect and challenge the community of faith to strive towards the recovery of Gods' image, in response to this initiative of grace.¹⁷⁸

From the above discussion we can draw the conclusion that the class meeting system as a teaching and learning method made a tremendous contribution to the growth of the Methodist movement. As a small group method it enabled the Methodist movement to be a place of Christian teaching, community of fellowship, mutual accountability and Christian nurturing. The church from a Wesleyan perspective is intrinsically an educational space. The lessons for

¹⁷⁴ Watson, *The Early Methodist Class Meetings*, 98.

¹⁷⁵ *Letters*, vol. ii, 297; "A Plain Account of the People Called Methodists." 1748.

¹⁷⁶ Dickson, K. *The Methodist Witness and the African Situation: Sanctification and Liberation. Liberation Theologies in the Light of the Wesleyan Tradition*. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1991), 199.

¹⁷⁷ In Williams, "Nurturing Perceptive Faith," 87.

¹⁷⁸ Williams, "Nurturing Perceptive Faith," 90.

the MCSA and the contemporary church, is that church must become a teaching and learning community, if Christian formation and nurturing is to successfully take place.

3.2.2.4. Combination of intellect and emotion

Wesley's ability to combine intellect and emotion motivated him to engage in education. As a result, many people were empowered to effectively defend their faith against the radical intellectualism that was rampant at the time. Again, this gives insight to the reasons for Wesley's commitment to education was holistic. It aimed to bridge the gap between faith and reason. The MCSA find itself in a post-Christian era dominated by the triumph of science, secularisation and atheism. Most of its challenges are based on the modernist idea that emphasises freethinking, intellectualism and the undermining of feelings, emotions and personal experiences as value judgments. Wesley's ability to combine intellectualism and human emotions is important to the contemporary church where, if education for transformation is to be successful, must be brought together in a complimentary relationship, instead of opposing one another. By so doing, Christians are given the means to be holistic in their Christian experience, by using their minds as well as their hearts in living out their faith. It also brings awareness to the importance of education for the church, so that Christians can have the ability to think through their faith. The MCSA sense of spirituality is strong; however it is still lacking in the *intellectual* aspect of its faith, because of the lack of an educational emphasis in its ministry. Wesley's lesson to the MCSA seeks to address this shortfall.

3.2.2.5. Learning through action

Wesley combined religious observance, academic and pastoral life as a whole. While at Oxford University he tutored New Testament. His tutorials included the devotional life and pastoral practice such as the visiting of the sick, distributing food to the poor and conducting prayer in prisons.¹⁷⁹ All these things were done in the context of full-time university student studies. In Wesley's understanding, education needed to be both religious and practical, rooted in the local context by responding to the needs of the Community. He had both humanitarian and religious motives, seeing the need to bring compatibility between education,

¹⁷⁹ Tuttle, *John Wesley: His Life and Theology*, 116.

religion and humanisation. As a result, Methodism made its most important impact towards the under classes, the poor and the marginalised. These are the people that were transformed by Wesley's ministry and education. Earnest Troeltsch has correctly described the result of Wesley's effectiveness:

To begin with, Methodism gained its victories in the middle and lower classes, among the miners and in the industrial towns. To the middle and lower classes it brought a new sense of the sacredness of personality; it appealed to the popular imagination, and awakened a devotion, which found expression in a most self-sacrificing charity...It had brought the impulse of personality and individuality into the life of the masses, which were being brutalised by the industrial system, and with its charity it helped them in their distress.¹⁸⁰

This approach to Christian perfection calls for Christian education to "use Wesley's theology of grace as a theological paradigm, and to insist on a Christian praxis that must not be tempted to remain a mere intellectual reflection."¹⁸¹ By the end of the century, Methodism that began as a group of despised poor people, become a force to be reckoned with in society. Free Methodist historian, Leslie R. Marston, says:

Methodists at first were a despised people. For the most part, they were poor. They worshipped in private houses, in barns, in groves, and after a time in their log meetinghouses, and in the country schools that were being built on the edge of the wilderness... Within a few decades, the status of Methodism changed. Churches were built, schools, colleges and seminaries were established; literary and publication agencies were expanded. Through frugality and industry Methodists prospered; many of them achieved middle-class comfort; a few amassed sizable fortunes. Methodism came also to wield a considerable measure of political influence...Methodism was now a force to be reckoned with on the American scene.¹⁸²

Although it was unfortunate that Methodists became the new elite, the point made here is that Wesley's education did lead to tangible results because it was a practical religion. It enabled people to learn to work and think for themselves and improve their situation as they practiced their faith. The Methodist theology was praxis-orientated. Thomas Langford in his book *Practical Divinity* takes this debate further when he characterises Methodist theology by saying:

It was through these classes that Wesley's theology was learned and practiced by members of the church. As a result this theology did not remain elitist, but rather a theology that belonged to the body of Christ, a people's theology that *was lived in the community*, as people faced their daily struggles and cared for one another.¹⁸³

Wesley believed that Christianity was essentially a social religion. He was of the understanding that those who have become Christians would change attitude and their actions

¹⁸⁰ Marquardt, *John Wesley's Social Ethics*, 41.

¹⁸¹ Williams, "Nurturing Perceptive Faith," 126.

¹⁸² Marston, L. *From Age to Age: A Living Witness*. (Winona Lake: Light and Life Press, 1960), 57.

¹⁸³ Langford, T. *Practical Divinity: Theology in the Wesleyan Tradition*. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1980), 26.

as they lived out their faith. As a result, he expected Methodists to do good in any circumstance they found themselves in:

Everything, which we give, or speak, or do...whereby another man may receive an advantage, either in his body or soul. The assisting the stronger, the visiting those that are sick or in prison, the comforting the afflicted, the instructing the ignorant, the reproving the wicked, the exhorting and encouraging the well-doer, and if that be any other work of mercy, it is equally included in this direction.¹⁸⁴

Recalling how Wesley's theology was put into practice within the class meetings, Peter Storey says:

The classes led to theology being lived and made practical by people instead of it remaining in the head or heart, but rather people put it into practice as they supported one another, sharing the struggles, sharing possessions and learning together to nurture their faith.¹⁸⁵

Thomas Kelly underlines the impact of the praxis-orientated theology of Methodism by analyzing the educational impact it made to his community. He said:

As a dogma, Methodism appears as a pitiless ideology of work. In practice, this dogma was in varying degrees softened, humanised, or modified, by the needs, values and patterns of social relationship of community within which it was placed. The church, after all, was more than a building and more than the sermons and instructions of its minister. It was embodied also in the class meetings: the sewing groups: the money raising activities: local preachers who tramped several miles after work to attend small functions at outlying hamlets.... The picture of the fellowship of the Methodists, which is commonly presented, is too euphoric; it has been emphasised to the point where all other characteristics of the church have been forgotten. But it remains both true and important that Methodism, with its open chapel doors, did offer to the uprooted and abandoned people of the Industrial Revolution some kind of community to replace the older community-patterns, which were being displaced. As an established (although undemocratic) church, there was a sense in which the working people could make it their own; and the more closely knit the community in which Methodism took root (the mining, fishing or weaving village) the more this was so.¹⁸⁶

In Wesley's theology we are presented with a praxis theology that has to be lived and practiced in real life situations. It calls for the participation of the larger body of Christ in that exercise. This offers an important lesson to the MCSA, which in most cases does not emphasise the importance of putting its faith into practice with the intention to learn. Even those churches that implement various projects and programmes do not usually see the need to use them as opportunities for action and reflection. They are not regarded as resources for the church members to learn from putting their faith into practice. Wesley brings our awareness to the fact that through putting our theology or faith into practice, we grow into mature Christians.

¹⁸⁴ Knight, *The Presence of God in the Christian Life*, 111.

¹⁸⁵ Storey, *And Are We Yet Alive?* 14.

¹⁸⁶ Kelly, *A History of Adult Education in Great Britain from the Middle Ages to the Twelfth Century*, Liverpool: University Press, 1962), 72.

Conclusion

In this chapter we show how John Wesley and the Methodist Revival in the Eighteenth century attempted to do CE, which sought to bring transformation in England. We started with a brief biographical overview and then looked at the rise of Methodism and its goals. We moved further to look at the educational context of Wesley's age, and his involvement therein. We explored Wesley's basic theological system and anthropology. Then we looked at the goal, content and method of education in the understanding of Wesley. We concluded the chapter by looking at Wesley's educational legacy.

In building a case for Transformation-centered CE in the MCSA what emerges clearly is that in Methodism "the point of departure" for CE was sin. Wesley believed that it was necessary and fundamental for CE to lead to repentance and salvation. There are three key elements in Wesley's education. The first one is the goal of education that is to "save souls" or to evangelise. This comes from his understanding that human beings are sinful therefore they need to be taught about the gospel so that they turn to God who is longing to save them from their sins. Second, his content was that salvation was by faith alone. The gospel was meant to transform people and through living their transformed lives they would be able to transform society. However Wesley was oblivious of the fact that people were affected and shaped by the dynamics of society, so to transform them one needed to transform society too. His understanding of social holiness was simply that Christianity was not private matter, but rather a public one, where people live it out in society. However he did not mean that Christians had to take deliberate actions of transforming society.

In terms of method, we saw that his tendency to view children and adults as empty vessels when it came to the knowledge of God made him adopt conservative methods of education. For Wesley anyone who was not a Christian was a sinner and so needed to be pushed to accepting the gospel. He did not think that they had anything to contribute to their own learning about God. As a result he adopted an anti-dialogical approach to CE. It is important to note that Wesley has weakness as well as strengths in his approach to education. We need to learn from both if we are to build a contemporary model of CE. My main task in this study is to build a model of CE for social transformation from a Wesleyan perspective. To do this I will draw from the insights that have been raised from the discussion on Wesley together with those that will emanate in the next chapter from the dialogue with the Creative Educators for

social transformation. A combination of these two approaches will enable us to draw from emerging insights that will assist us in forming a foundation for a model for TCE which will be developed in chapter five.

CHAPTER 4

SOUTHERN AFRICAN EDUCATORS FOR SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

Introduction

My research into the Journey to the New Land (JNL) programme of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa (1990-1997) has made us aware of the lack of an intentional educational model for the MCSA and by extension the South African church.¹ As with most church programmes the JNL had good aims and had the potential of facilitating social and ecclesial transformation in South Africa. However it was crippled by the fact that an intentional and rigorous educational programme did not accompany it. Even the educational activities that did accompany it did not use appropriate models of education. As we have argued the cause of this problem was the lack of emphasis on the importance of CE for the life of the church.

Thus far this study has dialogued with North American theologians, the Brazilian Paulo Freire (chapters 1 and 2), and with John Wesley. However because CE needs to be contextual, our discussion now needs to be rooted in the Southern African context. We need therefore to draw from African education theorists who can offer us resources appropriate to the Southern African context. We need, as it were, to drink from our own wells.² Our dialogue partners in this chapter will be four Southern African educationists, namely, Canaan Banana, Steve Biko, Bongani Mazibuko and Anne Hope. I call them *Creative Educators for Social Transformation* because of the work and impact they have made in society through their understanding of education. We will explore the insights they offer in our search for a relevant model of CE. Finally, we will bring them into dialogue with Wesley's key insights on education.

4.1. Four Southern African educators for social transformation

There are three main reasons why I have chosen to dialogue with these educators:

¹ A section of this chapter was published as "Sources for an Authentic Christian Education for Social Transformation," *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 122 (2005) 59-75.

² See Gutierrez, G. *We Drink From Our Own Wells: The Spiritual Journey of a People*. London: SCM Press, 1984.

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- (1) They have made an important and recognised impact in education for social transformation in Southern Africa;
 - (2) They are all committed Christians whose educational approaches are built on the basic assumptions of liberation theology;³
 - (3) They are all African, three of whom are South African

This chapter begins by giving a brief profile of each educator. This will be followed by a discussion of their key ideas and contribution in education in relation to the key themes that were raised in chapters 1 and 2. The conclusion will provide a summary of their contribution to education for social transformation.

4.1.1. Canaan Banana

Canaan Banana was born at Essex vale district (now known as Esigodini), East of Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, March 5, 1936 of Methodist parents.⁴ He came from the Ndebele tribal group. His father was a herbalist and a preacher at the local Methodist Church. His primary education was at Mzinyati Mission and he then proceeded to Tegwani High School for his secondary education. From 1960 to 1962 he attended Epworth Theological College in Harare, where he studied for the ministry. He was ordained as a United Methodist Church (UMC) minister in 1966. Between 1973-75 he furthered his theological education at the Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington DC, USA. He graduated with a Master of Theological Studies (MTS). In 1979 he completed a Bachelor of Arts (Hons) with the University of South Africa. The following occupations decorate his carrier path: an ordained Minister, a theologian, a schoolteacher, President of Zimbabwe and a lecturer in political theology at the University of Zimbabwe.

Canaan Banana is an important dialogue for this study for a number of reasons. Firstly, he was a Methodist from childhood until his death; the Methodist Church also educated him and the Methodist Church employed him as an educator and minister. Clearly Methodist education played a big role in shaping him and he did the same to shape Methodist education.

³ Banana and Mazibuko were ordained ministers of the Methodist Church. Biko was a committed member of the CPSA church and Hope a devout member of the RCC.

⁴ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/zimbabwe/article/0,2763,1083020,00.html>

Secondly, Banana was involved in education in all the crucial periods of Zimbabwe's development; during colonisation and the struggle for independence. After independence he was appointed president, and later when Zimbabwe began to show signs of economic collapse, he was earmarked to mediate between Mugabe and Morgan Tshangirai.⁵

Thirdly, Banana remained a liberation theologian all his life, being convinced of the need for the empowerment of the poor, even after he entered the prestigious and elitist life as both President and University Professor in Zimbabwe. He continued to do theology from the underside until this was interrupted by his trial on the charge of homosexual rape and his subsequent death. Even in the books he wrote later in life, he still regarded himself as "doing theology from his experience as an activist and educator in the liberation struggle."⁶ He understood that the church had an important role to play in the struggle against colonisation, and in reconstruction and development after independence, and finally its prophetic role against the backdrop of the political misuse of power.

His interests were in social and political education. He also saw the need for the Church to be involved in education, but one that leads to liberation and self-reliance.⁷ He argued for a socialist element in government that would promote community values rather than individualism. For him education must be *for* and *with* production.⁸ Banana was a liberation theologian of note; his theology came to its climax when he wrote the book entitled *The Gospel According to the Ghetto*.⁹ He also wrote a version of the Lord's Prayer, which included the lines "Teach us to demand our share of the gold/and forgive us our docility."¹⁰ He irritated the Christian community by suggesting that the Bible needed to be re-written from an African perspective, so that it could contribute to the decolonisation of people. In time Banana became estranged from Mugabe, and was tried and convicted on charges of homosexual rape, which many observers saw as a political strategy to marginalise him? Sadly he died in 2003, his contribution and insights being lost to the church of Zimbabwe and Southern Africa.

⁵ www.guardian.co.uk/zimbabwe/article/0,2763,1083020,00.html

This was interrupted by his trial on the charge of homosexuality and his subsequent death.

⁶ Banana, C. *Come and Share* (Zimbabwe: Mambo Press 1991), x.

⁷ Banana, *Towards a Socialist Ethos*, (Harare: College Press, 1987), 42.

⁸ Banana, *Towards a Socialist Ethos*, 31.

⁹ Banana, C. *The Gospel According to the Ghetto*. (Zimbabwe: Mambo Press, 1980). 12.

¹⁰ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/Zimbabwe/article/>

4.1.2. Bongani Mazibuko

Bongani Alison Mazibuko¹¹ was born of Methodist parents at Driefontein, Ladysmith, KwaZulu-Natal, and December 14, 1932.¹² His primary education was at Watershed Primary School, Ladysmith. He completed his secondary education at Eshowe. He then went to the Indaleni Institution to be trained as teacher.¹³ It was while there that he received a call to the ordained ministry, and went to Fort Hare University for his theological training. In 1968 he was ordained in the MCSA after which he served a number of Churches until 1974.

Mazibuko's tremendous contribution was in the area of mission and education. He completed his PhD dissertation titled "Mission as Education/Education as Mission," at the University of Birmingham in the United Kingdom. He was the first Black South African to be awarded a Ph.D in Missiology and the first Black person to be appointed as a lecturer at the Faculty of Theology at the University of South Africa. He later taught at the universities of Zululand and Durban-Westville. Whilst he was at Westville he started the Umlazi Project, aimed at teaching theology to Ministers of African Initiated Churches (AICs). He encouraged a number of ministers from deprived backgrounds to study at the University of Durban-Westville.¹⁴ As a result a number of Black Ministers in the MCSA and other denominations (especially the African Independent Churches) received their first degrees through his encouragement and tutelage.¹⁵

Mazibuko was a strong disciple of Paulo Freire's education for liberation and he attributed this to his experience of growing up under apartheid.¹⁶ He also saw the need for building partnerships across racial lines so that people could learn from one another and begin to do away with racism. He was a critic of Missionary education, but argued that the Church had an

¹¹ Prof. Bongani Mazibuko was a Methodist minister and taught at the Faculty of Theology, University of Durban-Westville. He was the first Black person to receive a Ph.D in Missiology and the first Black person to join the faculty of Theology at UNISA, which was White and mainly Afrikaans at the time. He moved to the University of Zululand, and later to the University of Durban-Westville, from where he died in 1997.

¹² Methodist missionaries, who came from Swaziland and settled there, built churches and schools, and founded Driefontein.

¹³ Indaleni was a highly respected Methodist School and teacher training institution. It has produced a number of remarkable educationists, priests and politicians. Notably Chief Albert Luthuli was educated at Endaleni. It was a pride of the MCSA in then Natal.

¹⁴ The erstwhile South African Indian University of Durban-Westville has now been merged with the University of Natal to form the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

¹⁵ In the Durban area alone there are twenty-five Methodist ministers who claim to have been motivated by him to study further.

¹⁶ Mazibuko, B. "Education is Liberation," in Gerloff, (ed) *Mission is Crossing Frontiers: Essays in Honour of Bongani. A. Mazibuko*, (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 2003), 253.

educational role to play in society. He also saw the need for institutions of higher learning such as universities to get closer to local communities and start partnership programmes, so that there could be mutual teaching and learning. He was convinced that the poor and marginalised had much to teach the non-poor and powerful. The educated needed to wait and listen from those who are regarded as illiterate. He takes the point further by explaining the epistemological base of this approach as:

The epistemological base of this approach is an emphasis on making connections. Here reality is viewed not simply as divisions into compartments social, economic, literary, personal, political, etc but rather as a whole whose parts are interconnected. Learning becomes an exploitation of such connections, and the starting points for such a venture are the concrete circumstances of daily life.¹⁷

Commenting on the positive contribution made by the method that generates themes from below Bongani Mazibuko says that:

this discovery process (Freire's method of generative themes) has unearthed such themes as 'preaching the Word training teachers, the experience of salvation, African families, spiritual healing, violence in our communities, government suppression of religion', and so forth.¹⁸

This is visible in his paper, "Learning from the Deprived."¹⁹ Mazibuko continued to teach until his untimely death in 1997.

4.1.3. Anne Hope

Anne Hope was born of Catholic parents in Johannesburg, February 12, 1930. It was while at Rhodes University that she joined the National Catholic Federation of Students, where her faith and strong sense of social justice were developed.²⁰ Hope is popularly known and respected for her contribution to education for liberation and social transformation. She was deeply influenced by Paulo Freire and a number of Catholic chaplains who were proponents of Liberation Theology.²¹ Her educational work moved between Liberation Theology, transformation and communism. She observed and admired the complementary relationship between Freire's educational method and liberation theology. From these, she built her own educational method, which became well known through a book co-authored with Sally Timel,

¹⁷ Mazibuko, *Education is Liberation*, 272.

¹⁸ Mazibuko, *Education is Liberation*, 273.

¹⁹ See Gerloff, *Mission is Crossing Frontiers*, 10.

²⁰ Van Schalkwyk, A. "The Story of Anne Hope's Quest for Transformation." *Missionalia* 2 (3), (2001), 444-475.

²¹ Van Schalkwayk, "The Story of Anne Hope's Quest," 446.

Training for Transformation.²² She observed two key points where Freire's method engaged with liberation theology. She noted:

His (Freire) work has a strong liberation impetus and focus. His work and the social movement it brought about is inspired in the exodus events, where God said "I have heard the cries of my people and then led them out of Egypt."²³

She continues by making a second point of connection by noting that:

The message of the Freirian method is the same as that of liberation theology. God is present wherever people are struggling and God is on the side of the poor and oppressed.²⁴

In her work with oppressed women, both married and single, Hope emphasised the need to start from people's experience. In the case of women she was concerned with their development, empowerment and building of solidarity. Her method became one of the most popular methods used to train people for consciousness during the struggle against apartheid in South Africa. It has continued to be used even after the demise of apartheid as a tool of conscientising people to participate in the transformation of society from an oppressive past to a better future for all people, as we will see later in this chapter. Her method has continued to be used by those who are committed in the transformation and development of society. Despite the fact that we live in a democratic society in South Africa, we still have problems such as growing poverty, unemployment, women and child abuse. These problems require that we embark on intentional and deliberate acts of education so that we can change the situation. Her model is one tool that can be used in this endeavour.

4.1.4. Steve Biko

Stephen Bantu Biko was born in King Williamstown, Eastern Cape in 1946.²⁵ He received his education there and then went to the University of Natal to study medicine in 1966. In 1968 while at University he joined with other Black students to form the all-Black South African Student's Organisation (SASO) and he became its first president. He was expelled from University at the end of his third year because of his activist work. It was the same year that he formed the Black Peoples' Convention (BPC), an umbrella body for groups sharing the ideas of Black Consciousness. After that he worked and started a number of organisations that

²² Hope, A. and Timmel, S. *Training for Transformation* (Gweru: Mambo Press, 1986),34.

²³ Van Schalkwayk, "The Story of Anne Hope's Quest,"455.

²⁴ Van Schalkwayk, "The Story of Anne Hope's Quest," 455.

²⁵ Bernstein, H. *No.46-Steve Biko* (London; International Defence and Aid Fund 1978),8.

fought for the oppressed, leading him his surveillance by the Bureau of State Security (BOSS), followed by detentions, arrests, banning and ultimately his death at the hands of apartheid controlled Security Forces, September 12, 1977.

Biko approached education from the point of view that there was a need to de-educate and re-educate Black people so as to curb the damage caused by mission, colonial and Bantu Education.²⁶ He observed that missionary and government education taught Black people to hate themselves and their background. He said that:

A long look should be taken at the educational system given to blacks...Children were taught, under the pretext of hygiene, good manners, etiquette and other such vague concepts, to despise their mode of upbringing at home and to question values and customs prevalent in their society. The result was the expected one, children and parents saw life differently and the former lost respect for the latter...yet how can one prevent the loss of respect between child and parent when the child is taught by his know-all White tutors to disregard his family teachings? How can one resist losing respect for his tradition when in his school his whole cultural background is summed up in one word-barbarism?²⁷

He promoted the philosophy of Black Consciousness, which was a “reawakening of Black people in South Africa to their value as human beings and their dignity as God’s children and creatures.”²⁸ Black consciousness was simply understood as a way of life, by Black people who sought to embrace their Blackness and who they were.²⁹

For Biko the ultimate goal of education for Black consciousness was the establishment of an egalitarian society, where all people were equal citizens.³⁰ Education as the building of citizenship can serve the goal of uniting oppressed people and boosting their self-pride and encouraging them to be agents of their own liberation.³¹ For education to serve the purpose of building good citizenship for all people it “had to be relevant to the people it affected, consequently, to the needs of the nation.”³²

His education made a profound impact on young activists of the BCM simply because it started with their needs and experiences. At the same time “it contributed to the radicalisation

²⁶ Bantu Education was the racial system of education that had been enacted by the apartheid government when it passed the Bantu Education Act of 1953. Its aim was to offer an inferior education for Black children thus condemning them to eternal servitude, while empowering White children with superior education. See, Christie, P. *The Right to Learn*. (Cape Town: The Raven Press, 1987),34.

²⁷ Biko, S. *The Quest for True Humanity* in Motlhabi, M (ed). *Essays on Black Theology* (Johannesburg: University Christian Movement 1972), 23.

²⁸ Motlhabi, B. *Black Resistance to Apartheid*. (Johannesburg: Skottaville, 1987),111.

²⁹ Black consciousness came from the teachings of people such as Fanon, Nkrumah, Malcolm X and Du Bois.

³⁰ Biko, *I Write What I Like*, 89.

³¹ Motlhabi, *Black Resistance to Apartheid*, 118.

³² Motlhabi, *Black Resistance to Apartheid*, 118.

and politicisation of education.”³³ As a result, his organisation concentrated on the education of Black people by opening pre-schools, schools, adult education centres and the development of Black intellectuals.³⁴ He challenged the church to re-examine what it taught to people. For him the church ought to teach that God sought to relate to the “Black man [*sic*] and his daily problems.”³⁵

There are two key contributions that Biko made in the education debate. *Firstly*, Biko brought social consciousness into education, and this brought in the feeling of pride for those who were being dehumanised through education. Thus education was no longer a system that dehumanised people but one that could raise their consciousness so that they could work for their own liberation. *Secondly*, Biko educated through practical methods, such as schools, pre-schools, vegetable gardens and other programmes, which were used to educate people on leadership and management skills preparing them for the day of liberation. In his approach to education there was the *theory* and *practice* model accompanied by a strong commitment to non-violence.³⁶ The projects that Biko developed were practical methods of de-educating Black people from believing that they were incapable of doing things for themselves.³⁷ What we see from the above is the importance of addressing people’s problems as part of teaching and learning. Biko also educated university students by encouraging them to take leadership roles in community projects. While doing this he addressed people’s immediate needs, conscientised them and built solidarity. For Biko, education is done by the individual in community with others and for the well being of the community as a whole.

Having introduced these four creative educators for social transformation from Southern Africa we need now to identify their theoretical contribution to adult education. To do this we will focus on the three key education issues that have emerged in the thesis thus far, namely, its *goal*, its *content* and its *method* or process.

³³ Sewpaul, *Reframing Epistemologies*, 5.

³⁴ Mangena, M. *On Your Own: Evolution of Black Consciousness in South Africa*. (Johannesburg: Skottaville Publishers, 1989), 37.

³⁵ Biko, *The Quest for True Humanity*, 23.

³⁶ He also encouraged the BCM not to adopt a confrontational and violent approach towards the regime. He observed that this might lead to the BCM suffering the same fate as the PAC and ANC. He thus opted for a peaceful and non-violent approach in the fight against apartheid. The non-violent stance is at the root of Black Theology movements. This is because its proponents in South Africa adapted it from African-American theologians such as James Cone, Martin Luther King Jr., F. Du Bois, James Lawson and others who were opposed to the use of violence in the struggle for liberation. It is also notable that Basil Moore, a White clergyperson, introduced Black theology into South Africa. It was the influence of such people that led Biko to reject the use of force and violence in the struggle, but rather emphasise patience and education.

³⁷ Biko, *The Quest for True Humanity*, 136.

4.2. The goal of education: Key insights

It is important for us to remember what Paulo Freire had to say about the goal of education. He argued that the goal of education is humanisation and emancipation of the oppressed. In this section, this humanising and emancipatory focus will emerge but with a clear focus on the Southern African issues of colonialism, apartheid, racism and post-colonial concerns such as poverty and HIV/AIDS.

4.2.1. Education for political liberation

All four creative educators for social transformation observe that education is never politically neutral. Education always has political implications. These creative educators echo the insights of Freire who taught people critical thinking because he believed in their capability to change their social reality. As Freire observed:

Conscientisation begins with the thesis that education is not and cannot be neutral. All educational practice implies an ideological stance on the educator's part. This stance, in turn, is based on the interpretations of reality that are congruent with the educator's worldviews. Education is always a political act because we cannot think of education without thinking of power, indeed, of political power in its broadest sense.³⁸

Mazibuko shows the impact of the colonisation project on the mind as a result of domesticating education or dehumanisation. He calls for an education theory or pedagogy that will liberate those who have been domesticated by Western education and imposed western culture that has eroded the culture and self-actualisation of the African people. He makes a strong case for a new form of education that will lead to humanisation. For Mazibuko the church must be an agent of liberatory education. This means providing an education that inculcates a culture of transformation and the protection of human dignity.

Biko taught about the political nature of education. The main philosophy of Black consciousness was “a reawakening of Black people in South Africa to their value as human beings and their dignity as God’s children and creatures.”³⁹ The BCM was convinced that

³⁸ Mazibuko, *The Umlazi Project as a Case Study in Liberating Theological Education*, 262 in Gerloff, R. *Mission is Crossing Frontiers*. (Pietermaritzburg : Cluster Publications, 2003).

³⁹ Motlhabi, *Black Resistance to Apartheid*, 111.

“Black people were not interested in education for domestication.”⁴⁰ Therefore the BCM saw a need to recruit teachers who would follow the BCM view so that they could provide education, which aimed at “making millions of down trodden Blacks self-reliant and free from oppressive strains perpetrated by the racist government of South Africa.”⁴¹ For education to serve the purpose of building good citizenship for all people it “had to be relevant to the people it affected, consequently, to the needs of the nation.”⁴² As a result his organisation concentrated on the education of Black people by opening pre-schools, schools, adult education centres and the development of Black intellectuals.⁴³

Anne Hope also drew from Paulo Freire when she taught about the role of education in conscientisation or the liberation of the mind. In her understanding, liberation meant the breaking down of oppressive structures and transformation, and the process of building up a new society.⁴⁴ She argued that the work of transformation involves a process of conscientisation, which means, “helping people to become aware, helping them to make choices and then setting up the alternative structures.”⁴⁵ Linked to this was her observation that the process of transformation involves an animated type of leadership, which for her means challenging people, presenting possible alternatives, enabling them to participate fully and always aiming at shared responsibility.⁴⁶

4.2.2. Education as liberation of culture

Another observation that is made by the creative theorists of social education is that education as liberation is related to the liberation of culture. Writing on citizenship, Canaan Banana begins by lamenting the damage done by colonial education to African culture. He mourned the fact that the colonial regime’s education focused on disempowering African people by destroying their culture. “Education meant the washing away of African culture and its total replacement by Western values founded on exploitative capitalism.”⁴⁷ He was also critical of schools in the colonial era for support the colonial regimes in eroding African culture.

⁴⁰ Motlhabi, *Black Resistance to Apartheid*, 118.

⁴¹ Motlhabi, *Black Resistance to Apartheid* .118.

⁴² Motlhabi, *Black resistance to Apartheid*, 118

⁴³ Mangena, *On Your Own*, 37.

⁴⁴ In Koegelenberg, R. *Church and Development: An Interdisciplinary Approach*, (Cape Town: EFSA, 1992), 332.

⁴⁵ In Koegelenberg, *Church and Development*, 333.

⁴⁶ In Koegelenberg, *Church and Development* ,333.

⁴⁷ Banana, *Towards a Socialist Ethos*, 29.

Mazibuko concurs with Banana's sentiments on education as a tool of colonisation. He argued that the domesticator uses methods such as advertising, mass media, television, radio, newspapers, sources of production and school textbooks. He argued that the oppressed are bombarded with images of their oppressors from childhood until old age, until they adopt these images as their models. These concerns were observed and well conceptualised by Freire who termed them "cultural invasion."⁴⁸ In his classic work, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* Freire noted the problem of cultural invasion. He said that:

Cultural invasion, which serves the ends of conquest and the preservation of oppression, always involves a parochial view of reality, a static perception of the world, and the imposition of one worldview upon another. It implies the "superiority" of the invader and the "inferiority" of those who are invaded, as well as the imposition of values by the former, who possess the latter and are afraid of losing them.⁴⁹

What the African social educators noted is that forces of oppression continue to bombard people with oppressive education through media, while there is very little liberatory education passed on to people to counter the oppressive one.

The remedy to this problem is an education that will seek to decolonize the colonised mind and Mazibuko saw this education as non-formal, integrated and interdisciplinary education. For him this is an education that "must include all the elements essential to our growth as a people and to our inter-cultural development."⁵⁰ This includes the role of the educator as a decolonising agent. He went on to say that "for the educator to become a decolonising agent the need to undergo a process of re-education."⁵¹ This is important because it proposes the role that must be played by the educators in the church if they want to educate for social transformation and liberation. Mazibuko notes that the church did make a significant contribution to the liberation of the oppressed masses. Secondly, the church became a space where people could experience dynamic love, sharing, and mutual growth through acceptance and participation. In Mazibuko's language the church was utilised as "an institution of hope and fulfilment." Mazibuko identifies himself with what was said by Eric Lincoln in his assessment of the Black church among the Africans who were suffering in the Diaspora:

⁴⁸ Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 133.

⁴⁹ Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. 133.

⁵⁰ Mazibuko, *Education is Mission, Mission is Education*, 12.

⁵¹ Gerloff, *Education is Mission/Mission is Education*, 13.

The Black man's church was his school, his forum, his political arena, his social club, his art gallery, his conservatory of music; it was the lyceum and gymnasium as well as sanctum sanctorum. His religion was his fellowship with man, his audience with God. It was the peculiar sustaining force, which gave him the strength to endure when endurance gave no promise, and the courage to be creative in the face of his own dehumanisation.⁵²

With this in mind the Church must play the role of being an agent of education for empowerment and liberation for those who have been oppressed and domesticated. Mazibuko argued that African culture needed to be freed from its colonial denigration, where it was dismissed as pagan and ignorant. In order to do this, educators need to “transmit culture, train people for specialised roles, and simultaneously be a force of continuity and change.”⁵³ In his quest for a liberating education Mazibuko argued, “What we need is a kind of education which would allow us to reach back to traditional African Humanism as well as go forward towards complete self-actualisation.”⁵⁴

Mazibuko called for an education that liberates people from oppressive culture to contribute to the process of transformation and development. He noted that the historical role of the church in education is ambiguous. He argued that the western missionaries did not even try to understand African culture and as a result “contributed to the de-culturalisation, de-spiritualisation and dehumanisation of the African personality.”⁵⁵ In this case missionary education was not liberatory but oppressive. He argued that if they had studied the African world-view, they could have provided a harmonious linkage between the Judeo-Christian and African worlds.⁵⁶ Mazibuko went on to argue that if education is to lead to the liberation of culture and people it must take into consideration the experiences and culture of the learner.

Generally, I sympathise with Mazibuko's quest for the liberation of cultures that have suppressed through colonial education. However as with most African scholars who tend to romanticise African culture, he does not recognise that African culture itself is not pure and holy. He overlooks the bad experiences of oppression of some groups such as women and the poor. I think he has to give a balanced view of education by adopting a critical stance when addressing African culture. Education must not be used to legitimate culture but to critique

⁵² Mazibuko, *Education is Liberation*, 147. The excessive use of sexually-exclusive language in this quotation is noted.

⁵³ Mazibuko, B. *Education is Liberation: A Personal Story* 1986 from the Methodist Church of Southern Africa to the CBWCP, England), in this volume, Part Two.

⁵⁴ Mazibuko, *Education is Liberation*, 143.

⁵⁵ Mazibuko, *Education is Liberation*, 143.

⁵⁶ Mazibuko, *Education is Liberation*, 144.

and analyze it so that it can be improved. However his observations are noted and remain an important contribution for education.

Biko also noted the need for the liberation of culture in relation to education. Cultural liberation means that education has to orient itself towards Black people's cultural structures or to social problems and to the overall process of emancipating them from the chains of oppression. In this case the aim of education is training Black people for self-discovery and self-actualisation.⁵⁷

4.2.3. Education for constructive citizenship

Canaan Banana's approach to education involved focusing on serving the goals of development. Development can be understood as:

A process by which members of a society increase their personal and institutional capacities to mobilise and manage resources sustainable and justly distributed improvements in their quality of life consistent with their own aspirations.⁵⁸

Banana blamed colonial education for discouraging people from developing skills. He argued that colonial education "tended to wean the elite from the hoe, the pick the shovel, and all other instruments of production."⁵⁹ He took the debate further by blaming colonial education for discouraging a work ethic amongst African people. It did this by stigmatising manual labour as a "sign of backwardness and failure, an activity open to the dull ones whilst mental labour in offices or in the classroom was exalted as the acme of greatness."⁶⁰ It is important to note that he kept poultry in his presidential palace, to put into practice his belief in education for and with production.⁶¹

Banana saw the solution to the problem by approaching education from a socialist point of view. He saw the goal of education as enabling people with skills to produce resources that are essential for their livelihood. He argued that:

⁵⁷ Biko, "Black Consciousness and the Quest for a True Humanity," 19.

⁵⁸ Malusi Mpumlwana in Kumalo, *From Deserts to Forests*, (Pretoria: CB Powell, 2003), 12.

⁵⁹ Banana, *Towards a Socialist Ethos*, 30.

⁶⁰ Banana, *Towards a Socialist Ethos*, 30.

⁶¹ Banana, *Towards a Socialist Ethos*, 28.

Education with production is the search and restorer of the natural unity and balance between the pursuit of knowledge and the acquisition of the practical skills for the production of the material means to life.⁶²

Education was needed for the production of national resources and as a tool through which people can be empowered with practical skills so that they can participate in the production of material for their wellbeing. By calling for education whose purpose it was to equip learners with skills of production he indirectly affirmed missionary education. While they were still active in the education of Africans, Missionaries provided technical education. They taught carpentry, farming, poultry, sowing etc.⁶³ Missionary education aimed at imparting skills to African people that could help them adapt to the new way of life that was emerging. They had been used to a life of hunting and gathering, hence when the missionaries came they were taught skills that enabled them to adapt to an emerging agricultural and industrial society. These sentiments were echoed by the Church of Scotland in its response to the imposition of Bantu Education in South Africa in 1953. The church stated that:

We believe that Christian education policy must seek to prepare members of every social group to assume their full share of adult responsibility in the service of the country.⁶⁴

The colonial government had no interest in offering education that would empower Africans with skills for them to be independent. They wanted to keep them subservient and dependent, whereas the missionaries wanted them to be independent. Hendrik Verwoerd stated this when he introduced Bantu Education to Parliament in 1953:

I just want to remind the Honourable Members of Parliament that if the native in South Africa is being taught to expect that he will lead his adult life under the policy of equal rights, he is making a big mistake. The native must not be subject to a school system, which draws him away from his own community, and misleads him by showing him the green pastures of European society in which he is not allowed to graze.⁶⁵

To some extent both colonial and missionary education had elements of “cultural invasion” inherent within it. However, there is a fundamental difference between the two. Missionary education sought to empower and liberate Black people from illiteracy, provide livelihood skills, and a sense of dignity while Bantu Education, which sought to disadvantage them, by denying them the skills and knowledge to participate in the leadership of the country.

⁶² Banana, *Towards a Socialist Ethos*, 28.

⁶³ Banana, *Towards a Socialist Ethos*, 27.

⁶⁴ Christie, P. *Right to Learn: the struggle for Education in South Africa* (Cape Town: Ravan Press, 1987), 81.

⁶⁵ Christie, *Right to Learn*, 93.

Banana also observed that liberatory education is both intellectual and practical:

In this situation of struggle, education becomes an exercise of freedom; becomes self-realisation, a conscious and productive involvement in history as opposed to education as high-handedness and reduction of man alienated, unconscious productive automaton.⁶⁶

The important thing to note here is that when he became President of Zimbabwe his understanding of the purpose of education changed from that of equipping people for the struggle to that of equipping them for production. This shift becomes clear in his book *Towards A Socialist Ethos*, especially chapter five where he addresses the issue of education, calling for education to focus on production if the nation is to avoid remaining a nation of international beggars.⁶⁷ He argued that there was a need for education to focus on “strategies and programmes that lead to self-reliance and self-sufficiency.”⁶⁸

Banana highlighted the importance of combining ideological and scholastic commitment with technical orientation, involvement and efficiency. Following independence Banana’s government was faced with the need to eradicate poverty, grow the economy and educate the previously disadvantaged so that they could participate in the development of the economy and production. As his country was faced with the need for development, his answer to the problem was to advocate for an education for production. However, he did not just reduce education to technical matters, as this passage makes clear:

Education is a central element in our national development. In addition to increasing the number of skilled workers, and thus raising the political and social consciousness in our youth we need education to acquire a broad base knowledge, attitudes, values and skills on which we can build in later life. Education should provide us with the potential to learn to respond and acquire the ability to participate meaningfully and constructively in the political, cultural and social life of our nation.... there is a need for our students to identify with the new changes in our society and to play a constructive role in these new circumstances.⁶⁹

This suggests that Banana recognised the need for education to enable people to participate in the development of the country. He still saw the importance of the arts and humanities, such as learning that addressed social, political and cultural changes in the country. He did not simply focus on technical education (as we seem to have done in South Africa.) He saw the need to raise the political and social consciousness of the nation, together with skills

⁶⁶ Banana, *Towards a Socialist Ethos*, 1.

⁶⁷ Banana, *Towards a Socialist Ethos*, 28.

⁶⁸ Banana, *Towards a Socialist Ethos*, 28.

⁶⁹ Banana, *Towards a Socialist Ethos*, 29.

provision. He called for an all-round educational approach. From Banana's approach to education we learn that the goal of education must be empowerment so that people can be able to produce their own resources. The content of education must therefore include skills training, so that people can use their hands, minds and tools in order to produce the things they need in life. As Groome has observed "our understanding of education has been impoverished by limiting it into narrow intellectualism, an affair of the mind only."⁷⁰ In this sense education must not be limited to the intellectual or abstract but to the practical and technical as well.

Anne Hope's aim of education as the radical transformation of society was held together by the belief that "'the way things are' is not satisfactory, and it is not the only way they can be."⁷¹ She understood that transformation should be brought about in four specific areas: an individual's life, their community, their environment and the society to which they belong.⁷² For Hope, education needs to be transformative education, one that makes it "possible to change life for the better."⁷³

Hope believed that liberation comes before transformation. In her understanding, liberation meant the breaking down of oppressive structures; transformation is the process of building up a new society.⁷⁴ She argued that the work of transformation involves a process of conscientisation, which means, "helping people to become aware, helping them to make choices and then setting up the alternative structures."⁷⁵ It also involves an animated type of leadership, which challenges people, presents possible alternatives, enables full participation and is always aimed at shared responsibility.⁷⁶ It is upon these basic assumptions that make Anne Hope's model of education for social transformation relevant for the church and South African society. The church has to emphasise God's intervention in the transformation of society and thereby move from a liberative to the transformative phase in our history as a nation.

⁷⁰ Groome, *An Introduction to Christian Religious Education*, 21.

⁷¹ Hope and Timmel, *Training for Transformation*, 16.

⁷² Hope and Timmel, *Training for Transformation*, 16.

⁷³ Hope and Timmel, *Training for Transformation*, 16.

⁷⁴ In Koegelenberg, *Church and Development: An Interdisciplinary Approach*, 332.

⁷⁵ In Koegelenberg, *Church and Development: An Interdisciplinary Approach*, 333.

⁷⁶ In Koegelenberg, *Church and Development: An Interdisciplinary Approach*, 333.

Looking closer at the approaches to education of the four creative educators for social transformation we see a consistency in their understanding of what the goal of education must be. All of them understand the goal of education as liberation or transformation from a situation of disempowerment to that of empowerment. This challenges us to look at the goal of CE in order to shape it in such a way that it promotes liberation. CE is aimed at “enabling people to live lives of Christian faith.”⁷⁷

4.3. Content: Key insights

All four educators argue that the content of education must develop from below. By emerging from the experiences of the people it will lead to the people’s ownership of the education process itself. Another element that made transformative education helpful is that it includes both action and reflection.⁷⁸

4.3.1. Education rooted in the context

One of the important points raised by the four creative educators is the importance of *context* for education for social transformation. An example of this is seen in Mazibuko’s Umlazi Theological Project. This project sought to explore liberatory approaches to theological education. It worked ecumenically by cooperating with a number of church organisations and with the University of Durban-Westville. It also sought to “explore the connection with the “known world” of formal theological education, while at the same time having the freedom to explore “unknown worlds” of enquiry based on the expressed needs and concerns of the participants.”⁷⁹ Mazibuko concludes his essay on education as liberation by relating the Umlazi Project to Freire’s notion of education through conscientisation. He says that:

The Umlazi Project attempts to see to it that both the methods and the content of learning are relevant to the needs of the Black township culture, in a larger social context dominated mainly by White Euro-centric worldviews and values. If we are to be engaged in the conceptualisation of theology we cannot do otherwise.⁸⁰

⁷⁷ Tye, *The Basics of Christian Education*, 23.

⁷⁸ Hope and Timmel, *Training for Transformation*, 16.

⁷⁹ Mazibuko, *Education is Liberation*, 252.

⁸⁰ Mazibuko, *Education is Liberation*, 263.

One of the main intentions of the Umlazi Project was to engage the participants in those aspects of study that were the most relevant to their pastoral situation, being attentive to the types of questions and problems, which they raised.⁸¹

It also assumes that the teacher orientates respective disciplines to the problems brought to them by the participant. At the same time participants are encouraged to enrich these disciplines by presenting existential problems and issues that arise from the religious insights and praxis of the Black church. Put simply, the learning sessions are essentially an experiment in the exchange of theoretical and practical/formal/academic and common/ordinary knowledge and experience.⁸²

4.3.2. Education as knowledge from below

The four educators also note that the content of education needs to come from the experiences of learners. The reason for this is that the oppressed are located on or pushed to the margins of society.⁸³ Hope calls for those who want to be involved in the transformation of the situation of the poor and oppressed to locate themselves and devise strategies that will start from the underside. She observed that:

People of faith, committed to participatory democracy and justice, need to develop strategies for transformation that start from the bottom-up. Those with education and skills have a role to play in enabling the poor to participate actively in identifying and analyzing the causes of their problems uniting with them in finding solutions. The needs of the people then must be strategically linked to public policy.⁸⁴

Educating for liberation and citizenship requires that one moves away from what Freire called “banking education.” The reason as Mazibuko puts it is that:

Domesticated students are controlled, manipulated and shaped by powers, forces, people and structure external to them. They have no power over the outcomes of their learning.⁸⁵

In banking education the content, goals and outcome of the education process are determined by the educator. The learners are not involved in this process; they are pushed to the margins

⁸¹ Mazibuko, *Education is Liberation*, 252.

⁸² Mazibuko, *Fly Now Pay Later*, 22.

⁸³ Hope and Timmel, *Training for Transformation*, 12.

⁸⁴ Hope and Timmel, *Training for Transformation*, 12.

⁸⁵ Mazibuko, *Education is Liberation*, 270.

of the educational experience. Condemning the banking model of education, Freire argues that:

Those truly committed to liberation must reject the banking concept in its entirety; adopting instead a concept of man as a conscious being, and consciousness as a conscious intent upon the world. They must abandon the educational goal of deposit making and replace it with the posing of the problem of men in their relation with the world.⁸⁶

Hope notes that when educated leaders seek to transform society on behalf of the poor, they do not succeed. The reason is that people not only resent them for being “educated leaders,” in that they fail to see the relevance of their actions on behalf of local people, but also because they do not work hand-in-hand with them.”⁸⁷ As a result there is a critical gap between the leaders and their constituents.

The four Creative Social Educators have argued that education, as a political entity is not neutral; the educational method must conscientise people to be aware of the political issues around any form of education. Thus, the start of the conscientisation process is the thesis that education is not and cannot be neutral. All educational practice implies an ideological stance on the part of the educator. This is important because it states the basic function of education, namely that conscientisation seeks “to uncover, step by step, the reality of things as they are.”⁸⁸ In the words of Freire, “the term *conscientizacao*, refers to learning to perceive social, political and economic contradictions and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality”⁸⁹ Hope argued that these basic values are held by many different faiths such as Buddhism, Christianity, Islam and Judaism and that this proves that “transformative education is essentially a spiritual process.”⁹⁰

The political issues that emerge as a result of conscientisation become the subject of discussion, which then leads to the educational process, the generation of knowledge and the search for solutions. The important thing to note here is that the issues come from the people themselves. The educator does not impose them upon the learners, but rather the learners raise them. This means that the learners become participants in the development of education; they are not simply passive recipients of education.

⁸⁶ Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 62.

⁸⁷ Hope and Timmel, *Training for Transformation*, 12.

⁸⁸ Mazibuko, *Education is Liberation* 262.

⁸⁹ Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 34.

⁹⁰ Hope and Timmel, *Training for Transformation*, 16.

The advantage of this approach is that education is dynamically related to the lived experiences of life. People learn about issues that concern them the most and not issues that are of interest only to the educator. Hope argued that education for social transformation would require that educators build upon the values of cooperation, justice and concern for the common good.⁹¹

4.4. The method of education: Key insights

When dealing with methods of education it is important to remember what Freire said about the congruence between goal, method and content? For instance in terms of Freire's pedagogy, if the goal is humanisation, then there will be a need to educate in a humanising way, what Freire calls a *dialogical* approach. The point that is being made here is that there needs to be consistency between the methods and goals of education of transformation.

4.4.1. Education as critical thinking

All the creative educators for social transformation refer to the method of education as a process of conscientisation. Conscientisation can be understood as a process of "bringing into awareness."⁹² Education is one method to enable people to achieve this goal of becoming aware of the social, political, economic and cultural forces that oppress. Critical consciousness can only be arrived at once people have been taught critical thinking. Hence, Freire argued that education must teach people to think critically. He said:

When we learn to read and write, it is also important to learn to think correctly. To think correctly we should think about our practice in work. We should think about our daily lives.⁹³

The need to liberate the mind cannot be over-emphasised. Geroux observes that the "mechanisms of domination and the possible seeds of liberation reach into the very structure of the human psyche."⁹⁴

⁹¹ Hope and Timmel, *Training for Transformation*, 16.

⁹² Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 52.

⁹³ In Gee, *Social Linguistics and Literacies*, 389.

⁹⁴ Geroux, H. *Theory and Resistance in Education: Pedagogy of the Opposition*. (London: Heinemann Educational Books 1983), 39.

In keeping with the above discussion we must note that all four creative educators for social transformation argue that education must be done through a process of dialogue and critical consciousness if it is to lead to social transformation. They thus take seriously the moment of encounter between people as they negotiate meaning. It also emphasises that education is not done *to* but *with* the learners because it is a dialogical process.

4.4.2. Education as dialogue

All four creative educators observe that education needs to utilise a dialogical approach. Freire was the first to develop this method. All concur with this and encourage the use of dialogue in the process of teaching and learning. When education is approached from a dialogical position the educator plays a facilitative role. In using Freire's dialogical approach in his theological education programme, Mazibuko found it to be appreciated by those he educated and his colleagues. Commenting on Mazibuko's abilities as an educator Gerloff says:⁹⁵

As a result of his approach to education from an educationists' point of view Mazibuko believed that a theological educator and a Minister is nothing more than a facilitator, one who enables people to move step by step until they are fully grown.⁹⁶

Mazibuko notes "if knowledge is to emerge from below, teaching is not a case of imparting knowledge on previously ignorant recipients, but of assisting them to build their own."⁹⁷ It follows that the learning and teaching event must be a constant exchange in which both the student and teachers are partners, subjects rather than objects. It is also important to note that critical thinking only comes as a result of teachers acting as animators, enablers, and facilitators during the teaching and learning situation. This is not possible when a teacher uses an anti-dialogical approach to education. For critical thinking to occur in education the teacher must see her/himself as a facilitator of the learning process instead of regarding her/himself as the one to impart knowledge. This includes the role of an educator as a decolonising agent (one who educates with the aim of facilitating a process of liberation and empowerment). Mazibuko went on to say that "for the educator to become a decolonising

⁹⁵ R. Gerloff, Interview, June 21, 2005.

⁹⁶ R. Gerloff, Interview, June 21, 2005.

⁹⁷ Mazibuko, *The Umlazi Project*, 253.

agent he/she needs to undergo a process of re-education.”⁹⁸ The purpose of de-education is to help the teacher to learn a new approach to education, one that is facilitatory and liberating.

Mazibuko belonged to a group of creative social educators who did not accept the “school-instructional paradigm” of education in social education models but rather adopted dialogical and liberating methods of education that went beyond schooling. One of the most important characteristics of the Umlazi Project was that it explicitly opposed being referred to as a school. The project is referred to as an example of *de-schooling*.⁹⁹ The focus of this project is on empowering the participants with skills to face their world.

Another reason for dialogue comes from the realisation that theological education has been Euro-centric and anti-dialogical posited on movement from the educator to the learner. As with most anti-dialogical ways of theologising, it has been characterised as Mazibuko notes

By approaching problems from a ‘vertical’ or top-down’ thinking approach. What we need is a ‘horizontal’ approach, a sitting alongside and listening to each other, learning from and informing together rather than teachers looking down vertically upon their students.¹⁰⁰

Mazibuko also emphasises models of education that allow dialogue and the creation of space for learners to be who they are in the process of learning. Education must lead to the liberation of the mind from experiences of domination that were passed on through the process of education to the learner. Biko also understood the importance of de-schooling. One of the ways through which he educated for consciousness was the monthly newsletter and

⁹⁸ Mazibuko, *The Umlazi Project*, 13.

⁹⁹ Lister, I. “De-Schooling Revisited”, unpublished draft text presented to the Writers and Readers Publishing Cooperative, London, 1976. Mazibuko explains de-schooling by referring to Ian Lister who summarised the term de-schooling as: A critique of institutions and professionals and, after Illich (who coined the term); we can never look at schools and teachers in quite the same way again. De-schooling raises several questions about institutions. Can institutions, once founded, constantly renew themselves and their purposes? Emphasising the importance of de-schooling, J. Naik of the Indian Council for Social Science Research, highlights the deficiencies of traditional schooling by arguing that: “Any system of formal education has serious limitations. It ignores the educative influence of home, society and workplace; tends to produce and perpetuate an elite; encourages conformity rather than healthy dissent; and requires ever increasing expenditure.” For such reasons Mazibuko saw the Umlazi Project as a de-schooling project, because it sought to become a liberating instrument of education. It rejected current structures and models of schooling, seeing them as controlled by “authoritarian figures who dictate to passive recipients the what, how and why of learning, in an effort to perpetuate the status quo of prevailing social values.” He continues: “The educational systems of many societies largely alienate and manipulate the individuals they ostensibly serve. Within the framework of the philosophy of conscientisation, however, participants set out to radically change the schooling system while at the same time, seeking to change larger society. The de-schooled theological project encourages critical analysis, which incorporates insights from both the social sciences and the theological disciplines. It goes on to provide opportunities for participants, as conscious reflective subjects, to learn about, to perceive and to modify their relationships with the world. Mazibuko, *Umlazi Project*, 68.

¹⁰⁰ Mazibuko, *Umlazi Project*, 69.

other papers and publications that he produced such as *Black Review* and the *Black Point of View*.¹⁰¹ Other programmes included youth and church related projects. BCM also ran literacy classes, leadership training courses and production of various articles some of which reviewed the Black political situation in the country.¹⁰²

Hope's approach to education focused mainly on women and community development. She was particularly interested in "women's integrated way of knowing, in their ability to care, to nurture and to contribute towards the well-being of the community, and their ability to contribute towards change in society. Hope thus preferred an approach that would encourage dialogue in education.¹⁰³ As a result she adopted the action-reflection cycle because applied in the context of women's lives it proved to create a dynamic dialogue between their experience and what they were learning. As a result education became a life-changing experience especially for poor and downtrodden women.¹⁰⁴

Banana argued that there must be dialogue between the Christian religion and African culture so that a new form of knowledge, which equips the learner, can emerge. He lambasted western knowledge systems for having undermined and ultimately replaced African culture. For him that type of education did not help to liberate the African people, but rather made them subservient to the White community.¹⁰⁵ His other concern was the need for intellectual knowledge to dialogue with practical skills so that the learner could possess a holistic type of knowledge. From this well integrated type of education emerge people who can think and put their ideas into practice.

Dialogue was also an important component of Biko's approach to education. He called for a dialogical approach because he thought it better promoted the quest for the liberation of human beings as they express themselves during education and this leads to the decolonisation of the mind. He said:

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

¹⁰¹ Mangena, *On Your Own*, 38.

¹⁰² Motlhabi, *Black Resistance to Apartheid*, 136.

¹⁰³ Van Schalkwyk, "The Story of Anne Hope's Quest," 471.

¹⁰⁴ Van Schalkwyk, "The Story of Anne Hope's Quest," 471.

¹⁰⁵ Banana, *Towards a Socialist Ethos*, 29.

consciousness among all people to make it possible for us to proceed towards putting these answers into effect.¹⁰⁶

Biko also drew from Freire who stressed an understanding of the struggle together with its dependency on dialogue and conversation for the empowerment of people. Freire said that:

If it is in speaking their word that men transform the world by naming it, dialogue impresses itself as the way in which men can achieve significance as men. Dialogue is thus an existential necessity.¹⁰⁷

It is through dialogue that people are able to share their experiences of injustices and, at the heart of conscientisation, the encounter between the educator and learners, is dialogue. In agreement with Freire, Brookfield describes it as “transactional dialogue, which is central to education and learning.”¹⁰⁸

Education by oppressors is always anti-dialogical. This system of education portrays an all-knowing and knowledgeable teacher and absolutely ignorant learner community. Underneath the principle of dialogue is the realisation of the problem caused by banking education. In banking education there is no dialogue between the educator and the learner. As Hope in her work with Timmel observed:

The creation of a good learning situation, taking into account the psychological needs of the adult learner, is vital. Each person should have an opportunity to take an active part in the discussion.¹⁰⁹

This focus on individual transformation or liberation by Hope comes from the fact that she “desired to see the manifestation of transformation on an interpersonal, human level.”¹¹⁰ Hope viewed education as an important step that brings transformation to one person, which thereby becomes a step to transformation for the whole community. Hope built on Freire’s problem-posing and conscientising method and through this understood that people gained insights and skills they could use to change conditions in the light of the liberating presence of the work of God. She observes that women emerged as empowered and ready to change their situation from the discussions.

¹⁰⁶ Malan, R. *The Essential Steve Biko*. (Cape Town: David Phillip, 1997),32.

¹⁰⁷ Paulo Freire, *Education for Critical Consciousness*. (New York: Continuum 1973),61.

¹⁰⁸ In Pannefather, “An Exploration of Selected Teaching Strategies and Content,”43.

¹⁰⁹ Hope and Timmel, *Training for Transformation*, 24.

¹¹⁰ Van Schalkwayk, “The Story of Anne Hope’s Quest,” 469.

The four creative educators for social transformation have successfully asserted the view that dialogue is the right approach to education that seeks social transformation as its goal.

4.4.3. Education as learning through action

An example of de-schooling through practice is the education that was propagated by Biko and his BCM movement. The BCM argued that education must free the colonised mind. Motlhabi who was part of BCM and later wrote a book on the history of BCM says that:

It was important to realise that the colonists, in accordance with their custom, had not been satisfied merely with holding a people in their grip and emptying the “Native’s brain” of all form of content. In addition to this, “they had turned to the past of the oppressed and distorted, disfigured and destroyed it.” The culture of the oppressed became “barbarism,” their religion became “superstition,” while their leaders became “tyrants.” As a result, the Black child learned to hate and despise their heritage from his [*sic*] early days at school. This situation had to be corrected.¹¹¹

The BCM was also concerned with the needs of people. As we have already noted above it started a number of community projects. The most important role of these projects was to conscientise self-reliance in the people. Biko personally founded a number of projects. By the time of his arrest and subsequent death he was running a community centre comprising of a woman’s sewing project, pre-school, clinics and literacy project. SASO built literacy projects and home based education to help illiterate adults who were interested in furthering their education. Other educational tools that were set up were the literacy campaigns, commission on the Black Press, the Free University Scheme and the Black Bank.¹¹²

The interesting thing is that Black university students who were members of SASO ran these programmes. This proved the potential that Blacks had. As Motlhabi states:

Most of the relief BCP and SASO provided had formally been the prerogative of White university students. The fact Black students and organisations could also provide such help is depended only of whites also provide was certain to arouse some change of attitude in Black people and add to their self-reliance.¹¹³

¹¹¹ Motlhabi, *Black Resistance to Apartheid*, 112.

¹¹² Motlhabi, *Black Resistance to Apartheid*, 110.

¹¹³ Motlhabi, *Black Resistance to Apartheid*, 136. What we see from the above is the importance of addressing people’s problems as part of teaching and learning. Biko educated university students by encouraging them to take leadership roles in community projects. While doing this he addressing people’s immediate needs, conscientised them and built solidarity. Education is done by the individual in community with others and for the well-being of the whole community. (This has close parallels to Wesley’s approach to education).

The projects that Biko developed were practical methods of re-educating Black people into believing that they were now capable of doing things for themselves. Education according to Biko does not only take place in classrooms but also in the fields, community projects and literacy groups.

As the BCP was a coalition of a number of political and civil organisations that adhered to the philosophy of Black consciousness it had a broad membership. This is also made it possible for its teaching and message to spread quickly throughout South Africa. Through SASO's work it planted Black pride and consciousness in schools and tertiary institutions and through South African Student Movement (SASM) it influenced school learners. One of the significant impacts of BCP's work was the Soweto uprising of June 16, 1976. Although the leadership of the BCP did not plan and organise this uprising directly, they influenced it through a number of subsidiary organisations that adhered to the philosophy of Black Consciousness. At the root of the Soweto uprising was the philosophy of Black consciousness in opposition to Bantu Education. Referring to the influence of BCP on Soweto, Biko proudly stated that:

In one word: Soweto, the boldness, dedication, sense of purpose, and clarity of analysis of the situation-all these things are a direct result of Black consciousness ideas among the young in Soweto and elsewhere. This is not quantitatively analyzable, for the power of a movement lies in the fact that it can indeed change the habit of people. This change is not the result of force but of dedication, or moral persuasion.¹¹⁴

The above discussion has enabled us to see the impact of the educational methods that were employed by the creative educators.

4.5. Synthesis: Rethinking Christian Education

A detailed discussion of the approaches to education by the four creative educators for social transformation help us realise that education enables humanity's quest to move beyond their present limits towards the realisation of their full potential as human beings. All four see the goal of education as bringing about liberation and transformation, which is changing from what *is* to what *ought* to be. If education enables people to transcend their reality this means that education is open to religious influences or religious conviction.¹¹⁵ This means that people live with a vision

¹¹⁴ Wood, D. *Biko*, (New York: Paddington Press, 1978), 98.

¹¹⁵ Groome, *An Introduction to Christian Religious Education*, 21.

of what transcends the current reality. The next challenge therefore is to explore what kind of religious conviction or body of knowledge informs that particular education. This question comes from our awareness that there is not only one religion but also a number of religious orientations and convictions that may influence education.¹¹⁶ Here we have clearly approached education from a Christian community point of view or conviction, and therefore although the four creative educators did not see themselves as doing Christian education as such, when their approaches to education are adapted to the education of the Christian community with the aim of furthering and deepening the goals of the Christian faith, they can provide the basis for rethinking Christian education.

4.5.1. The goal, content and method of Christian Education

These four creative educators have drawn our attention to the *goal*, *content* and *method* of education for transformation in South Africa. Let us look at the impact of each upon Christian Education.

4.5.1.2. Goal

In terms of the *goal* of CE there has been a constant articulation to see it as necessary for liberation and social transformation. It is important to note that CE has as its key component a perspective of Christian theology, which involves the affirmation of people, especially the poor and oppressed.¹¹⁷ Christian, and particularly Methodist theology affirms people as free agents, who possess the potential to contribute to the transformation of their reality, because they are all created in God's image. The goal of education must be to bring about their liberation or humanisation. Here education is not seen as serving the entrenchment of the status quo but rather the development of freedom, liberation, shalom and humanisation. This has huge implications for the development of Christian education. It raises issues about whose aspirations must be represented in the goals of education. The four creative educators have argued that education must represent the aspirations, dreams and hopes of the learners, instead of representing those of the educators alone. This challenges the dominant ways of curriculum development, because suddenly it means the educator must involve the learners at each stage of curriculum development. This issue will be discussed up later in page 217.

¹¹⁶ Groome, *An Introduction to Christian Religious Education*, 22.

¹¹⁷ Pazmino, *Foundational Issues in Christian Education*, (Michigan: Baker Books, 1990), 76.

4.5.1.2. Content

The four creative educators for social transformation also brought to our attention that learners already possess some degree of knowledge, and that they do not come to the learning situation as “empty vessels that need to be deposited with information from the educator.”¹¹⁸ This assumes a trust that learners possess basic knowledge and a belief that they are able to learn from their experiences, so that their experiences become a valuable body of knowledge that can be used as a foundation for their learning and growth. From a theological point of view this means the recognition of God’s image in people. From the discussion above it has been seen that the *content* of education must come from ordinary people. There is a need for the opening of spaces for learners to contribute in the learning and teaching situation knowledge that emanates from their life experiences. This means that there is a need to “create a teaching environment that balances the lessons that can be learnt through books and the insights that scholars, with the lessons that students have already learnt through their life and their ministry.”¹¹⁹

4.5.13. Method

The four creative educators also call for methods that recognise the worthiness of every person’s inherent capability to contribute to the teaching and learning situation. This can be referred to as being aware of a person’s natural dignity, which must be observed and respected throughout the learning process. This relates to the theological understanding of human beings as bearing the image of God, thus deserving to be treated with dignity and respect as learners. In terms of *method* there is the recognition that for education to be transformational it must be built on participatory and dialogical methods of education. This means that any method that does not encourage these basic principles cannot and must not be used in Christian education for social transformation. There must be congruence between the goals, method and content of education, if it is to lead to social transformation. This means that the goal of Christian education must be to empower learners to live their faith in practice so that it contributes to liberation. This point will be picked up in the following chapters.

¹¹⁸ Freire, P and Faundez, A. *Learning to Question: Pedagogy of Liberation*. (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1989), 26. See also, Biko, *I Write What I Like*, 129; Mazibuko, *Education is Liberation*, 145; Van Schalkwayk, “The Story of Anne Hope’s Quest,” 457.

¹¹⁹ De Gruchy, “Theological Education and Social Development,” 463.

4.5.2. Lessons from John Wesley and the Creative Educators approaches to Christian Education for Social Transformation

Wesley was an English praxis-theologian and socio-ecclesial reformer. Placing him in the education debate is somewhat problematic, as in general he compares his own work not with that of education theorists (apart from rather vague, less pointed comparisons), but with other theologians.¹²⁰ There is no place in his writings where he spoke of Africa or tried to engage with Africans, this is because his work preceded Christian missionary involvement in Africa. He is also separated in time and context from the four creative educators so that bringing him into dialogue with them as far as education is concerned is unfair to him. His theology and practice however has affected the African context. I will thus compare Wesley to the four creative educators, who have each produced significant contributions to the content and nature of education for social transformation. Five issues of particular importance to this research will be discussed:

- (1) The re-discovery of the importance of education in the ministry of the church;
- (2) Egalitarianism as an important theme in education;
- (3) The combination of intellect and emotions in education;
- (4) The class meetings as methods of learning in community with others;
- (5) Praxis as an important component in the process of Christian education.

Each of these four education theorists makes a particular emphasis of one of these five issues in their own way. When the analysis of these themes is completed, they will inform the development of a new model of doing CE for social transformation. This proposed model will draw on the contextual insights raised by the creative educators, and will be laid out in detail in chapter five of this work.

¹²⁰ Theologians referred to most often by Wesley include Martin Luther, John Calvin, and John Locke the Philosopher. Educationists that he often referred to though in passing were the philosophers Roseau, Aristotle and Plato.

4.5.2.1. Rediscovery of the importance of education in the ministry of the church

Wesley began his ministry by noting the importance of education for the transformation of people both at the personal and social level.¹²¹ His understanding was that the main purpose of humanity was to be reconciled to God and practice holiness, so that they can participate in the changing of society, which he referred to as “the spreading of social holiness.” The Creative Educators that I have engaged with do not speak of holiness; rather they use such secular terms as humanisation, transformation and liberation. The reason is that they are responding to concrete political problems faced in their own contexts. This group draws inspiration from Paulo Freire; whose work *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* is a foundation for most of their work in education. Freire makes the argument that education must bring about the humanisation or liberation of the oppressed in society. He makes the case that ordinarily education is meant for the benefit of the ruling class for the purpose of entrenching the status quo. He therefore calls for it to benefit the oppressed instead. In his work, Wesley was of the opinion that education brings about empowerment and social holiness. As a result he brought education into the church and made it a vital part of its ministry. Wesley was convinced that the church is an agent of change for God’s activity in the world.¹²² He accepted, revised and taught the traditional doctrines that the church was the place where the Word of God was preached, the sacraments administered and the kingdom of God given.

He did not separate the church from the rest of the world, but rather observed that Christianity was a social religion. Wesley possessed a vision of a transformed society, which would be transformed by and through the church. Through this Wesley emphasized the importance of the educational ministry of the church, almost the same way as the reformers Martin Luther and John Calvin had done before him. The educational ministry of the church declined, but he brought it back so that it could be done in, through, and for both the church and society. Linked to this is that Wesley understood that education covered other aspects of life, rather than solely the dissemination of Christian doctrine. Although his education was rooted in Christian theology as far as its philosophical foundations, his education also covered other aspects of life, such as science, health and politics. This becomes clear when you consider the three areas from which he educated: church, school and society. The four creative educators also provided education and saw it as important for the liberation of people. All four are

¹²¹ Wesley did not use the word transformation, but “holiness.” Hence where he uses holiness I use transformation to mean the same thing.

¹²² Le Roux, “The Local Congregation Empowering the Urban Poor,” 197.

known and engaged people in education. Between Wesley and the four creative educators there exists a common understanding that held education as the basis of all empowerment and that the church is one of the most important vehicles for education for transformation.¹²³ The church therefore has an important role to play in the education initiatives that will usher in social transformation. It is imperative therefore that a model for CE must be built on the pre-understanding that education is part of the ministry of the church.

4.5.2.2. Egalitarianism

While it is true that Wesley did not refer in modernist terms to equality in education as we do in our contemporary society, when we look at the way he approached education and his vision for social holiness, we see that he worked for an egalitarian society. His ministry was marked by his work for the upliftment of the poor, recognition of women, opening doors of learning for them and also his work for the liberation of slaves. His focus on the marginalised is reflected in his sermons, writings and practices. His bias towards the poor is a pervasive and continuous emphasis, which characterised his entire ministry, which extended through most of the eighteenth century. He worked to uplift the living standards of the poor and oppressed and campaigned for their dignity to be recognised. This he did by giving them education so that they so that they would be able to participate in their own upliftment and also by calling for their liberation. Wesley believed that people were created equal and so should live equally in society. This conviction showed itself in his education. The aim of his education was the development of personal faith, through which the individual could transform society. The basis of this egalitarianism is expressed in his belief in the universality of salvation. He argued that:

All men can be saved, all man needs to be saved, all men need to know that they are saved and all men can be saved to the uttermost.¹²⁴

For Wesley, one of the important purposes of education was to bring about the realisation that all people are equal, all are in need salvation and all have an equal opportunity to receive the promise of salvation. This was radical belief in his world, which was marked with the belief

¹²³ Paulo Freire was a committed church person and did work in the area of the church and liberatory education. All four educationists were involved in their respective churches and educated in and through the church. For instance Biko started pre-school programmes in the CPSA church in King Williamstown. Mazibuko, Banana and Hope educated in their respective churches.

¹²⁴ Hulley, *Wesley: Plain Man for Plain People*, 60.

in the inequality of people. All four creative educators come from communities that practiced economic and political inequalities. Their education was aimed at bringing about equality within society.

4.5.2.3. Intellect and emotion

In his work, Wesley did not entertain the dichotomisation of intellect and emotions or knowledge and faith. Although he argued that faith came first, he observed that it needs to be followed knowledge if it was to grow to maturity. Knowledge (of God) is seen as a worthy goal toward which immature Christians develop their faith. For him, experience or emotions are part of the journey of faith as well as intellect or reason. Wesley thus moves away from intellect/emotion, faith/knowledge, reason/experience and sacred/secular dichotomy to discussions of social holiness. For him both intellect and emotions can produce faith and knowledge. The key is to promote growth towards Christian perfection that comes as a result of the conflation of the two. Wesley contrasts education that was suspicious about reason (such as that held by the Moravians and other pietist groups) with groups that were suspicious of emotions and enthusiasm (such as the Church of England). He observed that the pietists' success was only in the spiritual realm and indeed, the failure to embrace reason and knowledge made their faith shallow. He also observed that the success of the established Church that emphasized reason over faith, had a strong intellectual grounding for their faith, but their failure was that they had dry spiritual lives, without the advantage of spiritual disciplines.

Wesley thus placed himself in a different position to most of the scholars and theologians of his day, but moves closer to contemporary theologians and the four creative educators. He believed that the way to understand faith could be enhanced irrevocably by linking intellect with Christian experience. The four creative educators also did not entertain this dichotomy, but rather saw life as a whole. As a result they educated for the total transformation of the person both at the personal and social level. All of them considered the feelings and experiences of their learners and used them as part of the teaching and learning process.

Linked to the above is the fundamental difference that one finds when looking at the extant framework of education between the four creative educators and Wesley. The creative educators have as their aim education for social transformation. They hoped that by changing existing social systems and structures they would change the world. Through this they would

bring about personal transformation. Their view of liberation was on the level of the social environment. They did not seem to consider the fact that social transformation needed transformed individuals. As a result political change does not guarantee the end of suffering and oppression. This means that one needs to bring about personal transformation in order to effect social transformation or lasting change. On the other hand Wesley concentrated on personal holiness, which was rooted in a particular theological anthropology. In his approach he ignored the importance of the social environment in deference to the need for salvation at the personal level. He accepted the social structure as it was and did not challenge it.

In this we realise that both approaches have advantages and limitations. In fact they complement each other. For total transformation to prevail there is a need for both personal and social transformation (Wesley would call it holiness). There is a need to transform the individual and work at the same time in transforming the social dimension. Without a transformed social situation the individual will be trapped, and unable to transform their situations. At the same time without transforming the individual, society will not be fully transformed, even though social oppression may be removed. A case at hand is the South African situation where after eleven years after democracy, the lot of the majority has not changed substantially, particularly with regard to poverty, housing, basic services, food security and job provision. Instead, what we see is a rise in corruption and the widening of the gap between rich and poor. To affect total change in society one needs to work at both the individual and societal/social level at the same time. Hence a successful model of transformation-centred CE must be rooted in both anthropological and sociological theory. It must recognise that human beings are both good and sinful by nature, thus education must be aimed at nurturing the good in them and to correcting the bad! It must also be rooted in sociological terms, which recognises that people are dependent on their social environment. Their ability to grow to maturity and to participate in transformation therefore needs a model that considers the social challenges. Such a model will be able to provide personal transformation as well as social transformation. Finally, the goal of such CE must be to grow people of faith at a personal level, and give them skills to transform their society. As Wesley argued it is transformed people who can transform their reality. Social transformation without personal transformation and personal transformation without social transformation will not last. The goal of CE must be both personal and social transformation, theological and sociological.

4.5.2.4. Class meetings

One of the methods of education that was successfully developed by Wesley was the class meeting, a methodology that employed small groups. These class meetings became a space for mutual support and participation. The class meetings had four underlying convictions regarding the making of disciples, which are important for education. These were:

- (1) The necessity of discipleship;
- (2) The necessity of small groups for discipleship;
- (3) The necessity of lay leadership;
- (4) The necessity of making holiness and service the double goal of discipleship.¹²⁵

Through the class meetings Wesley was able to equip his followers with doctrinal knowledge as well as skills for leadership, such as stewards, class-leaders, band-leaders, exhorters, trustees, sick visitors, helpers, preachers, booksellers and many others.¹²⁶

Wesley's understanding of education is contrary to the understanding of education by all five creative educators (including Paulo Freire). All these educators believed that the goal of education is to liberate and empower people with knowledge, skills and rights.¹²⁷ They did not see people as sinners who needed to be changed through education but rather understood them as victims of unjust systems and policies. Education was seen as a tool that could bring about change in their situation.

These five visionaries affirmed people as free agents, with the potential to contribute to the transformation of their reality, because they are all created in God's image. The goal of education must therefore be to bring about spiritual and societal transformation. So education is not seen as serving the entrenchment of the status quo but rather the development of freedom, liberation, shalom and humanisation.¹²⁸

The creative educators observed the ability that people had which enabled them to reach their fullest potential and transform themselves and their social reality. This is because they believed they were made in the image of God. This gave them intrinsic value as people. For

¹²⁵ Shaw, M. *Great Ideas from Church History* (Downers Grove: Inter Varsity Press, 1997), 141.

¹²⁶ Henderson, D. *John Wesley's Class Meeting: A Model for Making Disciples*. (Nappanee: Evangelical Publishing House, 1997), 137.

¹²⁷ See Kumalo, R. S. "South African Sources for an Authentic Christian Education." *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 122, (2005), 74.

¹²⁸ Kumalo, "South African Sources," 74.

example, Freire believed that to humanise people one also needed to change society. Freire believed that part of education was making people aware of the connection between their situation and the social structure so that they could implement change through a process of *critical conscientisation*.¹²⁹ This was done through the methodology of small groups.

Modern educators have also observed that small groups are the best method of teaching and learning. This is coupled to the understanding that education takes place in community. The creative educators also adopted a similar method of education utilising small groups and participation. This means that the model of CE that we are to develop must take into account small groups as important communities for teaching and learning. The class meetings or teaching and learning communities which are rooted in the church must be involved in social issues, whereby people are enabled to bridge the gap between faith and life.

4.5.2.5. Praxis

Wesley's education was a combination of theory and action. He taught Christians to act out their faith through works of mercy. Their faith and what they had learned could not just remain in the heart at the intellection level, but rather needed to be put in practice, thus creating opportunities for further reflection and growth. He observed the fact that all the works of mercy he had learned could not just remain in the heart or the intellectual level, but rather needed to be put into practice thus creating opportunities for further reflection and growth.

He expressed that the works of mercy were related to meeting the physical needs of people. He observed:

The works of mercy are related to the bodies or souls of men; such as feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, entertaining the stranger, visiting those that are in prison, instruct the ignorant, to awaken the stupid sinner, to quicken the lukewarm, to confirm the wavering, to comfort the feeble-minded to succour the tempted, or contribute in any manner to the saving of souls from death. This is the repentance, and these the fruits meet for repentance, which are necessary.¹³⁰

For Wesley salvation or spiritual growth was incomplete if it was not attended with good works. According to him holiness means that there is a continuing course of good works and a

¹²⁹ Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 34.

¹³⁰ Marquardt, *John Wesley's Social Ethics*, 137.

balance of personal and social concerns. This praxis-orientated education brings awareness that spiritual growth leads to good works or practice. Reflecting on Wesley's praxis Marquardt said:

With appropriate scholarly hesitance, it may be asserted that Wesley was the greatest social reformer of his time because he succeeded in bringing socio-ethical theory and practice into a close connection that served to advance both. His theory almost always operated independently when he allowed social problems to be posed; and despite its limited potential, his theory became so effective because he knew how to translate it into practical measures.¹³¹

Again, Wesley suggests a more radical way of teaching and learning which leads to works of mercy. In Wesley's view the church should engage in a process of education and theological reflection, out of which its praxis should emerge. For CE this means that our model must be rooted in action and reflection theory for it to be truly effective.

It is important to note that Wesley's observation that faith must produce works of mercy connects with the five creative educators because he emphasizes belief that leads to practical work that changes or improves people's situation. The connection of faith, education and works of mercy or social intervention links with the responses of the church in a situation of oppression that we saw in the previous chapters (chapters 1-2) of this study. It brings awareness to the fact that the mission of the church must be accompanied by practical responses to social and political problems that confront people in a given society. The creative educators challenge Wesley not only to teach about the need for works of mercy but also rather to teach people to work for justice in its totality, not just charity. Their radical approach to education that is more revolutionary than Wesley's is informed by their experiences of oppression as we have seen in the previous chapters (chapters 1-2).

Conclusion

In this chapter we entered into a dialogue between John Wesley and four Southern African educators for Social Transformation i.e. Canaan Banana, Bongani Mazibuko, Anne Hope and Steve Biko. We looked at the key insights that these four offer through their approaches to education. Under the goal of education they raised that education must be for political liberation, cultural liberation and constructive citizenship. In content they argued that

¹³¹ Marquardt, *John Wesley's Social Ethics*, 137

education must be rooted in the context and must encourage the rise of knowledge from below. Under method they argued that education must be built on critical thinking, dialogue and learning through action. The chapter concluded a synthesis of rethinking CE.

Had they had the opportunity to meet, I am certain that Wesley and the creative educators would have agreed on the above lessons as key factors necessary to the building of an education model for social transformation from a theological perspective. All four Southern African educators and Freire were connected to the church and all five saw a significant role for the church in education and raised important insights that have implications for CE.

With this theoretical work in place we are now in a position to move into a practical application and propose a model for CE that integrates this theory.

CHAPTER 5

A MODEL FOR TRANSFORMATION-CENTRED CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Introduction

The main aim of this chapter is to propose a model of Transformation-centered Christian Education. To do this, the chapter will be divided into three sections.

- (1) The first section will pull together all the lessons and insights that have been generated from the previous chapters. These are important because they form the groundwork for this model.
- (2) The second section will identify the key principles on which a method of transformation-centered Christian education can be built. These principles will be drawn from the conclusions of the previous chapters.
- (3) The third section will look specifically at the role of the ministers as educator; and
- (4) The fourth section will propose a model for transformation-centered Christian education for the South African church.

5.1. Laying the foundations

In chapter one of this thesis, I analysed Paulo Freire's theory of education as dialogue. I placed particular emphasis on those points that are particularly relevant to the South African context and its churches, to which I will further make reference at a later point in this present chapter. My main point of chapter one was to discuss the lack of education in the ministry of the church. It helped us see that even the little education that is in the church is limited by the lack of an appropriate model. There is an abundant use of anti-dialogical methods of education, which do not bring about social transformation but lead inevitably to domestication. Freire's theory of education as a dialogical process offers a solution to this problem and it is explored, along with a range of contemporary theorists of CE.

In chapter two I made an assessment of the impact of the JNL process that the MCSA embarked on as a way of responding to the challenges of transformation that the country and the churches were facing in the early 1990s. I included a brief summary of the history of the MCSA, its ministry in South Africa and its responses to apartheid, followed by an assessment of the impact of the JNL by looking at its successes and failures. I concluded that the JNL process would have yielded better results had it been accompanied by an intentional education process or strategy. The lack of an educational strategy by the church meant that the programme could not be implemented successfully. I also realised that the lack of an educational programme was not simply an accident but the result of the church not prioritising education as part of its central mission.

In chapter three I explored in detail the ministry of John Wesley. From his ministry I posited that the success of early Methodism was due to the recovery of the educational ministry of the church. Wesley had observed that without education, Christian ministry would inevitably fail in England. As a result, he brought education to the centre of the ministry of the church using a three-fold approach namely: *church-based*, *school-based* and *civic-based* education. In his approach to education, I highlighted five important lessons that need to be considered when developing a model of CE. These were:

- (1) The importance of the educational ministry for the church;
- (2) Education is aimed at holiness;
- (3) The link between emotions and reason;
- (4) The use of small groups in the form of class meetings;
- (5) The importance of praxis.

Although Wesley makes a good contribution by offering us these insights, we must not be oblivious to the fact that there are some weaknesses in his pedagogy and that he does not come from our context of social injustice. An authentic CE for the South African church requires that we build on the work of contemporary Southern African theorists of education.

In chapter four I explored four African educators who have made an important contribution in the area of TCE. I called them creative educators for social transformation. These educators helped root Freire's insights into the African context. They made us aware of a number of fundamental factors that need to be taken into consideration when building a model of

education in the historical context of oppression, domestication and exploitation. Each of these creative educators makes a unique contribution to the goal, content and method of education for social transformation:

- (1) As Steve Biko argued, education must be aimed at building self-consciousness;
- (2) Anne Hope said that education must consider people's present circumstances and must be aimed at social transformation;
- (3) Canaan Banana argued that education must be aimed at imparting skills for production;
- (4) Bongani Mazibuko said that education must be done from an African perspective paying attention to the values of African humanism.¹

These chapters have offered important and valuable insights that can be used to build a foundation for an appropriate model of TCE. In the next section, I will pull these lessons together so that they form the underlying principles of a new education model for social transformation.

5.2. Four Basic Principles of Transformation-Centered Christian Education

In this subsection I will use the three components of an educational approach that I have examined throughout this study, namely: its *goal*, *content* and *method*. However, I need to begin with highlighting the foundational issues of the motivation for focusing on education.

5.2.1. Motivation: Education is at the centre of the ministry of the church

The first principle that came from my exploration in the previous chapters is the importance of the educational ministry for the church. It is clear in the writings of Wesley, the theorists of CE, and the creative educators for social transformation in Southern Africa that there exists much that is of importance to the education ministry of the church. Each theorist emphasises that the effectiveness of the ministry of the church, be it within the church or in society, depends on its educational ministry. They therefore call for the rediscovery of the educational

¹ Mazibuko, *Education is Liberation*, 251.

ministry in the contemporary church. This is despite the fact that some churches have Sunday Schools. John Westerhoff argued, “The presence of a Sunday school and Bible study groups suggests little about the practice of CE in the church and in society.”²

A key theme that emerges is that everything in the church is educational. This does not mean that all activities in the church are aimed at meeting educational objectives. The point that is being made here is that the church is by nature an educational community. Through its activities we are able to get new lessons and insights. The educational ministry of the church is aimed at the nurture and practice of faith. The important fact to note is that all activities of the church, whether they are pastoral care, political praxis, prophetic witness, liturgy and worship, and development have their pedagogical importance, because they all teach something about the faith of the church. But that does not mean that they are primarily concerned with education.

Even when a church like the MCSA has the legacy of a strong educational ministry and Sunday school programme, the lack of adequate models of education can deprive it of the ability to contribute towards social transformation. Key to the church’s ministry and empowerment of its membership is the revival of an educational ministry that is both functional and liberating. The MCSA gives the impression of being educative when one looks at its many Sunday schools and Bible study groups, however, this is not the case. There are serious problems. As Peter Storey argues:

Most of our churches still do not teach Sunday school, and where they do, the materials used are not Wesleyan, but fundamentalist or conservative evangelical...only a small percentage of our congregations have a consistent adult teaching ministry of any kind.³

Storey’s words make us aware of the need to revive the educational ministry of the church in the MCSA. This is important if Christians are to grow into maturity. Wesley emphasised the importance of education for his converts because he “wished to develop them into knowledgeable Christians, who not only felt the assurance of God’s love, but also grasped for themselves rationally the consequences of faith for their lives.”⁴

² Westerhoff, *Will Our Children Have Faith?* 14.

³ Storey, *And Are We Yet Alive?* 1.

⁴ Marquardt, *John Wesley’s Social Ethics*, 55.

There is however a new wave of interest and scholarship set at retrieving the distinctiveness of Wesley's ecclesiological contribution, with particular reference to his emphasis on education and promotion of social holiness. The implications of his insistence on church, school, civic-based education and class meetings can have far reaching effects on the educational ministry of the contemporary church, which has been affected by apathy and a lack of interest in education.

The MCSA does not possess a rigorous educational ministry. Even where CE exists, it uses a clergy-dominated education model, which employs anti-dialogical methods of education and appears unconcerned about issues of personal and social transformation. The JNL process was an attempt by the MCSA to renew its structure and its ministry. This reveals that there is a conscious awareness present for the need for renewal in the MCSA. There is a realisation that the foundation of knowledge for the church's work and ministry is unclear, and that the JNL was a step in the right direction. Although the JNL programme did offer a glimmer of hope, my evaluation of the process made us aware that transformation in the church would come only as a result of a strong educational ministry. Programmes without education would only lead to the shifting of the furniture, without any proper transformation taking place. The MCSA has to learn from both Wesley and the critique of the JNL programme the importance of developing new vibrant educational ministries of education, teaching and learning communities on which to build a church that will make a profound contribution to personal and social transformation in South Africa.

5.2.2. Goal: Education leads to personal transformation and social transformation

The second principle that emerged from the previous chapters is that the goal of CE is personal *and* social transformation. If people are to grow in their faith and live out that faith in the world, then CE is important. As transformed people begin to live holy lives, they will see that society also needs to be transformed and hence they will engage in the processes of social transformation. CE aims therefore at the holiness of the people, which in turn will shape their morality. Viewed from the perspective of the CE theorists, CE is for both mission and social transformation.

Thus far in the MCSA, CE has not included adult and civic education. In this case CE is not simply about educating people to know more about the church. It is meant to help people

understand the church, the world and life in general. CE should address a variety of issues that concern citizens such as politics and the economy. This study has sought to expand the field of CE, namely, to include all three aspects of CE: *church-based*, *school-based* and *citizen-based* Christian Education. It means that Wesley and the creative educators for social transformation have added new approaches to the scope of CE in the way it should be practiced. This study argues that wherever CE is explored and its insights or theories are combined with practice, situations are transformed; people's lives and their social conditions are changed. This happens through the process of raising issues of concern, raising consciousness around those issues, maximizing knowledge and participation in addressing them.

CE for social transformation has as its ultimate aim the "humanisation" of society.⁵ Biko would argue that it is, the meeting of the "Quest for a True Humanity."⁶ Wesley would assert "The human persons growth to Christian Perfection and to social holiness."⁷ This means that TCE is concerned about people and communities. If the goal for TCE is empowering Christians to live out their faith, then transformation must be at the centre of the goals, content and methods of such an education programme. The fact that the goals of CE are both individual *and* social transformation means that CE is transformation-centered. In this study I utilise the concept of *Transformation-centered Christian Education* to depict the nature of the CE that I am seeking to promote.

TCE is not only aimed at imparting Christian knowledge, but also to bring about healing and reconciliation. Elizabeth Moore says, "As an educational approach, transformation seeks to heal and liberate persons, Christian communities, wider society and all of creation."⁸ In this case TCE is transformational and holistic, for it concerns itself with all of life. Karen Tye echoes the same sentiments when she gave the three purposes of CE. She said that:

The first reason for CE is that it is there so that the Biblical faith can be transmitted to succeeding generations and be reinterpreted for their particular situations. Second, it is vital to the growth towards maturity in Christ. Third, it also enables the church to carry on God's ministry of compassion, justice and social transformation.⁹

⁵ Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 52.

⁶ Biko, *I Write What I Like*, 48.

⁷ Marquardt, *John Wesley's Social Ethics*, 62.

⁸ Moore, *Teaching From the Heart*, 164.

⁹ Tye, *The Basics of Christian Education*, 32.

Education with the goal of transformation leads to liberation. Paulo Freire has taught us that education can result in two things, either *domestication or liberation*. Education as a liberation process involves “influences and actions which can set a human mind free to respond to liberating forces.”¹⁰ Transformation is a process that leads to liberation. As Tye notes:

This transformation-centered approach to CE means that, education is understood as a *process of liberation*. Education as liberation concerns itself with “transformation, which is the “forming over” of the church, of persons and society.”¹¹

Tye takes this point further when she says:

Such education emphasises the development of a new Christian consciousness, which will be aware of the global context of oppression and will lead Christians in constructing new, faithful lifestyles. Seen in this way, education becomes a prophetic activity. It seeks to develop critical reflection skills and enable participation in social action.¹²

Different people who aspire to change their situation have used transformation-centered education. Dean Blevins shares a variety of situations where transformative education has been used by a number of different groups. He says that:

Other approaches to transformative education include efforts for peace, justice, visits to locations and impoverished areas for deeper understanding, service learning, and alternative Bible studies that explore real life situations. Liberative teaching includes feminist’s approaches that re-conceptualize the nature of God, humanity, sin, salvation, the process of education and the nature of leadership. Liberative approaches have been adapted to educate the non-poor, are also held captive to an unjust social order.¹³

At the moment the MCSA does not concern itself with the building of good citizens who are going to play an important role in our new democratic society. This leaves Christians confused, not knowing if they need to participate in the political life of their society, and if so, to what extent. This inevitably leaves politics in the hands of politicians, making decisions on behalf of a majority that is not participating because they do not know if they have to. CE has to encourage Christians to defend the democracy that we have just attained. It has to teach people the importance of democracy and the need to participate in making sure that it is protected and continued. Noting the importance of people in processes of transformation David Korten calls for the building of movements to do this work. He says:

¹⁰ Mazibuko, *Mission is Education/Education is Mission*, 143.

¹¹ Tye, *The Basics of Christian Education*, 12.

¹² Tye, *The Basics of Christian Education*, 12.

¹³ Evans, A., Evans, R., and Kennedy, W. *Pedagogies of the Non-Poor*. (New York: Orbis Books, 1987), 248.

If transformation is to come, it must come as a consequence of voluntary action, an act of human commitment to collective survival driven by a vision that transcends the behaviours conditioned by existing institutions and culture. We must look to people's movements as the key to transformational change in the current era.¹⁴

Korten calls for people to be mobilised and educated in order to realise their social responsibilities as citizens. The church as a social movement is well positioned to do this work of educating for citizenship. However, for people to participate in the process of transformation they need to transform themselves. Individual and social transformation needs to take place concurrently because they are interrelated and interdependent upon one another. The goal of education therefore must be to bring about both individual and social transformation. The fruits of transformation are seen when people are able to change a situation of poverty to self-sufficiency, underdevelopment to development, and immorality to morality. All these are vital in South Africa and the church must make a contribution. For it to achieve this, it must have transformation-centered education.

5.2.3. Content: Education is a hermeneutical task

The third principle I have examined concerns education as a hermeneutical task. This means that education constantly requires engaging with and interpreting issues. The reason for interpretation is to gain a deeper understanding of the issues and thereby shape or influence the world around us. This means that the content of transformation-centered education is the interpretation of life issues, and not some abstract ideas or themes.

The question of where TCE is done is a question of content. It comes from the understanding that CE has to take into account the experiences, life, struggles and joys of the learning community. For content to become part of the curriculum, we need to get it from the context of learning. We need to understand what is going on in that context. In short, context refers to "the settings, circumstances and situations within which a particular event or happening occur."¹⁵

This means that CE has to take into account the stories of the people during the learning process, because it believes people's stories are important as they deal with their past and

¹⁴ Korten, D. *Getting to the 21st Century: Voluntary Action and the Global Agenda*. (West Hartford: Kumarian Press, 1990), 105.

¹⁵ Tye, *The Basics of Christian Education*, 30.

dream about their future. Anne Wimberly expresses this well in her book, *Soul Stories*. She says that:

Throughout every generation, stories reveal the very lives persons live and the lives, which they hope. Stories reveal person's yearning for God's liberating presence and activity in their lives. And they reveal persons yearning for meaning and purpose in life. Stories also reveal God's concrete presence and action in person's lives and person's responses to God.¹⁶

Taking the context into consideration means that the church needs to concentrate on what happens inside and outside the church and include it in its educational programme. It should not ignore these issues in favour of foreign cultural norms, but rather seek to use them for building its own education programme. In this case the curriculum is not drawn from books and imposed on them on the church but its agenda is drawn from the context. In so doing, CE has a dimension of doing theology in context or contextual theology. James Cochrane observes that:

Contextual theology must be one that listens to the voices of those whose faith and life is the occasion of theological reflection and this requires that we honor the history, tradition, the cultural patterns, the thoughts forms and the conceptual categories and language of the local community.¹⁷

Drawing content from the context of study requires that we do contextual analysis. Expressing the need for a contextually rooted theological education, Bongani Mazibuko once said:

Theological education that informs pastoral action, which promotes justice, needs to understand the dynamics of social change...Analysis helps us to understand the stance taken by those in position of power and influence in given situation.¹⁸

Another insight with regard to the content of TCE is that the curriculum must be generated not only from the context, but also from below. By below we mean from the ordinary people who will be part of the teaching and learning community. Ordinary members of the congregation are often the invisible participants. Philpott refers to this group of people as "the superfluous unknown people, marginalised by dominant sectors of society."¹⁹ Yet the ordinary members are the majority of the church and are those who must pay the heaviest price for the maintenance of the church. Not only are they invisible, but their knowledge and

¹⁶ Wimberly, A *Soul Stores* (Nashville; Abingdon 1994), 38.

¹⁷ Cochrane, J. *Circles of Dignity: Community Wisdom and Theological Reflection*. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999), 130.

¹⁸ Mazibuko, *Emancipatory Education* 79.

¹⁹ Philpott, G. *Jesus is Tricky and God is Undemocratic: The Kin-dom of God in Amawoti*. (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 1993), 17.

practices as well as their wisdom and experience are also largely invisible and undervalued. It is presumed that as uneducated people on theological issues, they are merely the recipients of the expert's (in this case the Minister) superior knowledge and solutions. Even though these people support the Minister financially during her/his time of training, they have no access to the institutions that are responsible for the production of knowledge, and have no way of influencing the development of appropriate and useful knowledge, let alone determine which questions and issues are taught.

As already has been shown, this research argues that a new form of CE needs to hear, understand and learn from those who have been excluded from the enterprise of the production of Christian knowledge, and to allow their invisible knowledge and experience to challenge and reshape traditional theological formulations which were generated from within the context of the dominant.²⁰ It is important for Ministers, facilitators, educators and community workers to learn from ordinary people as they seek to better respond to the crucial issues of society. Philpott highlights this when he argues:

Social problems, paradoxically, require that experts turn to non-experts in order to discover the many different even contradictory, solutions that they use to gain control, find meaning, and empower their own lives.²¹

This emphasises the importance of a model of CE that creates space for the student or learners to contribute to the learning process, drawing from their faith and life experiences. This way, they will also educate the professional theologian (their Minister/facilitator) while they contribute to the production of knowledge and its dissemination.

The hermeneutical task of TCE is to interpret these stories in the light of God's vision and values of the Kingdom of God as contained within the Bible. When the content of TCE comes from contextual dynamics and the experiences of the teaching and learning community, it is not imposed from outside but rather comes from within. It includes the faith, tradition, experience and aspirations of people who want to effect positive change in their situations. Curriculum in this case is not just a set of facts and information.²² Taking the contextual issues as the sources of curriculum development also means a radical paradigm shift for CE

²⁰ Philpott, *Jesus is Tricky and God is Undemocratic*, 17.

²¹ Philpott, *Jesus is Tricky and God is Undemocratic*, 17.

²² Tye, *The Basics of Christian Education*, 49.

where the Bible is seen as “content that really matters.”²³ As Maria Harris says “it is the entire course of the church’s life and content, it is found throughout the life of the church.”²⁴ It is a fact that the Bible is important for CE simply because it is the story that shapes our core identity as Christians. As Tye observes:

The Bible is the content that calls for our faithful and full attention. To ignore the Bible as a central part of the content we need to teach is to put the future of the Christian community in jeopardy.²⁵

This however does not mean that we must limit the content of CE to the Biblical story. There is a need to enable people to come to the fullness of knowledge needed to be mature and faithful disciples in the world today and that requires more than Bible education. To avoid seeing the Bible as our only content we need to look elsewhere for additional content. Anne Wimberly assures us that if we look to the people in the church as sources of content we will find answers.

I see these as insights that will come out of the combination of the knowledge of the facilitator and wisdom from below. It is knowledge that is both scientific and practical. The church can know the state and feelings of its members and where the Spirit of the Lord is blowing. Ordinary members of the church can own the church and influence its decisions, and thereby make them feel that “they” are the church in a real sense.

One of the benefits of a contextually orientated education is that it is holistic. John Wesley and the other creative educators have already shown that TCE must not only be concerned about spiritual matters and mysteries that are “beyond.” It must be concerned about peoples’ daily experiences, their material and physical needs. It must help them interpret and find answers to the deep questions of their existence. This will help the “church to produce the gospel for the whole person.” A transformation-centered CE will seek to give a Christian perspective on the social, economic and political situations faced by people. It also empowers people to meet their spiritual needs and apply them to their physical needs.

For this to take place, the values and doctrines of Christian faith need to be adapted to the real life-situation faced by people. The TCE method needs to take into account the stories of the

²³ Tye, *The Basics of Christian Education*, 50.

²⁴ Harris, M. *Fashion Me, a People*. (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1989), 5.

²⁵ Tye, *The Basics of Christian Education*, 50.

people during the learning process, believing these stories are important as they contain people's struggles of the past and dreams about the future. When considering experiential reality for content, the creative educators have made us aware that experienced reality must come from the South African context, through the stories of the people. The curriculum of TCE must be drawn from the stories of the members of the MCSA if education is to be a hermeneutical task in the real sense of the word and thus lead to transformation.

5.2.4. Method: Education is a dialogical undertaking

The fourth principle that I draw is that TCE has to be dialogical. This is why I suggest the need to form a teaching and learning community. Education emphasises a dialogical approach as a process of learning instead of an anti-dialogical approach. Here the educator is in relationship with the learners where they share knowledge with one another and there is full participation from each. Because education is done in community, small groups are important. This serves as a potent reminder that Wesley's class meeting system is a model of education done in community. The educator serves as a leader, who is not domineering but leads by facilitation.

Learning in dialogue assumes that one does not learn in isolation but is involved with others. There is a need to form a group of people who are going to take part in the teaching and learning situation. This group is referred to as the teaching and learning community. To learn we need to relate to one another, venture towards new discoveries and find new truths as we dialogue with each other on this journey. Community learning is built on the relationship between the educator and learners; learners amongst themselves; learners and the host of educators who went before them; and finally the learning community and the local environment, which is their context. By this understanding, learning takes place as a result of relationships where a number of people dialogue with one another on issues of common concern that arise from their experiences with the aim of bringing about positive and lasting change.

The primary focus of the transformation-centred approach is not on the facilitator, nor the learners, but the goal of education, namely personal and social transformation. Both facilitator and learners have to explore issues that emanate from their experiences so that they can change their situation using insights from their personal theological perspectives and actions.

As much as learners grow from the learning situation, so also educators benefit by learning something, because social transformation benefits all people especially when it comes as a result of dialogue.

The TCE approach does not undermine learners, but it introduces them to the wider world of human experience in relation to their society, which under normal circumstances they would not have been able to discover. The important thing to note here in this approach is that the goal, content and method of education are important; the learners determine the outcome, which is transformation. At the centre of this method are the concerns, aspirations, experiences and joys of both the learner and the educator, who are now in partnership in the teaching and learning situation. This requires that the learners be taken seriously in education because they are important dialogical partners. This is different from classes where only the educator is prominent. Palmer notes this is a response to the failure of the schooling-instruction paradigm, which he refers to as the teacher-centered model; other Christian educators have opted for the student-centered education model because of its concern for active learning.²⁶ Palmer explains this approach by saying that:

Students and the act of learning are more important than teachers and the act of teaching. The student is regarded as the reservoir of knowledge to be tapped, students are encouraged to teach each other, the standards of accountability emerge from the group itself, and the teacher's role varies from facilitator to co-learner.²⁷

This however does not provide an adequate answer to the problem. In the TCE approach neither the teacher nor the learner becomes the centre of the pedagogical circle, but rather the goal becomes the centre of the teaching and learning community. As a result, learners and teachers become only active agents of the teaching and learning process. The dialogical approach avoids teacher domination, and encourages the learners' involvement in the process. It mobilises the whole learning and teaching community to focus on the issue being explored. At the end of the teaching and learning process we must have regained what it truly means to be human, characterised by the attributes of belonging, love, care etc.²⁸ This is subject to the social dynamics that affects the person. If society is not conducive, the human being cannot experience dialogue. We get involved in the education of others, because we are human and

²⁶ Palmer, *The Courage to Teach*, 116.

²⁷ Palmer, *The Courage to Teach*, 116.

²⁸ Setiloane, G. 1986 *African Theology: An Introduction*. (Johannesburg: Skottaville, 1986), 20.

would like each to gain their full humanity. This is the ultimate goal of education. Paulo Freire understood this process as *humanisation*.

Method has to be consistent with the goals and content of education. If transforming education is to achieve its goal of forming people for the kingdom of God and bring about social transformation, the model must be consistent with these goals.

Freire has defined dialogue by saying:

It is a moment where humans meet to reflect on their reality as they make and remake it'.²⁹

The two who partake in dialogue are separate and distinct as individual beings, as speakers and as thinkers, but the conversation brings them together and fashions a unity of process through their joint engagement. Dialogue is therefore an unfolding process, a search for knowledge and understanding through the medium of the spoken language, involving partners who are committed to the quest.

There is a need for an environment of dialogue to exist in an education process. Here no one speaks alone but all possess a voice. The learning process is benefiting all who are there. Freire opposed the method of education where the teacher alone speaks and tells the learner what s/he knows.

5.3. Participants and minister in dialogical education

In the context of the church, the dialogue takes place between, clergy and poor, powerful and weak, poor and non-poor, learned unlearned, young and old, men and women. In this dialogue people share knowledge, where everyone has a voice and something to contribute in the process of bringing about of social transformation.

Participants in the TCE teaching and learning event

To articulate this further we will discuss what the dialogical approach will mean for:

(1) The participants;

²⁹ Freire and Shoir, *Pedagogy for Liberation*, 98.

(2) The Minister.

A dialogical approach means that all people take part in TCE and all are regarded as equals who have an important and unique contribution to make in the teaching and learning process. The educator is understood as a facilitator and fellow pilgrim in the teaching/learning process and learners are also viewed as educators in their own right.

5.3.1. The participants

TCE understands the roles that are played during the teaching and learning session to be shared roles in a partnership of mutual teaching and learning between the educator and her/his respective learners. The question of roles in education for social transformation is both a pedagogical as well as a political one. This is not surprising because education is never neutral but always has to do with values, norms, skills and cultures as well as the agendas of the different stakeholders. During the teaching and learning situation in TCE, it is not simply the values, norms and knowledge of the teacher that are important but also the values, norms and knowledge of the learners, who in this approach are not just passive recipients of received knowledge, but are equal participants and contributors. The conviction to regard learners as contributors and important dialogue partners come from the recognition that they bring resources with them to the teaching and learning process.

The TCE educator is conscious of the untapped knowledge that ordinary learners possess. There is a need to note the existence of knowledge by the learner because of their situation of being disadvantaged. As West says:

We also accept “the epistemological privilege of the poor.” This involves an epistemological paradigm shift in which the poor and marginalised are seen as the primary dialogue partners in reading the Bible and doing theology.³⁰

It is because of the awareness of the “epistemological privilege” of the poor that TCE opts for the dialogical approach to education. This means that the educator comes to the teaching and learning community not with a superiority complex of bringing knowledge to the unlearned members of the congregation. Rather s/he comes as an initiator of dialogue by opening up safe spaces for the learner or participant to share their knowledge.

³⁰ West, G. *The Academy of the Poor*. (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 14.

Trained facilitators of the transformation-centered approach recognise that the learners bring skills with them that are necessary for teaching and knowledge development. At the same time her/his recognition of the potential and knowledge that ordinary readers bring in the learning process is appreciated.³¹ Through these observations the TCE model contributes not only in contextual Bible studies, but also in any teaching and learning situation by valuing the resources that learners bring to the education process. A relevant model of TCE must recognise that learners are not ignorant people without knowledge, needing to be spoon-fed by the education facilitator, but rather they are active and important participants in the enterprise of education. The learners are understood as educators in their own right because of the knowledge they have to share. The ability to learn and share their knowledge can lead to the transformation of the individual and of their society. Learners are respected in this type of education. As Thomas Groome states, such learners are, “free and responsible agents and as the primary subjects of their own human emergence.”³²

5.3.2. The Minister as an educator in TCE

Traditional educational paradigms in the church have taught us that the Minister is an educator. Modern methods of education emphasise that that anyone can be a facilitator of an educational event as long as they are willing to be enablers and not dominators.³³ This is partly true, but it is too simplistic to think anyone can facilitate learning without obtaining facilitation skills. The question of roles in TCE is a crucial one that has not been fully investigated. Who are the educators in the local church? This is an important question. Unlike the North American churches where congregations employ a person whose responsibility is to work as the TCE educator, African churches cannot afford to create such a position. Hence, the education ministry becomes the responsibility of the Minister.

There are problems that come with this model of the Minister as educator. *Firstly*, the responsibilities of the Minister in the local church are normally unclear, so that s/he has to try to be everything to everybody, all the time. This includes, preaching, administration and other church responsibilities. This means that other important responsibilities such as CE are lost in

³¹ West, G. *Contextual Bible Study* (Pietermaritzburg, Cluster Publications, 1993), 61.

³² Groome, *Christian Religious Education*, 10.

³³ West, *Contextual Bible Study*, 24.

the process. *Secondly*, the importance of finances in the life of the church has meant that a successful ministry is measured through the amount of money the church is able to raise and not its depth of knowledge. Therefore most church programmes focus on the finances of the church, rather than growing the faith of the people and educating Christians. As a result, the education ministry of the church suffers. The TCE model emphasises the importance of the educational responsibilities of the pastoral role. The Minister's primary role in the local church is to educate people so that they may become effective disciples of Jesus Christ.³⁴ Once the congregation is educated it will be better able to share responsibilities such as pastoral work, counselling etc.

Thirdly, Ministers are in a position of enormous privilege and power in the local church, bestowed upon them through their ordination, denominational position and liturgical vestments. Tradition in the church has always given the picture that Ministers are shepherds and congregants are sheep who must follow.³⁵ The challenge therefore is how to deal with these power dynamics if the Minister wants to educate for transformation and utilise dialogical methods of education. This concern comes from the awareness that Ministers possess a lot of power, and thus tend to be anti-dialogical because they have the institution of the church behind them. For a Minister to be an educator s/he needs to be trained in dialogical methods of education and to adopt the role of an empowerer/liberator. To effect this change, the Minister will need to radically reconstruct her/his role in the church. The work of the Minister as educator is to facilitate a process that opens spaces for interested people to carry this ministry. The Minister as an educator will motivate, encourage and support the education ministry of the church.³⁶

Although TCE agrees with the fact that anyone can be a facilitator, it emphasises the importance of training and skills development for those who can facilitate learning especially if they are Ministers. Because of their ambiguous position, Ministers need to be transformed to identify with the learners if they are to educate for social transformation. This requires them to reshape and reconstruct their identities so as to identify with their learners. Beverley

³⁴ Mathew 28:19

³⁵ Tidball, D. *Skilful Shepherds: Explorations in Pastoral Theology*. (Leicester: Apolos, 1986), 23.

³⁶ In America, the position of director of Christian education is often a full time job, given either to an ordained or layperson who has a call to Christian education. In Ivory Park, the Methodist Church where the researcher ministered for five years, the church employed a person who worked part-time as a principal at the pre-school and also as a minister of education in the church. That improved the educational ministry of that church, so even in this country it is possible for most churches to have Christian educators.

Haddad proposes three notions of understanding the notion of re-shaping and reconstruction of identities:

- (1) To unlearn one's privilege as loss;
- (2) Collaboration is more than conversation;
- (3) Actively seek to be partially constituted by work with different groups.³⁷

This is important because untrained facilitators can become obstacles to the teaching and learning situation. Facilitation of liberatory pedagogy requires people with group management skills, who understand that transformation comes with being an activist-educator.

The best facilitators must be learners themselves because they also need to increase their knowledge of the context and situation of their learners especially if they are outsiders from the community. Forces of oppression are so strong that it is sometimes difficult for those trapped within to see it clearly and act against them. The Minister as educator therefore brings an outsider's view that has not been shaped or influenced by the hegemony that has been experienced by the learners. They are able to take a critical distance from the learner's situation. It is also important to note that the contribution of the learner can be enhanced through good facilitation even if the facilitator is from a different position compared to that of the learners. TCE proposes that these strategies are important resources upon which education for social transformation can be built. These need to be brought into the open and this can only be achieved through a process of mutual conscientisation. The dialogical process of learning relies upon a relationship of mutual influence between the learner and the educator. Both influence one another. Both groups bring with them individual experiences and resources through a process of mutual-conscientisation. The role of a facilitator is to create a safe space for the people to learn freely and contribute without fear of intimidation. Commenting about the importance of adopting a facilitatory approach Haddad says:

I now recognise that my role is not to conscientise but to enter into mutual dialogue and collaborative work with those I work with. In so doing, I recognise the need to be re-shaped and re-made. It opens me up to transformation and re-constitution. I am less bold or hasty than I used to be about what action I think should be taken against the many gendered injustices I see around me. I listen more, speak less and do not rush into prescribed solution to the evils...At times in

³⁷ Haddad, B. *African Women's Theologies of Survival: Intersecting Faith, Feminism and Development*. (Unpublished Ph.D Thesis, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, 2000), 66.

discussions with women of Sweetwater's and Nxamalala, I have not been able to be quiet and found myself speaking out my perspective on their oppression. Instead of having the desired effect of moving them into unanimous agreement, it has more often than not elicited silence.³⁸

In this method, the facilitator becomes a fellow pilgrim in the journey towards deeper knowledge. The educator is an equal partner in her/his journey of life, education and faith. In support of these sentiments, Jack Seymour says:

Through teaching, actually coordinating and leading teaching/learning processes, teachers are engaged in compassionate initiatives, hospitable inclusiveness, gentle empowerment, and a generous invitation to the partnership and community. As sponsors teachers encourage, make accessible the faith tradition, guide, and enable. This view of teacher explicitly rejects authoritarian, paternalistic, and manipulative practices of educational ministry. In other words, Christian education for justice and peace requires that teachers teach justly and peacefully.³⁹

The specific responsibilities of the educator are to prepare the learning environment, mobilise necessary resources, network with resource groups and research for technical knowledge needed on the theme. During the learning process her/his responsibility is dialogued with the people on the generated themes, challenging them to give more information in order to bring further clarity on these themes. Utilising the thinking of the Chinese Communist Leader, Mao Zedong, Hope and Timmel summarises the facilitating role of the educator is:

...to present to the people in challenging form the issues they themselves have raised in a confused form.⁴⁰

It is important that the facilitator be conscious of the knowledge that ordinary people have achieved through experience, faith and involvement within the church. This is not to deny that s/he knows more about the subject, but it is to ensure that the educator is able to teach an emancipating approach. This helps the learners explore for themselves with the guidance of the facilitator what is being learned and how that becomes relevant for them. This method believes that the solution to the problem of agency is the partnership between the learner and the education facilitator. The education facilitator must be aware that her/his position is one of enablement and not that of dominating the process. As James Cochrane notes:

It (the liberative model) turns many of the more normal patterns of ministry on its head: non authoritarian (I will learn from you and share what may help) rather than authoritarian (I will know best what you need); egalitarian (this theology, its processes and its production, belongs to the

³⁸ In Nadar, *Power, Ideology and Interpretation/s*, 237.

³⁹ Seymour, J. *Mapping Christian Education*, 28. In this case Seymour understands the educator as a one who supports the learner during the educational process.

⁴⁰ Hope and Timmel, *Training for Transformation*, 16.

group) rather than hierarchical (I will control what counts and what is decided); facilitative rather than directive; making one's resources available to the initiatives of others in the community rather than using their resources to back one's own initiatives.⁴¹

Cochrane also saw the oppressed as important interlocutors. He is however acutely aware of the important role that must be played by trained facilitators in this process. As ordinary people have knowledge, they still need to work hand in hand with trained facilitators who act as catalysts and animators to help them bring their knowledge and resources into the open so that it can be used towards their liberation. The impact of their knowledge will be maximised when combined with the knowledge of the trained facilitators. In this approach, learning becomes a two-way process. This means that there is mutual learning across the divides of race, culture, status and religion.⁴² This is what the JNL and Wesley's approach to education failed to do. Instead, they adopted traditional approaches to education that opted for domination and replaced the learner with the teacher in their struggle to change their situation.

5.3.3. Some of the technical tasks with which the Minister has to deal

In this subsection we will discuss the specific tasks that the Minister as an educator has to do when conducting a teaching and learning event.

5.3.3.1. Directing learners

The teacher or facilitator needs to give direction to the Learners so that they know clearly what is expected of them to do in this learning process. Some of the advice that Karen Jerling gives to facilitators is that they need "to speak slowly, use visual back-up, define important terms and demonstrate the activity."⁴³ It is important that this step is done properly otherwise the learning process will not go well if students have not received sufficient direction.

⁴¹ In Philpott, *Jesus is Tricky and God is Undemocratic*, 10.

⁴² See also Mazibuko, *Emancipatory Education*, 75; where the same sentiments are expressed.

⁴³ Jerling, K. *The Education, Training and Development Process*. (Pretoria, Kagiso, 1997),206.

5.3.3.2. Involving the learners in the activity

Here the teacher will need to motivate learners to look forward to the learning process. S/he must talk about the objectives of the subject. Jerling says, “He or she needs to sell the benefits of the subject, convey enthusiasm, connect activity and share personal feelings.”⁴⁴ Jerling says that involving learners in the process “involves keeping the activity moving, challenging the learners, reinforcing learners for their involvement in the activity, building a physical movement into the activity and showing enthusiasm to the students about the learning process.”⁴⁵

Once a structured learning opportunity has been concluded it is important for learners to discuss any feelings that the activity has elicited and to share their final reflections and insights. This means that the facilitator again leads the process of reflection by asking some specific questions such as what they think of the activity and what new insights have they gained. S/he can also check for the new insights that have been generated by the activity.

5.3.3.3. Research

One of the most important responsibilities of the facilitator is to conduct research on the themes that have been generated by the teaching and learning community. It is important that the education done in this group gets not only the popular knowledge that comes from below, but also the technical or scientific knowledge that can be found in libraries and resource centres so that it can be classified as scientific and credible knowledge. There is a need for each theme to be researched and the outcomes presented dialogically during the learning process. This forms part of the educators’ work as s/he prepares for a session.

I conclude the above discussion by noting that for education in the church to achieve the goals of transformation it needs to adopt a dialogical method of education. These methods encourage the mutual sharing of knowledge and mutual conscientisation. In this section I have looked at the method of education for social transformation. I have emphasised the fact that education is a dialogical undertaking. The dialogue is between the participants meaning the Minister as educator and the learners. I have shown that there is a need for dialogue between

⁴⁴ Jerling, *The Training, Education and Development Process*, 206.

⁴⁵ Jerling, *The Training, Education and Development Process*, 204.

the context of the learners and their themes of education. From the dialogical approach both the Minister and the learners benefit by gaining new knowledge.

5.4. First draft of a model of transformation-centered Christian education

In the previous chapters in the study I have pointed to the severe lack of CE in the church. I went on to emphasise that the greatest need is for a model of CE that will bring about both personal and social transformation. It is not enough to highlight the problems and gaps without making any proposal for addressing them. My aim in this section was to propose a model of doing TCE in the MCSA. The first draft of the model is built on the theory that has been accumulated from the above discussion. It is a result of extensive reading and reflection. The next chapter will test this model as a theory that still needs to be applied. Only then can it be revised and prepared for further application. I have decided to call this model Transformation-centered Christian Education (TCE). This model is the result of key issues that were raised by the educators in previous chapters and discussed in the previous section. The first observation by the education theorists is that the church is an educational community. Linked to this is the fact that education itself is a dialogical process. The model I am proposing includes the following four phases:

- (1) Formation of a Teaching and Learning Community (TLC);
- (2) Generation of themes (and curriculum development);
- (3) Analysis of themes (Public, Personal and Church texts);
- (4) Praxis (theory-practice and action reflection).

5.4.1. Phase one: The formation of the Teaching and Learning Community (TLC)

I prefer to call the Transforming Christian Education group a “Teaching and Learning Community” (TLC). This is because of the group’s approach to education. As the group uses the TCE approach there is a mutual sharing of knowledge. That means that everyone contributes in the sharing of knowledge and everyone learns something from the group. There is no one teacher who has to teach the rest who are mere learners. Each and everyone in the group learns and teaches.

The educator begins by inviting people to join the Christian Education group (TCE) by listing issues of concern within the church and community. People then join the groups that deal with those issues within their interest. This is important because it encourages people to join a group that deals with issues, which they are passionate about. Thus encourages an ongoing interest and commitment from people to participate in the education process. It will ensure that people are eager to participate in the groups and will have deeper commitment. This group has to be as representative and as inclusive as possible.

The work of the group is to learn, teach and apply CE in a dialogical manner, where all are allowed to contribute and have their opinion and knowledge considered. Membership of this group has to be voluntary and representative of people in terms of their age, education level, and status in society, both poor, and the rich. Male, female, HIV+ and all sections of society need to be present. Particular attention must be given to the marginalised groups in society such as women and people with disabilities so that they are encouraged to join the group so that they voice their concerns and be heard. This group will need to have a covenant of commitment that they will agree upon things such as punctuality, full participation, openness, honesty etc.

5.4.2. Phase two: Generation of themes

Ordinarily, educational themes in the local church are not derived from books and manuals, but from a different context. In this process of TCE, information and themes are generated from the people themselves. It is not the facilitator who thinks and decides the issues that need to be discussed, but people are given the space to raise their own issues that concern them. From the themes raised by people a transformation-centered curriculum can be constructed. This will enable people's experiences, joys, disappointments, values, traditions and aspirations to be the foundation of the curriculum because the task is hermeneutical. According to Allport's theory of humanisation and holism,

The humanistic approach to human learning and development does not present a single, organised system, but rather a movement within which a variety of systems are contained as long as they are based on the will of the people.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Allport, G. *The Theory of Holism*, (London: Oxford Press, 1969), 189.

The aim here is to generate recurring themes that people talk about in public places. The reason is that such themes carry the concerns and aspirations of both ecclesial and social communities. The resultant learning will not only be relevant to the needs of the church alone, but to church and community. Here the curriculum is built on the concerns of the people, not from some ideas or programmes that come from outside the community.

5.4.2.1. Listening

The group should start by listening to itself and finding out its own concerns, and from there go on to listen to the community. Since this method is new to people, an outline of listening skills would not only benefit the process but also the individual members, for acquiring the skill of listening is both humanising and empowering. Listening should be done where people can relate to the listeners in an informal manner.

There may be a need to train people in listening, critical thinking, and asking questions. This comes from the awareness that not all people are good listeners nor able to ask probing questions that bring out the right answers. Some people may prefer to carry notebooks to record the observations or the things they hear from the community. The advantage of this process is that not only the literate can take part. Even the illiterate can go around listening to people and memorise what they hear and come and share with the group. Findings should be recorded for the sake of accuracy, but people must not be compelled to write to the point of excluding those who cannot read nor write.

The importance of this process of listening to other people's voices is that we begin to hear even those we would otherwise not hear and that is liberating for them to be listened to. Listening in education leads to liberative education because it opens our eyes to the situation of other people. Mary Moore says that:

My passion is to engage in liberative education that is truly Leberative, opening our eyes to those realities that we have denied, opening our ears to those voices who wish to name their own realities, and opening our hearts to receive others and to enter partnership with them in their struggle for liberation.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ Moore, *Teaching From the Heart*, 163.

5.4.2.2. Prioritisation of themes

The listening process should lead to the compilation of findings as people bring in reports. There is need at this stage to compare and contrast these findings. Themes should then be prioritised according to their urgency and frequency within the reports. From these themes the group can build a transformation-centered curriculum for TCE.

The advantage of the report-back phase is that it also affords the participants another opportunity to learn, both from the content of the themes as well as the way in which the material is processed. They can then identify one issue that is the most common, so that the whole process is manageable. The important thing to note is that each of these stages provides an opportunity for people to learn, either from the material or through dialogue with one another.

At this stage they will see what groups of people are being affected by the situations listed and why some are more urgent or more important than others. Prioritisation means that they take the most important and urgent theme as their lesson topic.

5.4.2.3. Curriculum development

Curriculum can be understood as:

the content of education (what is *taught and learned*) the pedagogy how that content is transmitted), and evaluation (the methods used to ascertain whether the content has been internalised and understood).⁴⁸

This definition of curriculum speaks of curriculum as a document or plan. Curriculum development is important because it gives guidance and discipline to the group as it does TCE. It is important that the group takes the theme and plans how they are will conduct the learning, strategically putting topics, dates, times, venues and allocating responsibilities to participants. Other educationalists see curriculum to be more than syllabus documentation or teaching plan but view it in terms of both the plan and the practice of teaching.⁴⁹ This means

⁴⁸ Bertram,C. *Curriculum Studies*,(Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal, 2000),13.

⁴⁹ Casius Lubisi is influenced the shift from seeing curriculum as just a plan of things to be taught. Lubisi uses a metaphor of an architects building plans and the building itself to explain the idea of curriculum as plan and

that the drawing up of the curriculum is important, but during the actual teaching and learning there might be some changes and differing interpretations depending on the context of the teaching and learning situation. As much as curriculum is important, there is no need to be enslaved by it; rather, there is a need to be flexible, and allow changes that might be needed in the process.

5.4.3. Phase three: Analysis of texts

The third phase in the model is the analysis of the texts or themes. By analysis, I mean the action of seeking to understand reality. Holland and Henriot define analysis as “a tool that permits us to grasp the reality with which we are dealing.”⁵⁰ Speaking of said analysis, James Cochrane can write:

It examines causes, probes consequences, delineates linkages and identifies actors. It helps make sense of the experiences by putting them into a broader picture and drawing the connections between them.⁵¹

In other words as one seeks to understand the meaning of the text one is able to understand one's social context. One gets to the “extension of the principle of seeing clearly, moving from the personal realm to the social.”⁵² In this first draft we propose a three-fold focus: public text, personal text and church text.

curriculum as practice. This is because he makes a conceptual shift from understanding curriculum as plan of activities at school. He says that: The first understanding looks at curriculum as if it is a blueprint. It is regarded as a set of instructions similar to the drawings given by architects to builders when a new building has to be constructed. The second definition also includes a plan, but recognizes that the plan is only the starting point... The architects' plan is a necessary part of the building, but it is not the same as the completed building. The TCE curriculum will be understood in the line of the above metaphor, so that it covers the plan and the practice of teaching and learning.

⁵⁰ Holland and Henriot, *Social Analysis*, 14.

⁵¹ Cochrane, J. *In Word and Deed*. (Pietermaritzburg; Cluster Publications 1989),15.

⁵² Cochrane, *In Word and Deed*, 15.

5.4.3.1. Public text

A text is presented and people discuss and ask such questions as:

- (1) What is the problem?
- (2) What do we know about it?
- (3) What causes it, and why?

They also discuss the general understanding of the text. The facilitator is required to give the formal and official definition and understanding of the theme. This means that the facilitator has the responsibility of doing research and preparation on the text. S/he will give the technical knowledge while the participants give the popular understanding and knowledge of the theme. The text is then problematised. The issues that lead to it have to be identified, the cause of the situation recognised. The questions are put in such a way that will help the group see how the problem is exacerbated and how it affects people in general.

The facilitator brings to the debate the official or technical version and understanding of the text and unpacks it, so that it is demystified for the group, and thereby understands it in a broader sense. If there are statistics the facilitator is encouraged to bring them and any other relevant information in order to assist the process of understanding. As facilitator, s/he will even go to the extent of consulting the Constitution; other public documents and documents from the Christian tradition so as to share with the group how the text can be understood. The aim of the process is to produce as much knowledge as possible on the topic. It is only when the standard *intellectual* knowledge is combined with *experiential* knowledge that we can say that the teaching and learning event has been successful in producing knowledge effectively.⁵³

5.4.3.2. Personal text

The aim of this phase is to bring the text to the personal level. The main questions that are to be asked here include:

⁵³ Mazibuko, *The Umlazi Theological Education Project: A Case Study for Emancipatory Education in Gerloff, Mission is Crossing Frontiers* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 2003), 389.

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- (1) What does this text mean to me?
 - (2) How do I understand it?
 - (3) How does it affect my life both spiritually and materially?

People are offered an opportunity to analyze and reflect on the theme, so as to understand its impact on their lives. This is important because it offers an opportunity for the learners to personally own the theme and thus own the whole educational process and identify themselves and their role as part of the solution or perpetrators of the problem.

In this stage the people share their personal experiences and stories in relation to the text. They also share the role they play or would like to play in dealing with the text. For example, if the text concerns poverty, people are given a chance to share how it has affected them personally and their families at large. They need to mention the role they play in influencing the text, whether it is to perpetuate it or to change the situation. They are encouraged by the facilitator and the rest of the teaching and learning community to recognise their role in relation to the theme. They also express their emotions through laughter and tears.

This stage becomes therapeutic as it allows people to express their emotions and feeling in relation to the theme. It can become very emotional because as people reflect on their lives; some wounds may be opened. This creates an opportunity for members of the group to support one another, as they begin to listen to one another's stories. This is the beginning of healing, and brings a therapeutic dimension to the learning process. I am aware however that a therapeutic approach to dealing with the problem is inadequate, so the group needs to go further in its probing in order to exposure the resources and the potential that the affected person has to deal with the problem. As the theme is analyzed and the group share in detail their experience of the theme, the group helps the affected person to look at her/his own potential, or they offer some resources to deal with the problem. Once the group has decided on the action that needs to be taken in order to transform the situation the next step is to assess the amount of resources that the community already has at its disposal for action to be taken.

5.4.3.3. Phase four: Church text

At this stage the learning community as a community of believers or church draw from their church and theological resources in an endeavour to understand the text from a faith perspective. Their main question to be answered will be:

- (1) What does the church have to say about this theme through its teaching, liturgy and mission?

(a) Church

In Africa, the church influences the lives of people in many ways. This is because African people do not separate life into the sacred and the secular, but rather see it as holistic. As a result, church life should relate their spiritual life to social issues. John Mbiti notes that

For some people the church is one organisation that controls their knowledge and cosmology. Even their rights of passages such as birth, baptism, marriage, death and ceremonies of memoriam are conducted in the church. There is no way therefore that we can leave the church out when discussing how people understand themes that affect aspects of their lives because the church plays an important role in forming that knowledge and understanding.⁵⁴

Mbiti observes this when he continues to say:

Religion is part of the cultural heritage...It is found in all areas of human life. It has dominated the thinking of African peoples to such an extent that it has shaped their cultures, their social life, their political organisations and their economic activities. We can say therefore, that religion is closely bound up with the traditional way of African life, while at the same time; this way of life has shaped religion as well.⁵⁵

This shows that it is important to consider the teaching of the church at this stage because the church in Africa has a large influence on people. African people have a strong inclination to religious issues so that even themes that are found in ordinary conversations are understood religiously one way or another.

Generally, African people tend to believe as truth what their religious leaders tell or teach them. It is therefore important for us to critically revisit what the church teaches people to believe and ask if those things empower or enslave. For me, this is of critical importance for any theological reflection in transforming CE. The main questions to be asked include:

⁵⁴ Mbiti, J. *Introduction to African Religions and Philosophy*. (Nairobi: Heinemann, 1969), 9.

⁵⁵ Mbiti, *Introduction to African Philosophy and Religion*, 10.

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- (1) What does the church teach about this theme?
 - (2) Are there any insights that we get from the Church's doctrine, liturgy, sermons and other practices about this theme?
 - (3) How do we respond to the theme as a church?

(b) The Bible

The Bible as a central book to the Christian religion has during the colonial period influenced and shaped African belief systems and worldviews.⁵⁶ Linked to that is the fact that people themselves have shaped and influenced the Bible. Gerald West observes that:

Not only has the Bible been a significant text in Africa, but Africa has also had a significant impact on the Bible. There is a significant African presence and influence in the Bible!⁵⁷

The Bible therefore has a central place in TCE. It is important that the church reflect on the text theologically, trying to understand the way the church, the Bible and Christian tradition view the problem. This is the stage where the church comes under scrutiny as to how it relates and deals with the text. The people have not been innocent victims of the Bible, but they have also influenced and shaped the Bible. Therefore it is important that they reflect critically on the Bible as they seek to understand and know more about the text from a Biblical perspective. It is here that people will share how their church treats and understands the theme. What position and teaching does the church give on the theme? Does it support or reject the theme?

The Bible is a problematic book, one that has been used by oppressors to justify their injustices over others. The good thing is that the Bible is also a liberating book when well interpreted and understood by its readers.⁵⁸ In Christian education for social transformation it is held that when used properly, the Bible has some very important and helpful insights for social transformation. It is also true that the Bible is the most commonly used book especially by the poor and oppressed as a coping tool against forces that oppress them. Even the poorest of the poor have Bibles and they read them for nourishment, comfort and inspiration.

(c) Jesus' teaching on the theme

⁵⁶ West, *Contextual Bible Study*, 61.

⁵⁷ West, *Contextual Bible Study*, 61.

⁵⁸ West, *The Academy of the Poor*, 10.

The next set of important questions to be explored includes:

- (1) What would Jesus do about the theme?
- (2) What position would he take on it?
- (3) Would he be for it or against it?

This is important because the answers to these religious questions influence the way forward for the group. It is important that in looking at the church text we spend a great deal of time with Jesus. Jesus has been an example of what it is to live as the people of the kingdom. Jesus teaches us the values of the kingdom of God and how we should live as pilgrims. In fact the four gospels teaches how people have to live with one another and how they need to respond to their life experiences as Christians. It is therefore important that in theological reflection we begin with understanding what Jesus' understanding of the theme would be. The question asked here is what do we learn from Jesus concerning the theme? How did he address it? Are there any texts about the theme that we can recognise from the Bible on how Jesus dealt with the theme?

As people engage in theological reflection although they dialogue with one another, they also dialogue with God, as they pray, sing and read the scriptures. Secondly, they also dialogue with the church and it's teaching. The facilitator encourages them to feel free to talk back to the scriptures and to God. This is a platform where they can make their thoughts and voices plain. People may need to be encouraged to even voice their doubts because it is in this process that they will be able to grow and deal with their fears and find teaching from Jesus on how to deal with those fears and doubts.

5.4.4. Phase Four: Praxis

The group must agree on what action is to be taken towards transforming the situation. It is at this stage that the group begins to develop a common understanding and see the need to change the situation. As Apps writes, "Transformation cannot occur unless you are aware that something needs changing."⁵⁹ The primary aim of the TLC group is putting the theory (what they have learned) into practice. This also includes being able to apply the knowledge gained.

⁵⁹ Apps, J. *Leadership for the Emerging Age*, (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1994), 216.

In noting the importance of theory and action by Antonio Gramsci, Vishnathie Sewpaul has written:

Gramsci argued that education should be used for the creation of a vision of the future through this daily practice, and that knowledge consists of theory and existential experience which is located within its context, and is based on action and reflection.⁶⁰

Praxis offers us an opportunity to put knowledge into action, so that it no longer remains abstract but becomes lived genuine knowledge, which is neither rational nor personal, but a combination of both. It also reminds us of the need to learn by doing or through action as proposed by John Wesley in his educational method. Praxis also means that personal faith or holiness is related to the concrete situation so that it can lead to social transformation. Karl Marx noted that:

...rationality or intellectual knowledge was not enough to constitute genuine knowledge. Even personally appropriate knowledge, which is infinitely better than believing on someone else's authority was not enough. We know best...when our reason is coupled with and challenged by our action.... when we are not just the objects of historical process but its subjects.⁶¹

Its impact is not only on the society but also the church as it brings change in the way things are structured and thereby revisits its mission imperatives. In this case doing CE is not guided by "faith seeking understanding but by faith seeking intelligent action."⁶² Explaining the importance of doing theology with the aim of praxis Leonard Boff writes:

The first word is spoken by what is done, that is by conscious act aimed at changing social relationships. It is therefore an inductive theology. It does not start with words... and end in words, but stems from actions and struggles and works out of a theoretical structure to throw light on and examine these actions.⁶³

This also emphasises the point that adults can learn because they want to solve immediate problems by restructuring and recreating their society. Brookfield in his *Understanding and Facilitating Adult Learning*, said that:

If adults of widely differing class and ethnic groups are actively exploring ideas, beliefs, and practices, then we are likely to have a society which creativity, diversity, and the continuous re-creation of social structures are accepted norms.⁶⁴

The aim of praxis is to gain more insights on the theme and how it can improve our practice. They look for the immediate steps that need to be taken towards solving the problem they

⁶⁰ In Dominellie and Bernard, *Broadening Horizons*, 17.

⁶¹ In, Getui, M. (ed) *Theological Method and Aspects of Worship in African Christianity*, (Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 1998), 48.

⁶² Getui, *Theological Method and Worship in African Christianity*, 51.

⁶³ Getui, *Theological Method and Worship in African Christianity*, 52.

⁶⁴ Brookfield, S. *Understanding and Facilitating Adult Learning*, (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1986), 1.

have identified. The education process is incomplete unless one is challenged to commit to action. The next question is what are you going to do about the situation? This is to give people the opportunity to respond to the needs of their community. The method assumes that people do want to solve their problems and they can solve them; they simply need to be encouraged and guided to do that especially from a faith perspective and by their community of faith. The learning community can serve as an opportunity for people to gain the necessary stimulation of doing action reflection education.

5.4.4.1. Process evaluation

Once the group has implemented its plan of action seeking to respond to the challenges posed by the text, they need to observe the phenomenon-taking place. Experience is only valuable in learning once it is *reflected* upon. This stage is very important because the group wants to know more from the plan of action they have put in place. There is a need to evaluate the practice. They must ask questions such as:

- (1) What has worked?
- (2) What has not worked?
- (3) What have we learned from this process?
- (4) How can we improve it?
- (5) What insights can we draw from this practice?
- (6) Are there any valuable lessons for further action?

The new lessons that are drawn from the experience are then used for further reflection, meaning they then become generative themes. The cycle thus continues.

The key question that must be asked once the group has gone through the process is: “Has learning taken place?” It is here that we need to examine where learning has taken place. According to this model, learning is said to have taken place when a learner has received new insights about her/his problem situation, and understood new appropriate responses to ensure the improvement of their situation.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have proposed a model of TCE that seeks to enable the church to do CE that leads to social transformation by making use of the insights of John Wesley and a range of contemporary education theorists. This is in response to the limitations that were seen in the JNL programme which was only achieved a limited impact in the transformation of both church and society. I also explored the characteristics and basic principles for a model of TCE. I have sought to show that education must be at the centre of the ministry of the church. The church cannot ignore the educational task and still be faithful to the Great Commission. The fundamental aim of education in the church is personal, ecclesial and social transformation. This brings to our attention the awareness that education in the church is aimed at the transformation of reality. Education is also a hermeneutical task. It is not just about the imparting of information from one generation to another, but rather the interpretation of life experiences with the aim of producing new knowledge. Finally, for education to lead to change it must be seen or understood as a dialogical process. The development of this TCE model through the previous chapters of this study comprise of the generation and formulation of themes, analysis of texts and praxis. In discussing the different aspects of this method, I have included definitions of the key terms used by the model, as well as basic assumptions, theological rationale, its goals, content and methods and its various phases. By way of conclusion, we have come to recognise that for CE to be transformative it needs a transforming model of education. This should be a model whose goal is liberation and change. Its content must be the liberating message of Jesus Christ, one that is based on the Bible and the tradition of the church. The content must come from the context as it affects the learners. Its methods must be dialogical, participatory and transformation-centered. In this chapter I have pulled together the insights from the previous discussion. These helped us to see the key principles of education. They also helped to get the points from which we could build a strong foundation for the TCE model. In building the model I have discussed its various phases.

I am aware that the model that has been drawn in this chapter is still in its early stages of development. For example, the model is still in its first draft, and has yet to be tested. It remains a theory that still needs to be put into practice, so that it can be revised for further practice and reflection. The implementation of the model will be done in the next chapter. I hope from this implementation I will be able to draw new insights that can help improve the model and its phases.

CHAPTER 6

REFLECTIONS ON FACILITATING A TRANSFORMATION-CENTERED CHRISTIAN EDUCATION LEARNING EVENT

Introduction

In the previous chapter I introduced the model of TCE, which I think should be used by churches concerned with education for personal and social transformation. Having actually facilitated a number of teaching and learning events using this method I am now going to reflect on the event I led at Howick Methodist church. I begin by sketching the dynamics at Howick and the profile of the MCSA. Secondly, I will discuss the story of the implementation process of the TCE model. In the third section I will provide an analysis of the teaching and learning event in Howick, drawing out insights and important conclusions. In the fourth section I will close the chapter by presenting a second draft of the model, which takes into account the proposals of the teaching and learning events held at Howick.

6.1. The socio-ecclesial context of Howick Methodist Church

In this subsection I will look at the community of Howick where the Methodist Church is situated.

6.1.1. Location

Howick is located in the Natal Midlands, thirty kilometres north of Pietermaritzburg, the capital city of the Province of KwaZulu-Natal. It is a small town with a population of approximately 20,000 people. Three factors make Howick important; *first*, the famous Howick Falls that attract tourists from all over the world; *second*, it is the town where Nelson Mandela was arrested in 1964; *third*, it is in this town where BTR Sarmcol is located which made headlines in 1985 by firing 1000 workers for embarking on a wage strike.⁶⁵

⁶⁵ Most of the residents of Howick are connected to Howick as former employees or relatives of those who worked for Sarmcol.

6.1.2. Housing

The community is divided into two parts. The suburbs of Howick are mainly White and upper middle class, living in large, expensive homes. These are the previously advantaged people, most of who used to work for Sarmcol and other businesses in this town. Close to the White suburb of Howick there is kwaMevana, a Black township that used to accommodate BTR Sarmcol employees. The houses are four-roomed and poorly built. There are about five hundred houses in total.

East of Howick and kwaMevana there is an informal settlement community known as Shiyase. This is where the poorest of the poor live. Houses here are mostly constructed of old pieces of corrugated iron, packing cases and cardboard. The community is divided into two parts. The first is serviced with water and lights. The second consists of a squatter area (*imizabalazo*), which has not yet been serviced. They have no permanent sites, water or sanitation facilities and water has to be collected (mostly by women) in twenty-five litre drums. Electricity is illegally distributed at some agreed price by those who have it to those who do not. At present the squatter areas have no ESKOM supplied electricity, no water-borne sewerage system and no refuse removal. These conditions alone pose a serious health hazard to the community. Education facilities provided by the State are minimal (there is only one high school and two primary schools in the community) and all are poorly serviced in terms of resources. There are no opportunities for post-matric training and very few young people from kwaMevana are able to gain access to tertiary training institutions and no one from Shiyase has as yet received a university education.

The lack of basic services ensures that the cycle of poverty continues, and limited education opportunities inevitably lead to a high unemployment rate. It is estimated that about 40% of economically active people in the Howick area are unemployed. It is important to note that it is from these three communities that Howick Methodist Church draws its members. More importantly for the study, it is from the impoverished communities of Shiyase and kwaMevana that the majority of the Black members of Howick Methodist Church live. These people would like to see their communities transformed from poverty and dehumanisation to communities that are well served by all the social amenities that make a place fit for human habitation. They are therefore concerned about the need for a CE that can lead to social

transformation, particularly in the light of their two biggest social problems: poverty and HIV/AIDS.

6.1.3. Religious life

The dominant religions in Howick are Christianity and African Traditional Religions. The church is somewhat in competition with Sangomas and traditional healers from all over the community. As in most other poor Black communities, congregation members speak openly about their visits to traditional healers for herbal medicines, assistance in getting jobs and so on.⁶⁶

There are a few churches in Howick. Most of them are African Independent Churches (found in kwa-Mevana and Shiyase communities), which meet in people's houses and shacks. At the present time there are four mainline church congregations—Methodist, Anglican, Baptist, Roman Catholic and Presbyterian. A large number of people are Zionists. The history of the mainline Church has been one of White domination and Western doctrinal formulations, which is often alien to the ordinary people of Howick.⁶⁷ The faith of the Zionists is more relevant to their daily lives. Their faith is made alive in their small praying and worshipping communities and not in formally written statements of faith and powerful positions in society. It revolves around their daily struggles for life. They emphasise teaching through sermons, stories, dress-codes and symbols.

6.1.4. The Profile of Howick Methodist Church

Howick Methodist Church has three worship services each Sunday. White people predominantly attend three of them whilst Black people attend only one, a service that begins at 10h00. The three predominantly “white congregations” are referred to as Trinity and the Black congregation is referred to as the John Wesley Society. This congregation is made up of Zulu, a few Sothos and Xhosa speaking people. In this sense I can say that the congregation is multicultural. Membership in this congregation is 80% women, 10% children but only a few young people (mainly teenagers) and 5% men. Only seven of the women are employed,

⁶⁶ Kumalo, *From Deserts to Forests*, 66.

⁶⁷ Elphick and Davenport, *Christianity in South Africa*, 132.

five are teachers and two are nurses in the surrounding hospitals and clinics. The youth are either school children or unemployed school leavers. Two of the men are teachers in local schools, the rest are either labourers or unemployed. Although men are in the minority in this congregation, they play major leadership roles.

Howick Methodist Church was started as a White church. In a history spanning over one hundred years it has always been under the leadership of White Ministers. During the last decade about three Black Ministers have been appointed to serve as assistant Ministers. Their work consisted mainly of pastoring the Black congregation. As a result, most of the duties and power is in the hands of the White Minister with the assistance of the church council, which is dominated by members of the White congregation. There is a constant struggle for leadership in the church with the Black membership feeling that they are not consulted when decisions are made in this church.

A number of male members of the Methodist Church work in Howick, as labourers in the factories, or as clerks. Many women are employed as domestic workers in suburbs of Howick. Many sell goods in the streets of the town. The economy of Howick Methodist church depends on Howick, so the Black people of Howick Methodist church are servants of Howick in one way or another. Members of the White Trinity congregation employ a significant number of John Wesley Society members. This presents a number of interesting dynamics. Furthermore, the John Wesley Congregation is poor and always struggles to make a contribution to the church, resulting in contention arising between the two congregations with Trinity feeling that the John Wesley Society is a financial burden.

6.2. Implementation of TCE at Howick Methodist Church

I served as an assistant Minister to the Black congregation from 1995-1997 while a theological student. In 2002, I returned to the area to take up a lecturing position at the University of KwaZulu-Natal and was again asked to minister to the congregation. One of my first observations was that the congregation had again fallen into apathy as far as education was concerned. There was no Sunday school; confirmation class was done over a single weekend a year. This was because the congregation could not afford a Minister who could travel and educate them about their faith. There was a need for the revitalisation of education.

When I enquired about the JNL programme, I found that it did not have a strong presence in the congregation, 98% of the people at Howick knowing nothing about the process. They argued that no one had told them anything about it. Only 2% remembered the programme although they also had a vague idea of what it was and could not remember its aims and objectives. This shows the failure of the church in planting this programme amongst people. It was in response to the above overall situation that I decided to talk to the leadership of the church and seek permission to implement TCE.

In the light of the above brief profile of Howick Methodist Church it is necessary for the church to introduce educational programmes which will focus on spirituality, counselling and social engagement. When I raised the idea of a TCE group to one of the society stewards, Mr. Aaron Madlala, was so happy about that he responded by saying:

I have been a member of the Methodist for over thirty years now, but there is very little that I know both about my church and Jesus. I only know and believe that he died for me and others, he took away my sins, that one day when we die we will go to heaven. I am still a member of this church through the grace of God, I love the church, I am used to it, and it provides me hope about suffering and what will happen with me after death. But I do not know much beyond that.⁶⁸

Mr. Madlala's concern for education in the church is a concern that most people have. He raised the question of his lack of knowledge of his Christian faith. His knowledge is solely derived from sermons, which are sometimes very poor in theology. This echoes the concerns of this thesis. Education belongs to, and is the essence of the church. A church that neglects this function has lost its indispensable character. James Smart reminds us accordingly:

The Church must teach just as it must preach, or it will not be relevant to society.⁶⁹

Education and teaching have been recognised as the central mission of the church as enunciated in the Great Commission.⁷⁰ Education is important for the impoverished people of Howick Methodist Church because it guarantees improvement of skills and knowledge so that people may improve themselves. David Matheson says that:

⁶⁸ Conversation with Aaron Madlala, August 20, 2004 on the need for CE in the Howick Methodist Church, Pietermaritzburg.

⁶⁹ Smart, J. *The Teaching Ministry of the Church: An Examination of the Basic Principles of Christian Education*. (Philadelphia, Westminster, 1954), 11.

⁷⁰ Mathew 28: 16-18.

Education can be described as the process by which individuals and society seek to improve themselves and or society by increasing their skills, knowledge or their sensitiveness.⁷¹

The TCE programme at Howick covered a period of a month, October 3-31, 2004. The first week was the formation of the teaching and learning community and the setting of ground rules. This was followed by the introduction of the TCE method to the group, its educational philosophy, basic assumption and phases. The group was then introduced to the second stage, which is the generation of themes. They were given the task for the week to listen for recurring themes in buses, taxis, markets places etc on what ordinary people were talking about. On Sunday October 10 the group dealt with the generation of themes. On October 17 the group dealt with phase three, which is analysis of texts. October 30, the group dealt with the last step of praxis or action-reflection. November 24 there was a presentation to the larger church by the TLC on what had been learned by the group.

6.2.1. Phase one: Formation of TLC

When we started this stage there was a need for the education facilitator (myself) to begin by motivating the church why we needed to do TCE. Interestingly enough, most people agreed that there was a need for TCE in the church. They expressed their concern about the lack of training for Sunday school, Confirmation Class and Bible study. At some stage in the life of the congregation they had had these groups but for various reasons they had collapsed, hence the people lacked interest and stopped attending. A further reason is because the leader moved away from the church and there was a resultant vacancy in the leadership.

There was also apathy from people in joining these groups for various reasons, such as lack of time, they were boring, and they were not addressing people's real concerns and questions. I told them that the model we will follow would be a transformation-centered approach. This means that it would be concerned with learning the Christian faith, by using the issues that concern us as human beings in our daily lives. This raised a lot of interest from people and many wanted to be part of the group. In my motivation I spoke about the need for us to reflect on the life around us as Christians and members of our communities so that we could find a way of participating in transforming it.

⁷¹ Matheson, D. and Grosenor, I. *An Introduction to the Study of Education*. (London: David Fulton Publishers, 1999), 6.

It is also important to mention that the teaching and learning events at Howick were conducted in the Zulu language, spoken by most in the community. This made it easy for most of the people to participate and make a contribution during the sessions.⁷² It also meant that people could own the sessions and ultimately the whole programme because they contributed from its inception and were also responsible for shaping it as it unfolded during the teaching and learning sessions.

Suddenly there was great interest from people to be part of the process. As previously noted, Howick Methodist Church has very few men and children, the majority of its members being women, most of whom are poor, with the exception of a few who are employed as teachers and nurses. Eight people offered to be part of the group. They consisted of two men, four women and two young people. Interestingly, all were employed: four were teachers, two were nurses and the two young people were clerks. There was therefore a need for me to conscientise the people in the need for us to be more representative of the membership of the church in terms of gender, economic status, social status etc.

Four extra people then joined the group after I had personally approached them. These were two women, a man and a young person. They were all unemployed. Two were HIV+ and visibly sick. I approached two additional people one of whom is living with disability and the other is a town councillor and was not involved in church activities, other than attending church services where he sat quietly. By the end of this process our group had a Teaching and Learning Community (*Umphakathi ka Funda Ufundise*).⁷³ I explained to them that in this group there is mutual teaching and learning. I also told them the importance of community for the success of the programme, which means that the group offers mutual care and support and they learn from one another.

I went further to introduce them to the TCE model. I told them about the different steps that were to be implemented, although they must be understood as mere guidelines, for people are free to innovate and use the model in any way that would suite their situation. I went through

⁷² It is important to remember that one of the weaknesses of the JNL process was that the material and workshops were conducted in English, thus alienating a number of African people who could not speak nor understand English. Secondly one of the major points of conflict in South Africa during the apartheid era was the total dismissal of Black languages in favour of Afrikaans. See chapter 2.

⁷³ Zulu translation of Teaching and Learning Community. It was necessary to use this translation so that people could understand the group and its purpose.

all the steps, until the group understood their contribution; every time they made a suggestion on the model, I recorded it and tried to make it part of the model. This was needed to make them aware that the aim was not to impose the model on them, but to build a learning environment and process that was conducive to their full participation. I also wanted to assure them that their contributions were very important even if it meant challenging the model and reshaping it so that it is appropriate for their situation in its uniqueness.

I asked them to make their contribution on how we could make this group successful in nurturing our faith and life so that we could also contribute to the improvement of life around us. People raised a number of interesting suggestions and all were discussed and welcomed by the group. That was the beginning of our TLC group and people felt ownership of the process. This raised much interest and excitement. After having discussed the process in detail and all of them had made their contribution, we commenced our first homework, which was the “generation of themes.” It was agreed that the group would meet again the following week, an hour before the church service.

I had some difficulties convincing people that they should take part in generating the topic they wanted us to explore. One elderly woman asked me if it was their duty to come up with any topic, for after all, I was the educator, I was Umfundisi, (teacher), I knew what was good for them to know, hence why was I asking them for a topic? I had to explain that it was to their benefit that they should participate in the generation of the themes, curriculum development and even in the teaching and learning situation itself, because all this was the process of education and learning. It became clear to me that the old lady was speaking on behalf of a lot of other people, because they kept on nodding and agreeing with her. I saw it necessary to conscientise the people by sharing with them that we need a dialogical approach to education that would allow them to participate and share in the learning process because they also have knowledge. What I became aware of was that people do not easily accept the dialogical model. They are so used to the anti-dialogical approach that they have come to prefer it. In effect, an anti-dialogical model is easy for learners because they are not expected to do any work other than to listen to the educator. I therefore learned that even though we may see it as easy and empowering for people who have lived their lives under domination it becomes difficult for them to engage in dialogue.

It was also important that they started participating from the beginning of the process by formulating the curriculum that was to be followed so that this becomes their education, not mine. After a long discussion they agreed to follow the process and I asked them to listen for the recurring themes that people were discussing in the community. They were required to listen carefully throughout the week on what people were talking about, at their homes, on buses, taxis, at work, sitting in clinics etc. The guiding questions for them were:

- (1) What are the topics that are discussed or concern people in the community?
- (2) What do people see as solutions to these issues?

They were discouraged from interviewing people on these issues, but were to be part of the dialogue if prompted by people. They were encouraged to take notes if they could, but were not required to do so. The meeting was closed with a prayer and we had tea and cakes as a way of building community, as it had been agreed that this should be our custom.

6.2.2. Generation of themes

6.2.2.1. Listening process

The guiding questions here were:

- (1) What are people talking about both in the church and society?
- (2) What are people burning needs?
- (3) What are their common problems?

6.2.2.2. Prioritisation themes

We started with discussing the themes that people came with after listening to conversations. The themes varied from poverty, HIV/AIDS, democracy, land, unemployment, safety and security, education conflict, neighbours who were rude, even the subjects of local gossip were seen as issues! We recorded all the themes on our flipchart. The most prevalent issues were Poverty, HIV/AIDS, Unemployment, Housing, Education and Land. The TLC agreed to tackle these issues in order of their priorities. So poverty would be our initial focus, followed by HIV/AIDS.

6.2.3. Curriculum development: Designing the learning event

The curriculum development stage is meant for planning the teaching and learning process. Here we looked at the themes that we were to follow. The venue, time and other things that were needed for the learning events were discussed. It was agreed that for the next few weeks our lesson topic would be “Poverty.” The venue would be our church hall each Sunday, an hour before our service, which starts at 10h30. Therefore we agreed to meet from 09h00-10h00. I was going to be the facilitator of the teaching and learning events. The facilitator would only facilitate the teaching and learning process. We also appointed a timekeeper. We agreed that the opening prayer would be rotational. This was to promote participation of all people during sessions. We also agreed to bring our Bibles, hymnals and notebooks with us. It was agreed that for every session we would prepare for the next session, by preparing for the next stage during the week. This would mean asking for opinions from people and also studying relevant materials. The facilitator would also do research on the theme, so everyone saw this as an opportunity to explore knowledge in relation to the topic. Others would just dialogue with people at home, work and other places to find out their point of view on the themes. We agreed on the meeting time, called for the commitment of people and accountability to the whole group.

There was a need to encourage people to report or send an apology if they were not going to be present. People agreed on the time that would be spent on various issues in the curriculum and on the logistical issues such as venue, times for meetings and roles. It must be understood and agreed that the role of the educator/teacher in this approach is a facilitator. S/he is a partner in the teaching and learning process. The educator should play the role of creating a safe space of environment for people to learn, share and contribute in the learning process.

(a) Lesson plan

The lesson plan was as follows:

- Target Group: Howick Methodist Church Teaching and Learning Community.

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- Aim: To understand the problem of poverty so as to come up with strategies of intervention as a Church community.
 - Objectives: At the end of the learning event, we should be able to:
 - Define poverty and articulate how it affects us;
 - Understand the teaching of the Christian community on poverty;
 - Facilitate effective intervention strategies with regard to this problem;
 - Theme: Poverty and the church.
 - Venue: Church Hall
 - Time: 09h00-10h00
 - Day of meeting: Sundays

(b) Outline of sessions

- October 3: Formation of Teaching and Learning Community;
- October 10: Curriculum development (Generative Themes, Listening, Prioritisation);
- October 17: Poverty: Analysis of Text (Public Text, Human Text and church Text);
- October 24: Continuation of work from previous week;
- November 1: Poverty: Process Evaluation (What have we learned, How can we share it with others);
- November 21: Presentation to the Church (Liturgy, drama and suggestion)

(c) Roles

- Facilitator: Rev. R. S. Kumalo;
- Time Keeper: Mrs. Ntoyi;
- Note-taking: Mr. Milton Ncolosi;
- Prayers: Mr., J. Ngcobo, Mrs. A. Mnyandu, Miss, Z. Sikhakhane and S. Shangase;
- Teaching and learning materials: (chalk, flipchart, pencils, hymn, books, bibles) Mrs. Ngobese.

6.2.3. Analysis of texts

The second meeting and stage was to do textual analysis and we met on October 17, 2004. The group met at the church hall for its third session.

6.2.3.1. Public text

On the third week we had our third session in the church hall. There was great enthusiasm from people. They had lived with the topic for the whole week. They had engaged in discussions, debates, prayers and others had even read books on the themes. They were looking forward to share their accumulated knowledge around the theme. Mrs. Anna Mnyandu opened the session with a hymn on the providence of God and she prayed about the God who provides in the midst of poverty. Guiding questions for this session were:

- (1) What is poverty?
- (2) Is there any problem of poverty in our society?
- (3) What is the problem?
- (4) What causes it and why?

It was not easy to follow the set questions because people had a lot of other genuine questions and answers about poverty. I will highlight some of the ideas, which came up in the public text.

Poverty is to have no food like the street people; poverty means being unemployed; being poor because of bad governance; the problem is that some people are greedy and want to enjoy alone especially government officials; we are living in poor conditions; the problem is that there are no jobs and projects to help us to fend for ourselves because people up there are not fair; In our homes parents cannot afford to meet our basic needs and we not able to get jobs to assist them; the problem is that there is no equality in our society, some are extremely rich while some of us are starving to death.⁷⁴

The sentiments of what it meant to be poor as echoed by the TLC at Howick were the same as those shared by Graham Philpot's group in Amawoti in 1992. They said at that time:

To be poor is not to be able to satisfy basic human needs: food, housing, health, education, job and social participation. In this sense, as is very often pointed out in the Bible to be poor is the same as to be oppressed.⁷⁵

The above shows the similarities of how poor people understand poverty and its impact.

⁷⁴ These are some of the responses from the TLC group about poverty. Minutes of TCE Session October 17, 2004, Howick Methodist Church.

⁷⁵ Philpott, *Jesus is Tricky and God is Undemocratic*, 93.

I also contributed in terms of the technical meaning of the term poverty; in this I was assisted by some of the educated members of the group, some of who had done their own research on the topic. I saw this as the advantage of the dialogical method because people can share their own understanding of the topic. My contributions came in just as any other member of the group. I told them what Giddens said about poverty:

The concept of poverty is grounded in the idea of subsistence –the basic conditions that must be met in order to sustain a physically healthy existence. People who lack these fundamental requirements for human existence—such as sufficient food, shelter and clothing—are said to live in poverty.⁷⁶

People started comparing their situations with the given definitions; it was a moment of discovery for many. A number of people identified with the definition. Others were specific in their understanding of poverty.

6.2.3.2. Personal text

On October 24, the group convened again to continue with their learning and teaching process. This is the stage where people shared their stories in relation to the theme of poverty. For instance, most people shared the way poverty has affected them personally and their community at large. People were reduced to tears when they remembered how poverty had personally affected them. Most were poor because they were unemployed, not educated; they were retrenched, neglected by parents or spouses. A majority had lost breadwinners as a result of the AIDS pandemic. In a church situation it was interesting to note that both the rich and the poor will relate poverty to their lives. This can be said to be a human text in relation to the theme. Some people broke down and the rest of the group to them extended support. Some blamed Sarmcol for their poverty. There was also an opportunity of sharing deep-rooted pains that people had been keeping to themselves about their situation in their homes. Mrs. Alzinah Mabaso who is 65 years old shared that:

⁷⁶ Giddens, *Introduction to Sociology*, 221.

Mtanami, uma ukhuluma ngobuphofu nendlala ukhulum ngento esiphila ngayo. Ukudla ngike ngibe namalanga amabili noma amathathu, ngingakwazi. Uncedo ngiluthola komakhelwane, ngidle kanye nabazulu bami silale. Nezinye insuku silala ngamanzi. Lokho kuyimpilo kimi,⁷⁷

My son poverty has become part of my life, I live with it. Sometimes I spend two or three days without any decent meal. We live by begging from our neighbours and then I eat with my grandchildren. Some days we just drink water and that is it.

Surprisingly, to some poverty meant not having eggs just for a day or not having bread for a few days towards month-end. There were many more stories of this ilk, and in most cases were sorrowful and inspiring people to action. What came out clearly here was that most people in our congregation were poor, but poverty levels differed. It was also concluded by the group that lack of education, employment and the legacy of apartheid are contributory factors to the problem of poverty.

6.2.3.3. Church text

As a church there was a need to bring God into the picture. People gave their Biblical and liturgical understanding of the theme. At this point, I tried to bring the church, Christ and God into the picture. Would Jesus Christ endorse the status quo, or condemn it? People tried to bring in their Bible knowledge and explanations of what Christ could have done in their situation. To buttress their points, they alluded to the analogy of “all fingers not being equal.” They went further to quote Ecclesiastes 4:14 “The youth may have come from prison to the kingship, or he may have been born in poverty within this kingdom” and also Psalm 75:7 “(God) brings one down, he exalts another.” This Biblical reference generated further discussion as to the actual meaning of the text. Some quoted Luke 4:18 where Jesus spoke about bringing good news to the poor and said they found comfort here because a text like this helped them feel that Jesus identified with them as poor people. Another person quoted Mathew 5, saying that Jesus blessed the poor and that text was a source of inspiration for him. Christianity wanted to change society and that was social transformation. One old man said that Jesus came to liberate people from much bondage, including poverty. He also gave the example of manna from heaven when Moses was leading the Israelites out of Egypt. As in the Exodus story, God will still come down and feed those who are hungry.

⁷⁷ Mrs. Mabaso is a member of the Women’s Manyano. Her husband used to work for Sarmcol and was retrenched and they have been living in poverty ever since he lost his job.

One young girl made reference to John's gospel that those who are set free by Christ will have life in all its fullness and that is why he fed the crowds that followed him with five loaves of bread and two fish.⁷⁸ The young people also became interested in John's ideas and went on to give examples such as "whoever is thirsty should come to me."⁷⁹ The general agreement in the group was that Christ and God would always seek to feed the hungry and the poor. Christ is Saviour of the poor, oppressed and suffering. He came to give people freedom, liberty and life to the fullest. Rather than saying, "Blessed are the poor in spirit" the church is now more comfortable in just saying, "Blessed are the poor." This consoled its poor membership and helped it to trust and obey God.

This was the longest session; we did not finish the discussion because our time ran over, so we decided to continue the following week. This gave members an opportunity to do more reflection on the theme in the week that followed. November 1, we gathered again. We looked at Bible texts and began reading critically trying to help one another understand their true meanings. This was a difficult task because people are very rigid in their interpretation of Bible texts, especially if the text agrees with them. To move them from this pre-understanding proved difficult. We also explored the teaching of the MCSA on poverty. The JNL realised that the church needed to oppose poverty and in its history it has been involved in programmes of poverty alleviation.⁸⁰ Our liturgy and hymns however are very poor in addressing poverty they simply speak of spiritual poverty that is to be satisfied by God. They do not refer to real poverty often, and where they do, they promise pie-in the sky! The story of Jesus feeding five thousand people in the Gospel of Mark; four thousand in the Gospel of John, and his disciples in the Gospel of Mathew, showed us that Jesus was against poverty; therefore the church must be against poverty. We agreed that the responsibility of the church is to fight poverty and we committed ourselves as a church to embark on alleviation strategies.

⁷⁸ John 10:10, see also John 4:1-20

⁷⁹ John 7:37.

⁸⁰ Storey, *The Journey Begun*, 29.

6.2.4. Phase four: Praxis

November 7 the group dealt with the *Praxis* stage. Guiding questions for this stage were:

- (1) What would Jesus do about poverty?
- (2) What can we do as a church community about this problem?
- (3) How can we do it?
- (4) What resources do we already have amongst us to address the problem?
- (5) Who will do what, when?

Praxis can be understood as:

Actions of individuals or groups in as much as these are performed or interpreted as ecclesiastical action.⁸¹

The aim of this stage was to evaluate the process of education by putting what we had learned into action. The guiding question here was: What have we learned in this exercise and how can we share the knowledge we have gained? The majority of the people shared that they had learned a lot through the process. Some of the things they had learned were: to articulate the definition of poverty its causes, effects, statistics and impact of poverty. They also mentioned that this was the first time they had come to see the extent to which some of their fellow church members were suffering because of this problem. They also learned the impact that church education, through its liturgies, hymns, prayers, symbols and stories, can mislead people's understanding of what the church must do in relation to social problems such as poverty.

People felt that they wanted to continue to engage and delve deeper into the problem of poverty. They agreed to start a ministry of poverty alleviation; this project would serve two purposes. One was to provide an immediate response as a church to the poor. Secondly, it was to provide an action-reflection opportunity to the group, so that they can take their learning process on poverty further. They felt that the more they got involved with addressing the problem, they would learn more about it and about what the church's response should be.

⁸¹ Heyns, L and Pieterse, H. *A Primer in Practical Theology*. (Pretoria: Gnosis Books and Publishers 1990), 26.

6.2.5. Process evaluation

The main aim of this stage was to evaluate the teaching and learning events that had taken place. This was important so that we could improve the following sessions.

Guiding questions were:

- (1) What have we learned from this process or what knowledge has been produced?
- (2) How are we going to transmit that knowledge?

We continued with the next generative theme after two months of dealing with the issue of poverty. The immediate strategy of the group was to report to the congregation on the outcome of their teaching and learning sessions. On November 14 the group met to discuss and prepare for a presentation to the church on what they had learned and to invite more people to join the TLC for the next session on a different theme. The report back service was held November 21, 2004. The group drew up a liturgy, selected songs and a sermon, which would be dramatised all of which were on the theme of poverty. The aim was to teach and conscientise the whole church on this issue. The chosen theme of the day was *Church and Poverty*. It was referred to in the hymns, prayers, sermon and liturgy. Some members of the TCE shared with the congregation the lessons they had gained on poverty from the TCE sessions. Amongst there were the following:

Poverty is not just spiritual but also economic, God does not cause poverty. The majority of people in SA and in the church were poor. Poverty is structural, not accidental, and the Bible has more passages on the poor and on poverty than in any other topic. The gospel is good news to the poor, the church to respond to poverty as part of its mission, it must help people discover local assets to deal with poverty and the people themselves have to do something about poverty instead of waiting on government.

6.3. Analysis of the Teaching and Learning Event at Howick

In this section I will analyze the process of the TCE educational event that we practiced at Howick. In my analysis I will draw the themes that emerged from both my reflection on the teaching and learning event, and the group's own evaluation.

6.3.1. Dialogue is the foundation of a successful TCE teaching and learning event

The approach I used in education in Howick was very dialogical. The reason is because of its conscientising approach to education. It conscientised both the facilitator and learners in drawing from their own resources and contributing to the teaching and learning situation. It was able to do this because it gave room to the students to participate in the teaching and learning processes, giving room for creativity and critical analysis of the structures of society to which they belong. It also encouraged the group members to draw from their own experiences. Education can either empower people to participate in the processes of their freedom or it can just pass on the present system of oppression. Richard Shaul echoes this sentiment when he says:

Education either functions as an instrument that is used to facilitate the integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring conformity to it, or it becomes a practice of freedom, the means by which men and women (sic) deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of the world.⁸²

TCE assumes that no learning can take place without the learner, and that the learner is the starting point for achieving the objectives of the learning task. Both the teacher and the learner have a common interest, which is the deeper understanding of the theme. Hence, the teacher is encouraged to view the learner not as an empty vessel that needs filling with knowledge, but as one who already has some knowledge of some sort, from which the new learning experience will be carried out.⁸³ Methodologies such as question and answer, group discussions, and open forums are encouraged, in order for both educator and student to explore the perceptions they have of the generative theme until they discover the actual meaning that they can both accept and agree upon. Mazibuko gives his agreement when he writes:

In the teaching and learning situation, what is needed is a method of obtaining a commitment from both the teacher and the learner as to what is to count as an authentic perception, and—equally important—what is to count as ‘success in grappling with the generative theme.’⁸⁴

⁸² Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 16.

⁸³ Mazibuko *Education is Liberation*, 275.

⁸⁴ Gerloff, *Mission is Crossing Frontiers*, 275.

This is also in line with what Wesley's class meeting did through the covenants which each had to adhere to, in order to be part of the class meeting. There was mutual agreement on the behaviour of each class member and the need to attend class meetings without fail. Wesley said that:

When a person first visits a class on trial they are asked, "Do you know the design of our meeting together?" The rules of the society are given to them with some Remarks as these: "If you continue to meet with us, you will observe the Rules, both [for the] End you ought to have in view and the Conduct you are expected to manifest. Take them home with you-consider them alone, as in the sight of God."⁸⁵

People shared that the previous week had not been an ordinary one for them because suddenly they were vigilant and listened to issues that troubled people. This was growth in holiness when one looks at it from a Wesleyan perspective. They said that, by being attentive to people's conversations, they were already engaging in a learning situation, as they listened to people analyzing their daily lives at home, work and at church. Things that they had previously taken for granted suddenly became educative conversations that were nurturing their growth both as Christians and citizens. Others shared how they engaged in dialogue with other people on the church and its irrelevance for society.

The fact that TCE is based on a dialogical approach meant that in the learning process the TLC became a community of nurtured growth. In terms of Wesley's classes, although the difference was that everyone could talk and share their experiences and knowledge, it was "strong-participation" rather than "soft-participation."

6.3.2. TCE creates a safe space for mutual-conscientisation

In a context of poverty and marginalisation, the TCE method encouraged learning through dialogue, which helped people to name the realities that they experience daily. The learning events became an opportunity of sharing the deep-seated struggles of people with poverty that they had not spoken about before. As they shared they began to find the words with which to articulate their frustrations and what they were going through, whilst at the same time they were helping the facilitator (the present writer) to understand the extent of their struggles. They also conscientised me as they shared their stories. In this method, education became a space where a lot of information was drawn from people rather than imposed on them. Such an approach is one

⁸⁵ Watson, *The Early Methodist Class Meetings*, 106.

of the basic principles of education. The word education comes from the Latin word “educare” referring to an activity of leading out or forth. Thus, Karen Tye argues that education needs “clear thinking, deliberate and intentional efforts”⁸⁶ if it is to achieve its best result. I started by telling the TLC that as a people we must not be satisfied by the current *status quo*, instead we must strive to attain the not yet.

The way people were responding made me think that conscientisation is actually like reminding people or simply putting in words what people already know. Conscientisation was an eye opener to some who actually reacted as if they had discovered new information about themselves and their society. Having motivated people to critically think about their situation they began to participate eagerly in the learning process. This meant that the role of the education facilitator in TCE was to give “permission” to the learner to feel free to talk about their experiences and share what they knew. It is not to “tell” people, but rather to create an environment where they can feel safe to contribute their knowledge. I concluded that the work of an educator should be measured not according to the amount of knowledge s/he has imparted, but the knowledge that has been accumulated and negotiated between the learners and the educator. As Rapapport argues:

Social problems, paradoxically, require that experts turn to non-experts in order to discover the many different, even contradictory, solutions that they use to gain control, find meaning, and empower their own lives.⁸⁷

I also realised that the more people spoke, the more I was becoming conscientised. Sometimes I felt irritated by the slow pace of delivery. So the teaching and learning event was my moment of continuous conscientisation and growth.

6.3.3. The empowering role of an educator in TCE

The role of the educator in TCE is understood as that of a guide. Alluding to this, Margaret Crain says that the role of an educator is a guide, and the key skill an educator requires is listening. She noted that, with eyes of love, an educator should, “seek to see lives and groups

⁸⁶ Tye, *The Basics of Christian Education*, 18.

⁸⁷ In Philpott, *Jesus is Tricky and God is Undemocratic*, 18.

as whole and complex, living within a web of forces,” with unique experiences and needs.⁸⁸
She continues by saying that:

Judgment is not the place to begin listening. And the listening needs to occur with our shoes off, since we begin to know individual members of a congregation and the spiritual needs they bring to the congregation and we begin to realise that we are standing on holy ground. We must realise that this the garden planted by God’s grace.⁸⁹

This is true for education in a church such as Howick Methodist, which is in the midst of the racist legacy of the past. Being a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, and multi-racial church, true education can only be carried out that uses the skills of listening, seeing people with eyes of love, to begin to educate each other to reach the goal of education advocated in dialogical education, which is liberation and humanisation.

In this context it was necessary for me to see my role as that of a facilitator in this process. I was afraid I might perpetuate the dependency syndrome that is prevalent in most poor communities. This dependency syndrome can be transferred to a new leader simply because the basic structure of dependency is transferable. As Nürnberger affirms:

The basic structure (of dependency) is transferable, when a great power higher or higher authority appears; it is not difficult to yield to the new master. The transfer only requires some familiarity with the values norms and patterns of behaviour that go with the new realm of power.⁹⁰

So I remained vigilant, not to allow that to happen. This meant having to encourage people to see themselves as capable to do anything they want, without having to depend on me as the minister-educated-facilitator to do things for them.

6.3.4. The need for the teaching and learning community to be inclusive

Another important feature of the teaching and learning event at Howick Methodist Church was the inclusive nature of the group. This was spelt out from the beginning when we were setting up the TLC, that all people were welcome to be part of the group. When others shied away from the group, there was a move to invite them to be part of the process. This was important because it sought to include as many diverse people as possible from the

⁸⁸ In Seymour, *Mapping Christian Education*, 93.

⁸⁹ Crain, M. “Listening to Churches” in Seymour, *Mapping Christian Education*, 95.

⁹⁰ Nürnberger, K. “The Dependency Syndrome in Marginalised Cultures and the Liberative Potential of the Christian Community.” *Missionalia* 20 (2), (1996), 148-170.

congregation. It does not assume that people would easily join the group, but assumed that people needed to be motivated, encouraged and invited to do CE. Some people would not have joined the group unless they were motivated. This makes this stage critical because it is where the group is formed and people are motivated, especially those who would normally be reluctant to join because they have experienced marginalisation e.g., People Living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHAs), the unemployed, the homeless, the elderly, women and those living with disability. We cannot begin CE without making sure that the groups represented are a true reflection of the demographics of the church and community.⁹¹ This was significant in Howick Methodist Church where people do things according to their group, colour, age, social and economic status, etc. Even worship is structured in this manner. The TLC group was the only one in the church that crossed all these boundaries and offered people opportunities of growing and learning from one another.

The inclusive nature of the group at Howick Methodist Church meant the availability of a diverse experience and pool of knowledge that was shared amongst the group. Each and every stage of the learning process took time because each person had her/his own unique experience in relation to the topic that was to be discussed. This meant that all people shared their knowledge, and different opinions came from the different backgrounds and situations shared in the group. This maximised the amount of lessons gained during education. This means that inclusivity as first applied by Wesley in the class meeting system is important in education.

Traditionally, the Minister would select her/his own team, and these members would normally consist of those who would work well with the Minister, or those who in the Minister's opinion, are most appropriate. The general invitation allows for protection against this biased approach, as there is a greater possibility that a representative group adds credibility to the generative themes that are discerned and thus facilitates greater participation when the action plan needs to be implemented. It is the local people who collect information and themes, which are in fact their themes and data.

Upon reflection, I could say that people were invited to the learning process and to form a TCE group. Membership was voluntary and was representative of people from all walks of

⁹¹ Kumalo, R. S. "How Shall We Know: The Methodist Church as a Community of Teaching and Learning in a Transforming Society?" Presentation to the Wesley Celebration at John Wesley College, September 9, 2004.

life. Even those teachers who realised that dehumanising others dehumanises them were welcome to join the group. Interestingly, people joined the group consciously hence the possibility of committed membership. The group needed to have a mutual covenant for commitment, participation and mutual respect for each other. The rich and the poor should be able to work together as equal partners and this marks the beginning of the process of humanisation. I mentioned the problems of unemployment, HIV/AIDS, poverty etc. I shared with them how these can be dealt with in the church from a Christian perspective. This raised a lot of interest from people who saw the approach used as relevant to their situation.

Power relations will need to be monitored seriously because they can be a barrier to the success of this model. The conscientisation stage is very important here because it states the expectations of the model and calls for the commitment of the people to have mutual respect and equality as the basis of the teaching and learning community. The covenant they will draw up, as a group needs to highlight the need for people not to dominate one another in the group, but to promote equal dialogue. At this stage, the group identifies their assets that they will use. The facilitator asks people about what they bring to the group, e.g., their experiences, time, resources and knowledge. The aim is not to embarrass them, but to make them aware that every member brings resources in the group. By just being there, no one becomes a liability to others. Here the community begins to audit the resources present such as people, land, building, and water electricity. The important thing is that the community begins with what it has rather than what it does not have—the latter being a hangover from the past. Many communities have started by looking at what they need instead of what they have, and this has led to total paralysis when they look at the amount of resources they need. They become discouraged, and see no way of getting those resources and thereby end up doing nothing. This method encourages the asset-based approach to social action. Assess and appreciate what you have before you worry about what you need!

6.3.5. TCE and the agency of the learners

Another lesson gained from the session at Howick was that people became excited with the learning process. People arrived on time enthusiastically, brought resources and took initiatives to invite others to share their information. They did informal research by asking people about the topic and took notes that became useful points of reference during the

learning sessions. Their learning gave opportunity to gain more knowledge and compile information for themselves. Some brought notebooks and tape recorders in order to record the sessions for future reference and continued learning. This was made possible by the fact that the learning process was dialogical, hence it could be recorded easily and was far more exciting than that of a formal lecture. This was a clear indicator of the level of ownership by the group of the teaching and learning event.

This is what makes the TCE approach different from other methods such as the one used by Wesley where learners were passive followers of the learning process. The TCE approach reminds people that it depends on them and their participation without which there would be no progress.

From this experience I learnt that a major challenge in education in the church is the question of power. The challenge of educators is to learn to share power, as they become conscious of power that can be used either to promote liberation or maintain the *status quo*. I suggest that in education, power must be used for the liberation of the learner through initiating and giving them permission to share their knowledge and put into practice what they have learned without fearing those above them. The educator gains power as s/he descends from a position of power and becomes vulnerable to the learner. The learner moves from fearing the educator to respecting her/him. As the learner begins to feel good about their participation, they stand up for themselves and become empowered. Once they have gained knowledge about the themes, they begin to participate in other fora in society that deal with social problems.

6.4. Proposed changes that were needed by the TLC

There are a few changes to the model presented in chapter 5 that were proposed by the TLC at Howick Methodist Church during the process evaluation stage. These were:

- (1) The Minister must be regarded as the chief educator in the local church;
- (2) The inclusion of a communal text;
- (3) Theological reflection as an independent phase.

In the discussion that follows, I will evaluate these proposals.

6.4.1. The Minister as chief educator in the local church

I asked the congregation to accept that a member of the group can be a facilitator, so that they do not have to depend on me as Minister for facilitation. They agreed that other lay people could be facilitators, Sunday school teachers and even facilitators of Bible studies. However, they disagreed that a Minister can leave the educational ministry of the church in the hands of other people, without playing a key role. The group felt that the Minister is the main educator in the church and all the others facilitators are assistants and need her/him to lead the way of education facilitation in the church. As one member put it:

Mfundisi,⁹² even the name *umfundisi*, which we use when we refer to Ministers, tells us that the main job of the Minister is that of an educator. We supported our children when they offer for the ministry, we pray for them and send them to college, as a church we pay for their fees, with the understanding that when they finish they will come back and teach us the knowledge of God, which they have accumulated at college. We know and we want to continue doing all the other things in the church such as counselling, pastoral visitations, prayers etc. What we do not know is to teach the theological reasons behind them and that is what we need the Minister to do. He must teach us to do that. That is your job to teach us.⁹³

This discussion led to an agreement that the Minister is an educator. In answering the questions: How does s/he educate? What are the aims and methods of his education? The aim of her/his education must be to empower not to dis-empower, to facilitate the transformation of individual lives, the church and even society where necessary.

6.4.1.1. Catalyst

The Minister as an educator is a catalyst in the local church through education. At the beginning of the teaching and learning event at Howick Methodist Church there was a lack of interest in participation from the people. As I kept asking questions, trying to problematise the issues so that we would explore them as a group, I was losing the people's interest and attention. They felt it was a boring exercise because they expected me to tell them the answers, because I knew them. They asked: "Why waste time by asking them questions about

⁹² Umfundisi is a Nguni (Zulu, Xhosa and Siswati) word which literally means teacher, or one who educates.

⁹³ Howick TLC Event November 7, 2004.

things that I knew they did not know?” They expected me to know everything—after all, I am the teacher, highly educated and ordained, hence my use of the question method of education was interpreted as a weakness or being selfish. I made myself vulnerable in order to liberate them from their dependency. I continued with this approach and explained to them that I understood the role of an educator to be that of a catalyst.

Speaking of catalysts, Nürnberger affirms the misunderstanding of the poor concerning the catalyst that deliberately descends so as to enable people to ascend, when he says they would not understand the humility of the leader because the dependency syndrome needs powerful superiors. They would misunderstand humility as weakness and feel orphaned and thereby turn away disappointed, perhaps even disgusted. He said that:

In the early stage the catalysts are above subordinates. If they win the trust of the subordinates, the dependency of the latter will be transferred to the former. This stage cannot be avoided. The rank and file is still in dependency and would not understand the 'humility' of the leader because the dependency syndrome needs powerful superiors. They would understand humility as failure and weakness and feel orphaned and turn away disappointed, perhaps even disgusted.⁹⁴

It was difficult for the people to accept this new role of leading the teaching and learning process. There was a need to help them see that it was not a weakness or failure to lead on the educator's part, but rather a display of maturity. I helped them realise that a transforming approach to education requires that the educator allow them to take part in the provision of answers and content of the teaching and learning event. This also means that the educator must expect some resistance from the students when moving away from the traditional mode of education to that of a liberatory pedagogy such as TCE. Learners, especially adult learners, are used to these traditional methods of teaching and learning so that they find it difficult to adapt to new methods. It takes therefore a holistic approach towards education in order to break the effect of “banking education.” As Nürnberger says:

It is also necessary for the subordinates to be empowered not only technically but also spiritually (or psychologically) to take up their responsibility.⁹⁵

For education to be dialogical and thus enable the learning environment to be an empowering exercise there is a need for the educator to trust the learners. As Carl Rogers has said:

⁹⁴ Nürnberger, K. “The Dependency Syndrome,” 148-170.

⁹⁵ Nürnberger, “The Dependency Syndrome,” 148-170.

As I began to trust students...I changed from being a teacher and evaluator, to being a facilitator of learning.⁹⁶

6.4.2. Facilitator as companion of the learners

As the sessions continued I observed that a number of people were quiet. Most of these were women and those who are semi-literate. They shied away from making contributions, letting those who were brave and educated to dominate the discussions. I began to encourage those who were not talking to speak, giving them the necessary permission to take their time and share their thoughts without fear of criticism. After the session I asked them about their feelings and encouraged them to keep participating and develop confidence. By the end of the TCE process they had gained confidence and were participating freely. This taught me that an important part of the educator's responsibility is to sponsor others in the learning process. The word sponsor means to "encouraging and giving support" to another person.⁹⁷ Referring to the purpose of CE, Seymour in his book *Mapping Christian Education* says that:

Congregational Christian Education consists of sponsoring human emergence in the light of the reign of God. ... The term sponsoring connotes Jesus' prevailing style of educating a way of being and walking with people characterised by compassionate initiative, hospitable inclusiveness, gentle empowerment and a generous invitation to partnership and community. Sponsoring includes encouraging, enabling, and guiding in contrast to authoritarian, paternalistic, and manipulative ways of practicing education.⁹⁸

Understood from this perspective, the TCE educator is a sponsor of human growth and development. S/he is a partner to the learners, as they embark on their journey of growth towards knowledge.

6.4.2. Communal text

In the original model (see chapter 5) there was provision for a public text, personal text and church text. However, the TLC evaluation process held at Howick Methodist Church expressed the thought that the *common understanding* of the text must be given a prominent space as a phase on its own. The feeling was that it takes time and effort to negotiate a common text that all will agreed upon, hence it must not be lost in other texts, but rather be

⁹⁶ Palmer, J. *Fifty Modern Thinkers*, 49.

⁹⁷ Doke, C. *Dictionary of Education*. (Johannesburg: Wits University Press 1990), 461.

⁹⁸ Seymour, *Mapping Christian Education*, 27.

seen as an achievement. As a result the TLC resolved that we must allocate a space in the phases for a common text, which will provide an opportunity for people to come to some agreement on the meaning of the text to them as a community. This definition may be unique to this group. It was also felt that the phase could be referred to as a *communal text*. This is important because the way the text is understood in the group determines the attitude, methods and strategies that the group will employ in its endeavour to address the problem. It became clear to us that a small group is more reliable for the discernment of God's Will than individuals. The small group (TLC) however needs to be part of the church community to which it belongs. This community must be informed and measure its decisions against the belief and practice of the whole church.⁹⁹

6.4.3. Phase four: Theological reflections

In the original model (see chapter 5), "the church text" was third in a series of "texts" in phrase three. The TLC at Howick Methodist Church proposed that the church text must be given a prominent space as its own phase instead of falling under general analysis. The reason given for this change was that it has so much work; putting it under phase three leads to confusion. The group also felt that since this is a CE model, it falls under theology, which means that the focus on theology must be prominent. To do this, a space needs to be created for it. It was felt that it would be very easy for the theological input to be forgotten or marginalised if it was not placed at the centre of the model and accordingly, would be detrimental to the theological credibility of the model. It was therefore suggested that we create a separate theological phase.

Linked to this was need to change it from a church text (as it has been suggested earlier) to that of theological reflection. The reason for this was the awareness that the term church is a limiting term whereas the term theological refers to the broader field of *theological reflection*; furthermore, the church is covered as a sub-topic under theological reflection so there is no need for this phase to be put under that term because it is there anyway. At this stage the learning community as a community of believers or church draws from their church and theological resources in its endeavour to understand the theme from a faith perspective. The

⁹⁹ Groome, *An Introduction to Christian Religious Education*, 199.

main question that is to be answered here is: What does the church have to say about this theme through its teaching, liturgy and mission?

6.4.4. Second draft of a Model of Transformation-centered Christian Education

After the above observations were made by the TLC group at Howick Methodist Church it became necessary to review the new model. I will not be able to test it again in this study, but this is how the Howick Methodist Church congregation has shaped it.

6.4.4. Phase one: The formation of the Teaching and Learning Community (TLC)

Phase two: Generation of themes

- Listening
- Prioritisation of themes
- Curriculum development

Phase three: Theme or text analysis

- Public text
- Personal text
- Community text

Phase four: Theological reflection

- The Church
- The Bible
- Jesus

Phase five: Praxis

- Process Evaluation

Conclusions

The foregoing discussion has enabled us to implement or test the TCE model in a real situation at Howick Methodist Church. Drawing on this experience, I can argue that the model is not just an abstract idea, but it is one that has been put to the test. When I discussed the community profile at Howick Methodist Church I found evidence of the lack of education in the local church and heard members' concerns about the problem. From the implementation process I was able to see that the model works and has potential for revitalising CE in the church. Linked to this is the fact that the basic characteristics of a transformation-centered method of education were visible.

I was able to see the dialogical method being applied within the situation, the generation of themes, and the hermeneutic process and finally, the action plan and report-back process. Another insight that I gained was the focus of educating Christians for transformation effectively bridged the gap between the known and the unknown.¹⁰⁰ The education process must begin at the local level with the basic assumptions of CE. Participation and dialogue have to form the goal of all education and training. I also observed the TLC suggesting improvements to the model. An improved model has been suggested above, although I will not be able to test it again in this study. However, I have no doubt that I will be able to put it to further test in the future. The lesson gained is that models of education are not static, they are applied in real situations; they therefore change and take new forms.

¹⁰⁰ Ngumi, G. A Critical Analysis of the Role of the Church and the State in Civic Education and Socio-political Development in Kenya between 1985 to 1995. (Unpublished Ph.D Thesis University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, 1998), 270. Ngumi also notes the same observation when discusses civic education.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to make some concluding remarks and recommendations from this study. *Firstly*, I will examine the key stages that each chapter went through during its development. *Secondly*, I will discuss the contribution that this study seeks to make in the area of Christian Education and social transformation. *Thirdly*, I will make some recommendations that can be used to take the process forward and thereby improve the state of TCE in the church.

7.1. Summary of the thesis

In this subsection I will summarise all the chapters of the thesis, by identifying the key insights that we have learned from each.

7.1.1. The lack of education in the church

In chapter one, I discussed the lack of an educational culture and appropriate models of CE in the MCSA. The development of the right attitude towards transformation and dialogue should be considered a vital necessity in the education processes in the church. It was contended that there are methods of education in the church that are used by churches that are inconsistent with the contextual dynamics. A detailed discussion made us aware of the contribution made by Paulo Freire in education for social consciousness. This enables us to see that the dominant type of education in the church, which is not concerned with issues of social transformation, can be replaced with other models that seek to bring change. The literature review of the current state of the discipline, mainly from North America, showed us that the church has a rich heritage, which can foster education and advocates for dialogical and participatory methods of education instead of domesticating ones. Williamson and Allen proposed that:

The congregation is first a neighbourhood theological seminary whose primary purpose is to help its members relate the Christian tradition appropriately, intelligibly, and morally to the contemporary world situation and vice versa. The fundamental work of the congregation is to develop Christian consciousness and to provide the congregation with the resources and methods by which to make the Christian witness in the world.¹

7.1.2. Importance of education for the Church

In Chapter one I explored CE with resources from North America and Brazil (Paulo Freire). In order to locate this study in our own context and in particular the MCSA, chapter two examined the JNL programme of the MCSA. I noted how it sought to meet the social and ecclesial needs of the time, and that it had some important successes. However, my evaluation noted that by and large it failed to achieve what it set out to do. The crucial reason for its failure was the lack of an intentional educational process. This case study on the JNL process in the MCSA therefore indicated just how deep-seated the lack of good education is within the church in South Africa. This observation provides the passion and agenda for this present study, namely to explore the theological and pedagogical resources available to the MCSA (and other churches) to develop a Transformation-centered Christian Education.

7.1.3. A Wesleyan contribution to education in the church

In chapter three I provided a general picture of education from the historical perspective of John Wesley. I began by analyzing the church of eighteenth-century England, showing the involvement of the church in education. I sought to show that there was competition between faith and knowledge, emotions and reason. John Wesley brought a synthesis between these two so that there is an inner coherence and complementarity between them. It became clear that in Wesley's day the church had a lot of problems when it came to its educational ministry. Schools and universities adopted the secular approach to education which discouraged religion and which Wesley vehemently opposed. Wesley developed in its stead a comprehensive approach to education.

¹ Williamson, M. and Allen, R. *The Teaching Minister*. (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox press, 1991), 106.

To a certain extent Wesley argued that education was for personal and social holiness. It was not meant to pass on the *status quo*, but rather to change the situation of those who were marginalised, the poor and slaves. Education was thus understood as enabling the processes of transformation at the individual, ecclesial or community transformational level. Wesley adopted authoritarian approaches to education and leadership, an approach I resolved to reject. I nevertheless embraced his understanding of the goal of education and other key insights that he offers which are non-authoritarian. He offered five key insights as far as education in the church is concerned. These were:

- (1) The need for the revitalisation of education in the church;
- (2) Education is for all people;
- (3) Education has to be done in class meetings or in community with others;
- (4) Education has to combine emotions and knowledge, faith and reason;
- (5) Education leads to praxis.

John Wesley provided a model for comprehensive Christian education. Whilst, this education did not contradict the theological foundations of the church, it also did not encourage escapism from the realities of life. On the contrary, it argued that holiness must be social. By its very nature the church has to spread “scriptural holiness” in the world.² As a result, Wesley did not tolerate the oppression of the poor and slaves, but rather argued strongly against such practices. Wesley also saw continuity between evangelism and education. He did not place spirituality and reason into a false dichotomy as some in his day used to do. He was convinced that the two must go together. This has been an important insight for us as people who live in a world that tends to emphasise this dichotomy even in the church, when the relationship between professional theologians and ordinary members of the church is in view. In chapter 3, I also raised the limitations of Wesley’s theology that did not emphasise the need for social transformation, which for our context is crucial. I conclude in chapter 3, that any education that is to bring about social transformation in South Africa needs to respond to the social dynamics present.

The church is well placed to instruct Christians on matters of faith, truth and justice. This takes place when the church has its goal of education as “Christian perfection,” referring in

² Hulley, *Wesley: Plain Man for Plain People*, 17.

particular to a continued growth and struggle to be like Christ. In other words, the church cannot be excused for not educating people or for adopting an apolitical stance. In relation to this analysis, I came to the conclusion that CE in the church has to be transformed from one that domesticates and dominates to one that conscientises and liberates.

7.1.4. Southern African insights for Christian Education

In chapter four I noted that colonialism and domination led to the emergence of creative educators whose main aim was to bring about the transformation of their situation through liberatory forms of education. These are Steve Bike, Canaan Banana, Bongani Mazibuko and Anne Hope. Through the oppressive nature of colonial and apartheid state, Southern African theologians and Christians explored new methods of education aimed at bringing about freedom and a sense of worth to those who were victims of the apartheid regime. These were participatory methods of education whose aim was to encourage the victims of the state to work for their own liberation and independence. These methods were shaped by the basic fundamentals of liberation theology; as a result they were theological and thus not foreign to the church. Education was aimed at social transformation and liberation. Its content was to come from the underside of history. The observation of the creative educators enabled us to see what has been termed the “struggle for the second liberation in Africa” did not involve a well-planned and properly carried out re-education of the masses.³ The creative educators held that all members of society must fully participate in the transformation of society. This can only be enabled through education. I have therefore argued and concluded that the church’s role is vital in mobilising its members and educating them to participate in processes of transformation.

7.1.5. Proposing a Transformation-centered Christian Education model

Having explored Wesley in detail and the creative educators for social transformation. In chapter 5 I concluded that a comprehensive transformation-centered CE does not contradict the theological foundations of the church. On the contrary I saw the church, as an essential part of society has to respond to contemporary experience, which includes liberation and

³ Gifford, P. (ed) *The Christian Church and the Democratization of Africa*. (New York: J. J. Brill, 1995), 1. See also Ngumi, G. “A Critical Analysis of the Role of the Church and the State in Civic Education,” 272.

transformation. Furthermore, the nature of ministry and practice is to take education seriously. Committed to issues of justice and righteousness, the church has to reflect on its transformational practices. The above observations make us aware of the need for a model of CE that will enable the church to achieve the goals of transformation. As Seymour and Wehrheim have observed:

On the [Christian] pilgrimage, one meets fellow pilgrims who also are engaging in a search for meaning. Together these pilgrims encounter Christian symbols, immerse themselves in the tradition, and open themselves to the presence of God. Through the experience they are transformed. The doors of perception are revised and vision redirected. Some previously important assumptions are revitalised, with new eyes; experience is opened to the presence of God.⁴

Because of its emphasis on transformation, I have called the emergence of a comprehensive model of education a Transformation-centered Christian Education model. I went on to propose and develop the Transformation-centered Christian Education model. The four phases of the model I proposed were:

7.1.6. Implementation of the Transformation-centered Christian Education model

The field trial or practical application of the model of TCE identified the strengths and limitations of the model. For instance, because of its dialogical emphasis, the model involves a number of people. This was viewed as one of its strengths. The curriculum is not imposed from outside the community, but rather articulated from the issues, experiences and aspirations of the community through the generation of themes phase. There was an appreciation of the personal experience and therapeutic nature of the model, which allows the expression of feelings. The participants also noted two key limitations of the model: *First*, there is a need for additional phase for the explication of a communal text, which creates a space for the discussion of a text that emerges as a result of the analysis of the public and personal texts. *Second*, it was observed that there was a need for the theological reflection part to be made more prominent as a phase on its own instead of being under the analysis of the text phase. This was to deliberate foreground theological reflection, as the model is confessionally Christian in character. It was also observed that Ministers have to see

⁴ Seymour, J and Wehrheim, W. *Faith Seeking Understanding: Interpretation as a Task of Christian Education; Contemporary Approaches to Christian Education* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1984), 134.

themselves as facilitators of education in the church whilst at the same time the participants are seen as important partners in the teaching and learning process.

The revised model therefore has five phases, as follows:

- (1) Formation of the teaching and learning community
- (2) Generation of themes
- (3) Analysis of texts
- (4) Theological reflection
- (5) Praxis

7.2. Contributions of the study

There are number of areas that this study has contributed to, and which I will now seek to highlight.

7.2.1. Adult Christian education

In the area of education, the study has raised awareness to the fact that the church should be an important open space for education. Taking into account the fact that South Africa has as a legacy of its past, a huge backlog as far as education is concerned the church can contribute towards solving this problem. It can do this by opening its doors to formal and informal education classes. Secondly, prominent Southern African Christians and educationists such as Biko, Mazibuko, and Hope, remind us of the important contribution in the area of education for empowerment that CE can make. As the study has been educational it has also brought our history into the education. It has thus utilised sociological, historical and theological insights in producing its educational model for social transformation.

7.2.2. Theology of education from a Wesleyan perspective

Another important contribution that has been made by this study is its reference to the theological foundations laid by John Wesley and encapsulated within the historical legacy of the MCSA, for the goals, method and content of education. Wesley reminds us that education is not just a secular activity but it is both spiritual and transformative. The church must see

education as an essential part of its mission, without which its mission would be incomplete. Education should not be aimed at merely temporal goals such as the acquiring of skills and passing on of knowledge, but more so to the achievement of the goal of personal and social holiness. This is important in the South African context where the dawning of a new democracy has not meant the attainment of true liberation for all people. Instead, corruption and the breaking down of the moral fibre of society were realised. Education by the church must be aimed at the transformation of the person, their character, morality and vision, which must be guided by a deep spirituality. Political education on its own does not guarantee social transformation.

7.2.4. TCE as Pedagogy of Hope for the South African church and society

One of the most encouraging moments of the Howick Methodist Church TLC was when we reached the “Praxis” stage. We asked members of the TLC to express how they felt about the teaching and learning process. Mrs. Ntoyi said: “I am happy; I feel I have hope again about life.”⁵ If CE therefore is to be embraced and seen as empowering by ordinary people it has to cultivate hope that their life and situation is going to be transformed for the better. This is the mission of the church. Speaking of the necessity to cultivate hope, Paulo Freire said that:

The struggle for hope means denunciation, in no uncertain terms of all abuses.... As we denounce them, we awaken in others and ourselves the need, and also the taste of hope...Whatever the perspective through which we appreciate authentic educational practice-its process implies hope. ⁶

Bell Hooks takes the point even deeper when she says:

Hopefulness empowers us to continue our work for justice even as forces of injustices may gain greater power for a time. As teachers we enter the classroom with hope. ⁷

The MCSA finds itself within the context of social contradictions where although South Africa has been through an important and hard-won transition from oppression to political freedom, there remains much pain and suffering. The majority of the South Africans still live in abject poverty, experience homelessness, unemployment and are affected by the scourge of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Life remains a struggle for survival. I see TCE as a model of

⁵ TCE session in Howick, 14 November 2004.

⁶In Hooks, B. *Teaching Community: A Pedagogy of Hope*. (New York: Routledge, 2003). xiv.

⁷ Hooks, *Teaching Community*, xiv.

education that is capable of restoring hope to suffering people because of its ability to deal with issues that concern people.

7.2.3. Agency: The Minister as resident educator

Another contribution made by this study is the issue of agency. The TCE model argued that all people have a responsibility of participating in the processes of transformation. This means that no one is absolved from working towards social change. I am aware that in the South African context there has been a debate as to who must deal with the problem of poverty and marginalisation. The perspective on agency that this model holds means that the Minister has a given role to play in the educational empowerment of the local community. By virtue of her/his ordination and induction to the local church, the Minister cannot afford to be uninvolved in the process of transformation. The fact that the Minister is educated makes her/him an important resource to the community and therefore must be involved in the processes of transformation as long as s/he adopts dialogical approaches instead of anti-dialogical ones. Furthermore, a Minister must become a facilitator of the educational processes to the benefit of the local church. The Minister is not to do this in their stead, but has to enable the church community to carry their responsibilities toward self-empowerment whilst enjoying the Minister's support and companionship.

7.3. Recommendations

In the light of the foregoing, the following recommendations are made to the MCSA:

7.3.1. On placing education at the centre of the agenda of the church

Education influences the attitudes and values of people towards their faith and belief. The development of the right attitudes towards the church and participation in the processes of transformation should be considered a vital challenge to the church and society. From the arrival of Western missionaries in Africa, they brought a gospel that was closely accompanied by robust education.

Different perspectives and methodologies that churches adopt have affected education in the church. Even the aims of education varied from domestication, socialisation and liberation. Such methods and goals included TCE in the church, in schools and tertiary institutions and in society at large. Therefore it can be said that TCE is not new in the church, but in need of re-visitation and remodelling. The MCSA has a rich heritage, which can foster education that leads to ecclesial and social transformation.

The church needs to revitalise the educational ministries in the local church if it is to be relevant and make a formidable contribution in society. As Westerhoff⁸ and Farley⁹ have lamented, the lack of intentional education ministry in the church, Hauerwas has also observed that the church itself still stands as an educational tool in society, through its ministry and practices.¹⁰ It still provides education about itself and about what it stands for. This does not mean that we no longer need to embrace new strategies of rigorous education in the church. There is a need to revisit methods of education that are relevant for today's society. These should be dialogical and participatory as opposed to the anti-dialogical methods used in the JNL programme and in most CE programmes in other Christian church denominations.

As the MCSA finds itself in a democratising society, it is right to conclude that CE must have as its priority the need to educate for transformation, thus enabling its members to participate in the processes of transformation. I can conclude nothing less. CE in the church must aim at transformation. The teaching and learning event must be an opportunity for people to explore and discuss issues that affect them both in the church and society. They must be equipped to deal with those issues as Christians in a transforming society. The anti-dialogical approach to Christian education has caused enough problems in the church. If the MCSA is to make a contribution to the processes of transformation, it has to begin at home, by revitalising its educational ministries so that it can empower its own members to deal with the forces of transformation.

7.3.2. The categorisation of Christian Education

⁸ Westerhoff, *Will Our Children Have Faith?*, (Minnesota: The Seabury Press, 1976), 43.

⁹ Farley, *Can Church Education be Theological Education*, *Journal of Religion and Education* 34, 224.

¹⁰ Hauerwas, *S. Schooling Christians*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William Eerdmans Company, 1992), 123.

This study has also provided a clear framework through which we can place TCE if we are to understand and do it to maximum effect. There is a need for the church to recognise the importance of dividing CE into three foci in order for it to be manageable:

- (1) Church-based TCE—which focuses on the educational ministries of the church, aimed at the growth and nourishment of the body of Christ for discipleship. This looks at issues such as Sunday school, confirmation classes, Bible studies and Adult Christian Education classes.
- (2) The institutional-based TCE—which focuses on the educational ministry of the church to formal institutions of learning such as schools, colleges and universities. It involves the chaplaincy in schools and universities and the support of Christian societies or groups at such institutions.
- (3) Civic-based TCE—which focuses on the educational ministry of the church with special focus on civic matters e.g., voter education, human rights, church and state issues. This ministry is usually done in churches sometimes through church-based organisations and other structures that the church is connected with. It is normally in the form of workshops, seminars and symposia.

7.3.3. The Minister as facilitator of ministry in the local church

Traditionally, the Minister has occupied the role of educator in the church in the same way as s/he is expected to occupy other roles in the church such as preaching and counselling. This approach has not been productive, due to two main reasons: *Firstly*, Ministers are not trained to be educators. Most seminaries and theological faculties do not offer courses on CE, whereas the Minister is expected to teach and train people within the Congregation. During the training of Ministers, little or no emphasis on the educational role they must take in the community is given. They are hardly given teaching or facilitation skills. Their training is solely based on theological knowledge, preaching and pastoral counselling and visitation. It is no wonder that the educational ministry of the church suffers. This study proposes the importance of modern educational skills for Ministers during their time of formation or training. *Secondly*, there is a need for a radical change of the emphasis on the role of a Minister. S/he must be given facilitation skills in training and empowering congregation

members to do the work of ministry. The main function of the Minister is not to do ministry on behalf of the congregation, but rather to empower church members to do ministry through education, sponsorship, companionship and motivation to exercise their calling in the church.

Conclusion

In keeping with Wesleyan praxis within the MCSA, and informed by scripture, tradition, experience and guidance by creative educators for social transformation, I have sought to bring a contemporary understanding of education, ecclesiology, liberation theology and social research to bear on Wesley's theology and approach to education. This has been done in order to propose a *Transformation-centered* CE, which is theologically, educationally and contextually relevant to the South African experience. I believe that the TCE approach, with its concern for an intentional education in the church, and its goal of personal and social transformation is an imperative that the MCSA cannot ignore. The resultant hermeneutical task and dialogical method will bring about a new enthusiasm in education within the church. I cannot presume that I have exhausted the issues around this topic; in fact I am aware that this study has raised a number of issues that need further attention. This will be the focus of other studies and publications that I hope to complete in the future.

I conclude this study with a substantial hope for the future of the MCSA. It has been blessed with good resources, buildings, money, leadership, and friends and partners both locally and internationally. In these respects the MCSA is in a good position to work and make a profound contribution to the democratic process and to grow in its work of building the Kingdom of God in South Africa. The MCSA works under a difficult situation of power and leadership struggles within the church, as well as ethnic prejudice and the need to bring about transformation of the current reality. It is my prayer that the MCSA can realise a bright and meaningful future, with the strength of its ministry determined by the emphasis it places on the revitalisation of its educational ministries. I have been blessed by growing up in this church and have the privilege of serving in its ministry. I have no doubt whatsoever that it is capable of achieving its goal of *A Christ-Healed Africa for the Healing of the Nations*. This it will do if it seeks to know Christ by embarking on a Transformation-Centered Christian Education. I offer this study with the hope that it will in some small way add value towards this goal.

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Part I

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Part II

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Part VI

Interviews

Name and Surname	Position in Church	Date of Interviews
Bishop Paul Verreyne	Bishop of Johannesburg	March 2003
Bishop L. Dlangalala	Retired Bishop of MCSA	July 2004
Bishop P. Malinga	Bishop of MCSA	2005
Rev. Ross. Olivier	Former Coordinator of the JNL.	2005 by Email
Rev. A. Storey	Pastor, Calvary Methodist Church	June 2003
Rev. E. Ndlaku	Pastor Mzimkhulu Methodist Church	May 2003
Rev. V. Mngxuma	Pastor KwaMakhutha Methodist Church	August 2004
Rev. C. Morgan	EMMU, Lecturer John Wesley College	June 2003
Rev. M. Chapman	Pastor Rustenburg Methodist Church	July 2003
Rev. D. Moodley	Minister Heddleburg Methodist Church	June 2003
Rev. B. Moodley	Pastor Minister Heddleburg Methodist Church	June 2003
Rev. G. Andrews	Pastor MCSA in Cape Town	June 2003
Rev. D. Newby	Former minister in the MCSA and Researcher on JNL	July 2003
Mr. M. Ncolosi	Society steward Howick Methodist Church	October 2004

Miss. L. Dlamini	Circuit Steward CCMYT	April 2005
Mrs. Z. Ntoyi	Vice-president, Howick WM	November 2004
Mrs. R. Kumalo	Minister's wife, President of WY, CCMYT	November 2002

Part V

Questionnaire

1. What is your understanding of the JNL programme of the MCSA?
2. What were its aims and objectives?
3. Were you in anyway involved in this programme?
4. What was your role?
5. What was your attitude towards the JNL?
6. Were you trained to participate in the programme?
7. How were you trained?
8. What skills did you gain?
9. Do you think it made any impact in the MCSA?
10. What is the contribution you think it made?
11. Was it successful, how and why?
12. Are there any failures, what were they and why?
13. Would you have changed anything?
14. What would you change and why?

