Deaf as Other:
A Levinasian reading of the history of Deaf ministry in the Catholic Church in South Africa from 1948 to 1994

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Supervisor: Professor Philippe Denis

A dissertation submitted to the School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg in fulfilment of the academic requirements for the degree of Doctor of Theology (History of Christianity).

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PLAGIARISM DECLARATION

This dissertation is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor in Philosophy in the School of Religion, Philosophy, and Classics at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg

I declare that this dissertation is my own unaided work. All citations, references, and borrowed ideas have been duly acknowledged. None of the present work has been submitted previously for any degree or examination in any other University.

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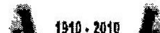

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1910 - 2010
100 YEARS OF ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Founding Campuses: Edgewood Howard College Medical School Pietermaritzburg Westville

Dedication

This research is dedicated to the Catholic Deaf communities in
South Africa, eSwatini and Lesotho
for your commitment to your faith.

You have taught me the meaning of
the responsibility that comes
with proximity.

In remembrance of my grandparents, Joseph and Eunice Hirst,
and my parents, Ken and Margaret James.

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Mark James OP
23 June 2019

Abstract

This study is an attempt to write an interruptive and a heterological history of how the Catholic Church's approach to deaf ministry both served and failed the Deaf Other. For centuries, Catholic ministry sought to enable deaf people, or sometimes referred to as the hearing impaired, to function optimally in a hearing world. The purpose of this study is to understand how it was that this construct emerged and then to deconstruct it using the philosophy of the French philosopher, Emmanuel Levinas. Using this Levinasian lens, it will be necessary to gauge the extent to which Catholic Deaf education and ministry were experienced by Deaf people as totalising and oppressive; and the extent to which they empowered some Deaf people to transform and to shape their lives in a more liberating way.

Levinas agreed with Aristotle that language is constitutive of what it means to be human. However, he was concerned about language as revealing an ethical relationship between people. What constitutes our humanity is our willingness to take responsibility for the Other. For Levinas, responsibility is response-ability. Our responsiveness to the needs of others may mean the need to learn another language or to be open to communicate in a way which goes beyond the limit of verbal language or speech and the voice. Levinas never imagined, however, that his philosophy would be used in the context of Deaf people.

The ministries of two Catholic Deaf priests, Fr Cyril Axelrod CSsR and Fr John Turner CMM, inspired lay Deaf people in South Africa, some of them Catholics, to challenge these totalising attitudes towards Deaf people. They countered audism and phonocentrism by setting up Deaf organisations like the Deaf Community of Cape Town (DCCT) and DeafSA to improve the situation for Deaf people. These Deaf people have shown that they are not defective human beings. They are not second-class citizens neither are they handicapped. Rather, they are people who have come to know themselves as Deaf and have inspired other Deaf people to appreciate their innate dignity as people created in God's image and likeness.

The findings of this research, firstly, was that the use of sign language by Catholic Deaf priests revitalised the ministry. Secondly, there needs to be more self-critical approaches to ministry to avoiding a totalising approach. Thirdly, there was often an inadequate support for marginalised Deaf people and priests in the church's ministry. Fourthly, the breathing

spaces created by Deaf people themselves largely contributed to the development of a more inclusive church where Deaf people could feel at home. Fifthly, the philosophy of Levinas proved useful in developing a post-audist reading of Deaf life and experience. Sixthly, hearing people have much to gain and learn from Deaf people in relation to what it means to be human.

List of abbreviations

AAD	Archive of the Archdiocese of Durban
AACT	Archive of the Archdiocese of Cape Town
ADPE	Archive of the Diocese of Port Elizabeth
ANC	African National Congress
ASL	American Sign Language
BSL	British Sign Language
CDSA	Cabra Dominican Sisters' Archive
CHB	Catholic History Bureau
CM	Congregation for the Mission
CMM	Congregation of Mariannhill Missionaries
CODESA	Convention for a Democratic South Africa
CODA	Child(ren) of Deaf Adults
CSsR	Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer
DCCT	Deaf Community of Cape Town
DeafSA	Deaf South Africa
DEAF	Deaf Equal Awareness Foundation
DET	Department of Education and Training
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
KDSA	Kingwilliamstown Dominican Sisters' Archive
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
OMI	Oblates of Mary Immaculate
OP	Order of Preachers
OSD	Order of St Dominic
OSM	Order of the Servants of Mary
PAC	Pan-Africanist Congress
RA	Redemptorist Archive
SACBC	Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference
SAIRR	South African Institute of Race Relations
SANCD	South African National Council for the Deaf
SASL	South African Sign Language

SASLRP	South African Sign Language Research Programme
SASO	South African Students' Organisation
STJI	St Joseph's Theological Institute Archive
SLED	Sign Language Education and Development
SPM	The Sound Perception Method
UDF	United Democratic Front
UWA	The University of the Witwatersrand Archive at the William Cullen Library

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Chapter 1 Deaf as Other: Outlining the Study

1.0. Introduction

The Catholic Church boasts a 145-year old history of ministering to deaf people in South Africa. Yet, Deaf[1] people continue to be marginalised within the church and in society. A desire to uplift Deaf people and assist them to become more functional members of society shaped the purpose of Catholic ministry during this period. In this regard, the Catholic Church's primary contribution was through the establishing of schools for deaf children and its secondary contribution was developing deaf chaplaincies. The phrase "liberating the deaf from a prison of silence," for many years, summed up this fundamental approach. The assumption was that deaf people were imprisoned in a world of silence due to their handicap. The purpose of Catholic ministry was therefore to enable deaf people, or sometimes referred to as the hearing- impaired, to function optimally in a hearing world. The purpose of this study is to understand how it was that this construct emerged and then to deconstruct it using the philosophy of the French philosopher, Emmanuel Levinas.

Today, in South Africa, Deaf people have successfully campaigned to have South African Sign Language (SASL) recognised as the twelfth official language. SASL has been recognised as a medium of instruction in South African schools for the deaf. Furthermore, the Department of Education is presently rolling out a new curriculum in SASL for Deaf children. The campaign during Deaf Awareness Month in September 2018 was called: '*Take back Deaf education*.' Deaf people no longer see themselves as handicapped or disabled. Instead, they view themselves as a linguistic minority group in South Africa with its own language and culture.

Since Deaf people also want to express their faith and pray and worship God in sign language, this transformation also had an impact on the Catholic Church's ministry among Deaf people.

[1] It is the convention to refer to Deaf people with a capital D as those who are aware of their identity as members of a cultural and linguistic community of people who use sign language as a means of communication. The use of deaf with the lower-case d refers to those people who lack physical hearing but who either were trained orally and reject the use of sign language and therefore do not see themselves as part of the Deaf community; or those who were previously hearing but went deaf due to accidents, illness or old age. This distinction will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.

This change happened through a process of inculturating Deaf culture into Catholic liturgical and pastoral life and which, in turn, contributed to the emancipation of Catholic Deaf people. This dissertation seeks to analyse and record how this transformation occurred. It looks at how Deaf people themselves built up Catholic Deaf communities around the country and used sign language in the liturgy. It also explores how many Deaf lay people came to a deeper appreciation of their own gifts and talents, and more importantly developed a Deaf identity. Deaf people began to see themselves as subjects, celebrating their faith in their own language and cultural understandings. In so doing, they called for greater social and political change for Deaf people in the church and within South African society.

1.1. Deaf as Other

At the outset, it is necessary to clarify the terminology being used in this study. Firstly, the word 'deaf' and 'Deaf' are utilised in a specific way. The word 'deaf' refers to people who are physically hearing impaired and is inclusive of those who are hard-of-hearing. Deafness is a medical condition that arises from a lack of hearing. Those who lack hearing are often referred to as hearing-impaired, handicapped or disabled. Remedies within this perspective often centre on providing hearing aids, cochlear implants or other means of technologically amplifying sound so that these people's residual hearing can be exploited.

'Deaf' refers to those deaf people who identify themselves as culturally and linguistically Deaf. Deaf people identify themselves as members of a community who communicate using a natural sign language. This community has developed its own cultural traditions and ways of being-in-the-world as Deaf.

Culturally, Deaf people are therefore both deaf and Deaf.[2] The accepted term used that is often used is d/Deaf. This study does not use the term d/Deaf but does distinguish between 'deaf' and 'Deaf'. In this dissertation, I will be using the spelling Deaf for those who are Deaf Aware, conscious of their dignity as Deaf people and who recognise that they belong to a community of Deaf people with their own language and culture. The word 'deaf' will be used

[2] For more detailed information, see Richard J. Senghas and Leila Monaghan, 'Signs of their times: Deaf communities and the culture of language,' *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 31, (2002), 69-97.

for people who physically lack hearing, but who do not know sign language and who do not identify themselves as being part of a Deaf community and culture.

Deaf people who identify themselves as Deaf also refer to their cultural and linguistic community as DEAF-WAY[3] or DEAF-WORLD.[4] DEAF-WORLD is used in contrast to the hearing world. Hearing people who sign or are CODA (Children of Deaf Adults) are usually included in this idea of DEAF-WORLD. The hearing world is auditory-based whereas the DEAF-WORLD is more visually-based. Hearing people focus on the transmission of sounds to facilitate communication, whereas Deaf people rely on communication through the seeing of signs. Consequently, Deaf people have been referred to as eye-centred people.[5]

The word 'Other' used in this dissertation also has a distinctive meaning. In this research it is being used from a Levinasian perspective which is different from the post-colonial usage. For Levinas, the Other needed to be understood as alterity.[6] This means that the Other is understood as other than myself, in contradistinction to myself and not as my construction. The Other is an enigma who eludes my grasp, my comprehension, and who resists my attempts at assimilation. The Other has a moral authority that calls me to responsibility. The Other also teaches something new, completely beyond what the self already knows. Levinas' understanding of the Other will be explained more fully in chapter 2.

Levinas' understanding of the Other is different from the post-colonial use of the word of other, in the writings of Michel Foucault or Edward Said.[7] For Said, the 'other' and 'othering' refer to the power of a dominant group or class which defines a different group as a binary opposite to itself.[8] In othering, a person or group of people are identified as inferior to the

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[3] See Erting, Carol and Robert Johnson, et al (eds). *The Deaf Way: Perspectives from the international conference on Deaf culture*. Washington DC: Gallaudet University Press, 1994. DEAF-WAY and DEAF-WORLD are glosses, that is, signs which have been transcribed into written English. They are written in capital letters. See Senghas and Monaghan, 'Signs of their times,' 72, 87.

[4] See Harlan Lane, 'Construction of deafness,' in *The Disability Studies Reader*, second edition, edited by Lennard Davis, (New York/London: Routledge, 2006), 85-88.

[5] William Key, Ann Albrecht, Thomas Coughlin et al, *Eye-centered: A study on the spirituality of Deaf people with implications for pastoral ministry*, (Silver Spring, MD: National Catholic Office for the Deaf, 1992), 42-46.

[6] Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An essay on exteriority*, (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969), 36.

[7] See Michiel Foucault, *Discipline and punishment*, New York: Vintage, 1995 and Edward Said, *Orientalism*, New York: Vintage Books, 1994.

[8] Said, *Orientalism*, 40.

dominant group. Some of this sense of other also exists within the Levinasian understanding of Other. This distinction will be discussed in more detail in chapter 3.

Therefore, this research has as its starting point in the idea of Deaf people as Other, as alterity not as a relative difference like in the different representations of men and women, or people of different races. The alterity of the Other is absolute and infinite. The Other is a Stranger to the self and they do not share a common homeland.[9] This can be likened to the alterity between the hearing and the deaf. The deaf are often strangers to the hearing.

The otherness of Deaf people is a *locus theologicus*,[10] that is, a starting point and a context from which the theologian can begin to reflect on the experience of Deaf people as a site or a 'holy ground' where the mystery of God, Christ and the Holy Spirit can be revealed. For the historian of Christianity, the Deaf as Other will provide the context or starting point to begin reflecting on the history of deaf ministry in the Catholic Church. Levinas proposed we start with the face of the suffering, the marginalised and the vulnerable Other. In this dissertation, I will explore how Deaf people, who have been marginalised in church and society and who have been treated as outsiders for centuries,[11] can help us understand 'the face of the vulnerable Other' to whom Levinas referred.

In this respect, I will be reflecting on the experiences of Deaf people in the Catholic Church in South Africa during the time of apartheid. The system of apartheid was a legally entrenched programme of racial segregation and economic exclusion. It came to prominence in South Africa in 1948 with the victory of the National Party in the white elections. Apartheid remained the white Nationalist government's policy until the African National Congress (ANC) came to power in South Africa's first fully democratic elections in 1994. During this period of apartheid, Black people[12] engaged in a struggle for liberation from racial and economic oppression. This coincided also with Deaf people growing in consciousness of their own struggle to be recognised as a linguistic minority with its own language and cultural tradition.

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[9] Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 39.

[10] Marcel Broesterhuizen, 'Faith in Deaf culture,' *Theological Studies*, 66, 2, (June 2005), 325.

[11] See Paul C. Higgins, *Outsiders in a hearing world: A sociology of deafness*, (London: Sage Publications, 1980).

[12] In this dissertation I will be using the word Black to refer to African, Coloured and Indian people.

The Catholic Church's deaf ministry took place within this context of social change and transformation.

1.2. Catholic ministry to the deaf in South Africa

At the outset, it is necessary to review the literature on what has already been written on Catholic deaf ministry in South Africa. This review will cover two areas of ministry, firstly, Catholic deaf education, and secondly, Catholic chaplaincies for the deaf.

1.2.1. Catholic deaf education

The origins of Catholic deaf education in South Africa has been documented incompletely. The Catholic Church established seven schools for the deaf in a bid to respond to the educational needs of deaf children in South Africa during the period 1874 to 1992. Initially, there were only two congregations of Dominican Sisters involved in deaf education, namely the Cabra Dominican Sisters, originally from Dublin in Ireland who established themselves in Cape Town in 1863 and the Kingwilliamstown Dominican Sisters who originated from Germany but became a local South African congregation in 1877. Two other congregations of professed women got involved in deaf education later. In 1983, the Daughters of the Charity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Sisters, also known as the Matikwe Sisters, began teaching at the KwaThintwa School for the Deaf in Inchanga, KwaZulu-Natal. In 1992, a Polish congregation called the Little Servants of Mary Immaculate started a school for the deaf in Port Shepstone. For the most part, this research will focus on the Cabra and Kingwilliamstown Dominican Sisters' contribution to deaf education in South Africa.

Kathleen Boner's book *Dominican Women: A time to speak* has a chapter on the contribution made the Cabra Dominican Sisters to deaf education in Cape Town.[13] Boner is a Cabra Dominican Sister but also a retired professor of History from the then University of Bophuthatswana. The chapter contained useful information on the Cabra Sisters' three schools for the deaf, the two schools in Cape Town and the third in Hammanskraal near Pretoria. She also contributed to the understanding of Catholic chaplaincy work in her unpublished doctoral dissertation on Monsignor Frederick Kolbe. Kolbe was a pioneering

[13] Kathleen Boner, *Dominican Women: A time to speak*, (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 2000), 136-156.

Catholic priest in the Western Cape in the late nineteenth century until his death in 1934.[14] Boner documented his early contribution to deaf chaplaincy in the Western Cape. Her Master's thesis on the Cabra Dominican Sisters' contribution to education in the Western Cape had an informative chapter on deaf education.[15]

Mariette Gouws, a Kingwilliamstown Dominican Sister, has written on the ministries of the Kingwilliamstown Dominican Sisters in South Africa. Her book *All for God's People* was published in 1997.[16] It covered the establishment of the early deaf school in Kingwilliamstown in 1884 until it was moved to Johannesburg and became St Vincent School for the Deaf in 1934. It also documented the establishment of St Thomas School for the Deaf in the Eastern Cape in 1962 and the involvement of the Sisters in this school. The Dominican Sisters of Kingwilliamstown were also called upon by Archbishop Hurley in 1982, when the KwaThintwa School for the Deaf in Inchanga near Durban, was established to provide a principal and some teachers for the school.[17] From its inception this school permitted the use of sign language in the classroom, marking a move away from a strictly oral approach to deaf education. This method was referred to as the combined method or as Total Communication. It allowed for the simultaneous use of sign language and the mouthing of a spoken language for the purposes of communication in the classroom.[18]

A chapter on Catholic education written by Joy Brain, a retired historian from the University of Durban-Westville in a book on the history of the Catholic Church in contemporary Southern Africa, also covered the Catholic schools for the deaf. Her contribution was a brief summary of what had already been written on Catholic schools for the deaf in South Africa. However, she mistakenly referred to the Kingwilliamstown School for the Deaf, established in 1884, as

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[14] See Kathleen Boner, *Dr FC Kolbe: Priest, patriot and educationist*, (Unpublished Doctoral dissertation, Pretoria: Unisa, 1980).
[15] Kathleen Boner, *The Irish Dominicans and education in the Western Cape (1863-1892)*, (Unpublished Master of Arts thesis, University of South Africa, Pretoria, 1976), 150-183.
[16] Mariette Gouws, *All for God's people*, (Queenstown: Kingwilliamstown Dominican Sisters, 1977), 35.
[17] Paddy Kearney, *Guardian of the Light*, (Scottsville: UKZN Press, 2009), 72.
[18] See Debra Aarons and Philemon Akach, 'South African Sign Language: One language or many? A sociolinguistic question,' *Stellenbosch papers in Linguistics*, 31, (1998), 10. This is will be explained further in chapter 6.

the first Catholic school for the deaf in South Africa.[19] She made no mention of the Cabra school in Cape Town that was established in 1874.

Much of the writing on Catholic Deaf education in South Africa has been primarily of a descriptive nature outlining the work done by the two congregations of the Dominican Sisters. Boner, in passing, referred to the modality debate in Cabra schools for the deaf, concerning the use of sign language in the classroom versus the oral method of deaf education.[20] As we will see in chapter 3, this remains a hotly contested debate even to the present day. It is the purpose of this study to take this reflection further in describing what the oral method of deaf education entailed, but also to show its limitations, and how Total Communication began to gain wider acceptance in Catholic schools for the deaf.

1.2.2. Deaf chaplaincy ministry

With Deaf chaplaincy work there was greater openness to sign language usage. Monsignor Kolbe, the first chaplain for the deaf in South Africa, learnt sign language from the deaf teacher Bridget Lyne.[21] After Kolbe, there were many other chaplains for the deaf in Cape Town like Fr T. Gill, Fr Ernest Green (later Bishop Green), Fr Eddie Mansfield and Fr Reginald Cawcutt. Not all these chaplains were able to minister in sign language. They had to rely on interpreters. The most extensive work was done by Fr Ernest Green who served the Deaf community in Cape Town for over 40 years. Green was a hearing priest who was a fluent signer.

In Johannesburg too, there were Catholic chaplains appointed to serve the deaf community. The first chaplain was Fr Ramsay, a Servite priest, who served as chaplain at St Vincent's School from about 1948 to 1960. The most notable priest to work in Johannesburg was Fr Cyril Axelrod CSsR. Axelrod is Deaf. He later went to work in Cape Town for a brief period. Axelrod wrote an autobiography, *As the Journey begins,* detailing his life and work among the Deaf in South Africa, Macau and the United Kingdom.

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[19] Joy Brain, 'Catholic education,' in *The Catholic Church in contemporary Southern Africa*, edited by Joy Brain and Philippe Denis, (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 1999), 106-107.

[20] Boner, *Dominican Women*, 138-139 and 149-150.

[21] Bridget Lyne, a Deaf Irish woman, was the first teacher and principal of the Deaf school in Cape Town established in 1874. See Boner, *Dr FC Kolbe*, 260.

A second Deaf priest, Father John Turner worked primarily from Mariannhill but served the Deaf communities in Johannesburg, Pretoria and Swaziland too.

Deaf ministry has not been a major focus for historical research in South Africa. Most of the reflections have come from the United States and from Europe. In relationship to understanding Deaf ministry within the Catholic Church, a useful contributor is Marcel Broesterhuizen. Broesterhuizen, a hearing Catholic clinical psychologist, has worked extensively in Deaf ministry in Belgium and the Netherlands. His notable contribution was to describe the change in the understanding of pastoral ministry to the Deaf as a shift from care for the hearing-impaired to Deaf ministry.[22] He challenged hearing pastors to recognise that, rather than understanding deafness as an impairment, the church needed to see deafness as a *locus theologicus*, a context from which to theologise.[23] This called for 'a new practice of Christian life,'[24] where Deaf culture and Deaf people's experience of life is inculturated into the life of the Church.[25] For Broesterhuizen, hearing people need to undergo a process of kenosis and be freed from their mistaken ideas concerning hearing and deafness, normalcy and difference.[26] Hearing people need to be open to Deaf people's view of life and experience. In contrast, kenosis for Deaf people would mean that they do not hide their talents or allow themselves to be muzzled by modesty, for fear that hearing people might misunderstand them.[27]

A more radical contributor to this discussion was Hannah Lewis, a Deaf woman priest in the Anglican Church in England. Lewis argued for the development of a Deaf Liberation Theology. Lewis agreed that it is important to make Deaf people feel at home in the church through the liturgical use of sign language, through the acceptance of Deaf culture and by appreciating Deaf people's lived experience worship. However, in addition to inculturation, there was also a radical need to challenge the power relations that operate within the church.[28] There are

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[22] Marcus Broesterhuizen, 'Pastoral ministry with the Deaf: From care for the hearing impaired to Deaf ministry,' in *The Gospel preached by the Deaf: Proceedings of a conference on Deaf Liberation Theology held at the Faculty of Theology at the Catholic University of Leuven (Belgium), May 19, 2003*, Marcus Broesterhuizen ed, (Leuven: Peeters, 2007), 1-12.
[23] Broesterhuizen, 'Pastoral ministry with the Deaf,' 8.
[24] Broesterhuizen, 'Pastoral ministry with the Deaf,' 9.
[25] Broesterhuizen, 'Pastoral ministry with the Deaf,' 8.
[26] Broesterhuizen, 'Pastoral ministry with the Deaf, 9.
[27] Broesterhuizen, 'Pastoral ministry with the Deaf,' 11.
[28] Hannah Lewis, *Deaf liberation theology*, (Aldershot, Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing, 2007), 3.

many ways in which deaf people are included or excluded in the church, recognised or ignored in the preaching of the scriptures, and in the homilies given by the clergy. Deaf people are marginalised in pastoral practice as a whole.[29]

For Lewis, this meant challenging the discourses which kept Deaf people oppressed through finding a liberating Biblical hermeneutic.[30] Jesus was not Deaf, he did not know sign language, so, she questioned, how can he be good news for the Deaf community? She formulated a response around the concept of *logos*, Jesus as SIGN OF GOD.[31] Does God only communicate through the spoken or written word, could God not be a signing God?[32] This theology must also be realised in the developing of DEAF CHURCH, a space where Deaf people can worship freely and where their views and perspectives are valued and appreciated; a space where they can tell their stories and hear the Biblical story anew. A creative space where they can express their faith in life-giving and imaginative ways.[33] Lewis referred to celebrating Deaf saints and heroes,[34] the developing of signing choirs[35] and using inclusive language and changing the prayers, as well as responses, so that they are Deaf-friendly.[36]

Very little has been written on the contribution of deaf saints and heroes in the South African context. Little has been done too, in envisioning a new way of being church and the celebration of the Eucharist from the experience of Deaf people. Some research that has been done was the work of the Western Cape sociologist, Marion Heap. Heap reflected on the Deaf Community of Cape Town (DCCT), a non-governmental organisation (NGO) with historical ties to the Catholic Church. In her research into the Deaf community in the Western Cape, she highlighted the importance of space and networking for Deaf people. In her research, she contributed a short summary on the history of Deaf education in the Western Cape from its beginnings in 1874 until the year 2000.[37] Heap's approach was appreciative of the contributions of Deaf people themselves. This was evident in her dissertation, where Heap

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[29] Lewis, *Deaf liberation theology*, 169-177.
[30] Lewis, *Deaf liberation theology*, 105-131.
[31] SIGN OF GOD is a gloss. So is DEAF CHURCH.
[32] Lewis, *Deaf liberation theology*, 149.
[33] Lewis, *Deaf liberation theology*, 179-180.
[34] Lewis, *Deaf liberation theology*, 171.
[35] Ibid, 174.
[36] Lewis suggested the changing 'hear our prayer' to 'OUR PRAYER, RECEIVE'. See Lewis, *Deaf liberation theology*, 173-174.
[37] Marion Heap, *Crossing social boundaries and dispersing social identity: Tracing Deaf networks from Cape Town*, (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Stellenbosch, South Africa, 2003).

gave credit to Bridget Lyne,[38] a Deaf teacher, for establishing the first Deaf school in South Africa rather than to Sr Dympha Kincaid or the Cabra Dominican Sisters. This interesting twist, she claimed, was told to her by Sr Kathleen Boner.[39] In her book, Boner claimed that Lyne was employed by the Dominican Sisters as a teacher and as the first principal of the school.[40] It is an interesting debate on who was the founder of the school, the one who envisaged the need for the school or the person who did all the work teaching in the school.

In the Church, lay people and Deaf people's contributions to the development of Church institutions have often been overlooked or ignored. This study is part of a discipline called Deaf Studies which seeks to recover the hidden or ignored stories of Deaf and lay people in the Church and society.

1.3. The relationship to Deaf Studies

The purpose of this historical study is to bring the history of Catholic Deaf education and pastoral ministry into a discussion with the issues and debates prevalent in Deaf Studies at present.

This history and struggle of Deaf people in South Africa needs to be understood in the context of the challenges that faced Deaf people worldwide. Deaf Studies emerged in various universities in North America and Europe to address these challenges and focused on four facets of Deaf experience: 1) Deaf identity and culture; 2) power; 3) language; and 4) public voice.[41]

Deaf identity has been a contestation between the medical approach to deafness which focused on the biological lack of hearing and the medical remedies of this condition and those who believe being Deaf is a cultural way of being-in-the-world.[42] As we have already discussed, being deaf (using the lower-case d) refers to the physical condition of being without hearing or at least lacking sufficient hearing according to the norms of a hearing

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[38] In some texts, she is referred to as Brigid Lyne and in others as Bridget Lynne. I will use Brigid Lyne throughout the dissertation.
[39] Heap, *Crossing social boundaries*, 68.
[40] Kathleen Boner, *Dominican Women*, 137.
[41] See H-Dirksen Bauman, 'Introduction: Listening to Deaf Studies,' in *Open your eyes: Deaf studies talking*, edited by H-Dirksen Bauman, (Minneapolis/London: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 1-32.
[42] Paddy Ladd, *Understanding Deaf Culture: In search of Deafhood,* (Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters, 2003), xviii.

world.[43] Being Deaf (using the uppercase D) is an identity, a way of experiencing and living in the world which is consciously chosen by a deaf person.[44] Deaf culture refers to the discourse that Deaf people historically have developed and maintained 'about themselves, their lives, their beliefs, their interpretation of the world, their needs, and their dreams.'[45]

Hearing people have traditionally referred to deaf people and focused on their lack of hearing as a deviation from the norm that is the hearing majority.[46] The question of normalcy and deafness, seen as a lack or deficiency in deaf people, has resulted in hearing people exercising power over the Deaf community. The hearing sought ways to cure, heal or improve the lot of deaf people through medical means and thereby to make them more like 'normal' people. Hospitals, schools and governments also sought to enable Deaf people to fit into a hearing world. Underlying this industry of care and benevolence lies a more insidious creation of dependency on these institutions and on hearing professionals who run them. The Deaf adult or child is caught in a 'dependency duet not because of audist practices or legislation but because of the deaf person's intrinsic nature.'[47]

In contrast to this 'instrinsic nature' argument, the word 'audism' was coined to express the superiority and arrogance of hearing people and the views that they have held of Deaf people down the ages. Tom Humphries was the first to define audism as 'the notion that one is superior based on one's ability to hear or behave in the manner of one who hears.'[48]

Harlan Lane developed this definition by saying that audism was:

> the corporate institution for dealing with deaf people, dealing with them by making statements about them, authorizing views of them, describing them, teaching about them, governing where they go to school, and, in some cases where they live; in short,

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[43] Senghas and Monaghan, 'Signs of their times,' 71-72.
[44] Senghas and Monaghan, 'Signs of their times,' 72.
[45] Tom Humphries, 'Talking culture and culture talking,' in *Open your eyes: Deaf studies talking*, edited by H-Dirksen Bauman, (Minneapolis/London: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 35.
[46] Thomas Reynolds, *Vulnerable Communion: A theology of disability and hospitality*, (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2008), 27-28.
[47] Harlan Lane, *The Mask of benevolence: Disabling the Deaf community*, (San Diego: Dawn Sign Press, 1989), 78.
[48] Tom Humphries, 'Audism: The making of a word,' unpublished paper, 1975. Quoted by H-Dirksen Bauman, 'Introduction: Listening to Deaf Studies,' in *Open your eyes: Deaf studies talking*, edited by H-Dirksen Bauman, (Minneapolis/London: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 13, 30.

> audism is the hearing way of dominating, restructuring and exercising authority over the deaf community.[49]

This power was and continues to be exercised by hearing people over Deaf people through various institutions under their control like hospitals, schools, churches and government offices. Audism functions like racism not only because of attitudes of superiority of one group over another but also due to the institutionalisation of these attitudes. Through the oral method of education in schools and the providing of hearing aids and cochlear implants to Deaf children, hearing people seek to train Deaf people to function in, what they call, the 'hearing world.' These audist agendas, under the guise of benevolent care for the Deaf community, are hostile to the Deaf community, their language, their identity and their self-understanding.[50]

Deaf people reject audism and its assumptions, which are based upon biological and medical definitions of deafness. For centuries, it was believed and understood that only spoken languages were truly languages. Sign language was disparaged as mere gesture and viewed as primitive, closer to the way animals communicate than human beings. In 1960, William Stokoe both argued for and demonstrated the linguistic structures of sign languages. In so doing, he overturned centuries of misconceptions.[51] Sign language is a language utilising space rather than sound as its medium of communication, relying on sight and the visual rather than hearing and the audiological. This awareness has broadened our understanding of language and even what constitutes the human.

Audism has become increasingly understood as a form of cultural and linguistic colonialism,[52] where Deaf people have been denied access to their language and culture. Deaf people have been denied access to their own language as a means of communication and a medium for education. This oppression was institutionalised when Deaf people were coerced by schools for the deaf to learn to speak spoken languages and punished if they were found signing. Deaf teachers were effectively purged from schools for the deaf and were not considered good enough to teach deaf children. They were relegated to being hearing teachers' assistants. This

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[49] Lane, *The Mask of benevolence,* 43.
[50] See Lane, *The Mask of benevolence*, 43.
[51] See William Stokoe, 'Sign Language Structure,' *Studies in Linguistics Occasional papers*, 8, (1960) and *Semiotics and human sign languages*, (The Hague: Mouton, 1972).
[52] Ladd, *Understanding Deaf Culture*, 81-83.

oppression was perpetrated not just as prejudice against Deaf people but was the institutionalised result of policies propagated by governments, taught in universities, perpetrated by the medical profession under the guise of care for the deaf and forced upon defenceless deaf children in schools for the deaf. The hearing are the colonisers who imposed their language, culture and value-system on the Deaf oppressed just like European colonisers did to African people in the nineteenth century.[53]

In contrast, Paddy Ladd proposed the idea of 'Deafhood' as an alternative to the audist understanding of deafness. Deafhood is the Deaf 'way of being in the world, of conceiving the world and their place within it in both potentiality and actuality.'[54] Therefore, Deaf people have a common and equal human dignity with hearing people. Deaf people were not to be understood negatively as those who lack hearing but rather positively as those who share a common way of being in the world. Consequently, Ladd understood Deafhood to be 'a process by which Deaf individuals come to actualize their Deaf identity, positing that those individuals construct that identity around several differently ordered sets of priorities and principles, which are affected by various factors such as nation, era and class.'[55]

Recently, H-Dirksen Bauman has introduced the concept of phonocentrism taken from the writings of Jacques Derrida. For Derrida, phonocentrism is the limiting of language to speech and the use of the voice and vocalisation and, thereby, ignoring other ways of communicating, especially the written means of communication. In extending this idea to Deaf people, Bauman has argued that phonocentrism is the privileging of speech and the 'maniacal obsession' with the human voice over sign language as the main contributing factor to audism.[56] This will be explored in greater detail in chapter 4.

However, recently the polarity of Deaf identity has shifted. been challenged. In 2005, Guy McIlroy, a Deaf lecturer in Deaf education at the University of the Witwatersrand, suggested that perhaps Deaf identity is much more fluid than what has previously been suggested. He proposed that the way to speak about Deaf people is to use the word DeaF, where the **F** refers

[53] Lane, *The Mask of benevolence*, 74.
[54] Ladd, *Understanding Deaf Culture*, 81.
[55] Ladd, *Understanding Deaf Culture*, xviii.
[56] See H-Dirksen Bauman, 'Listening to phonocentrism with Deaf eyes: Derrida's mute philosophy of (Sign) Language,' *Essays in Philosophy*, 9,1, (2008), 4. Accessed on 7 September 2018 at url: http://www.commons.pacific.edu/eip/.

to the fluidity of identities, as Deaf people negotiate their place within and at the interface between the Deaf and hearing worlds.[57] In their research on Deaf children in hearing families, McIlroy and Storbeck sought to 'find out how a bicultural DeaF identity is assumed.'[58] They found that although all the participants were happy to identify with the Deaf community, this did not mean that they imposed 'a moratorium on dialogue with the hearing society.'[59] They were particularly concerned with strengthening the bonds they had with close family members and their hearing school teachers thereby displaying 'the fluid bicultural DeaF identity proposed by the researchers.'[60] This insight opens up thinking beyond audism and this will prove valuable when we begin to reflect on Levinas' understanding of language in chapter 4.

Sign language remains at the heart of Deaf identity and often used to distinguish between those who are deaf, Deaf or DeaF. In the United Kingdom, using the word 'Deaf' when referring to the Deaf community has been discouraged. Instead, the Deaf community is called the sign language community.[61] Through sign language, the Deaf find an identity and dignity on a par with hearing people. In asserting their full human dignity Deaf people are finding their public voice.[62] Deaf people have formed international organisations like the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) and, likewise in South Africa, DeafSA lobbies for recognition for the rights of Deaf people in South African society. Much of the identity of Deaf people centres upon their use of sign language.

1.4. The development of sign language in South Africa

In 1983, the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) in Pretoria funded the establishment of the South African Sign Language Research Programme (SASLRP). The SASLRP's primary task

[57] See Guy McIlroy, 'Deaf identities: A range of possibilities,' A paper presented at the Deafness and Mental Health conference, Worcester, Cape Town, De La Bat Institute for the Deaf, August 2005.
[58] Guy McIlroy and Claudine Storbeck, 'Development of Deaf identity: An ethnographic study,' *Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education*, 16, 4 (Fall 2011), 497. Accessed on 8 September 2018.
DOI: 10.1093/deafed/enr017.
[59] McIlroy and Storbeck, 'Development of Deaf identity,' 509.
[60] Ibid.
[61] See H-Dirksen Bauman, 'Introduction: Listening to Deaf Studies,' 12.
[62] It is ironic how audist assumptions affect the language we speak. I have chosen to remain with this sense of voice even though it is precisely what Deaf people have been campaigning against, the predominance of voice over sign.

was to produce a dictionary for South African Sign Language (SASL).[63] The dictionary was to be of signs that adult deaf people were actually using.[64] Claire Penn from the University of the Witwatersrand was integral to formulating this dictionary. Sign language was becoming more widely accepted as the natural language of the Deaf community in South Africa. It was no longer seen as gesture or some form of pantomime or primitive form of language but as a real language, equivalent to any spoken language.[65]

However, in formulating this dictionary, it became apparent that sign language reflected the divisions within apartheid society. Different communities had different signs. Claire Penn and Timothy Reagan wrote a ground-breaking article in 1990 entitled 'How do you sign "Apartheid."'[66] The article highlighted the political dynamics integral to sign language development in South Africa. In South Africa, there was not one sign language which united the Deaf community, but rather 'divisions among the Deaf, which are reflected in the presence of a number of distinct natural sign languages initially brought about by natural processes, have been emphasized and entrenched by separate and distinct educational systems.'[67] There was no standardised sign language for the whole country. The signs a Deaf person employed depended on the school for the deaf they had attended. Even in the same region or city different signs were operative depending on the Deaf person's home language and racial classification.

Aarons and Akach pointed out how the apartheid education policy promoted the use of the oral method of education for white schools and but not for use in black schools.[68] This policy resulted, they pointed out, to the survival and development of 'strong centres of natural signed language use.'[69] The veracity of this comment needs to be qualified because these schools were permitted to use a limited form of sign language known as the Paget-Norman

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[63] Timothy Reagan, Claire Penn and Dale Ogilvy, 'From policy to practice: Sign language developments in post-apartheid South Africa,' *Language Policy*, 5, (2006), 192ff.
[64] Ibid.
[65] Claire Penn, 'Signs of the times: Deaf language and culture in South Africa,' *The South African Journal of communication disorders*, 40 (1993), 12. This article is very helpful as an early attempt to explain the grammar of South African Sign Language (SASL).
[66] Claire Penn, Timothy Reagan, 'How do you sign "Apartheid"? The politics of South African Sign Language,' *Language problems and language planning*, 14, 2 (Summer 1990), 92-103.
[67] Penn and Reagan, 'How do you sign "Apartheid"?' 95.
[68] Aarons and Akach, 'South African Sign Language,' 5-11.
[69] Aarons and Akach, 'South African Sign Language,' 11.

method. Among themselves, the pupils used natural sign language and taught each other. This will be discussed in later chapters.

In post-apartheid South Africa, DeafSA has campaigned to have SASL accepted as the twelfth official language. This campaign started in the 1990s. While SASL was originally accepted as a language for the education of the Deaf, it is only recently that the South African Parliament's Constitutional Review Committee recommended that SASL be accepted as the twelfth official language.[70] Much progress has been made and it should become law soon. This is not the only new development in deaf education in South Africa. More schools are moving into bilingual Deaf education.

1.4.1. Bilingual Deaf education in South Africa

Much of the most recent literature on Deaf education is focused on the development of bilingual Deaf education in South Africa. Education in sign language is the main method of instruction while a spoken language, like English, is taught as a second language for the purposes of written work. There is extensive material on this bicultural and bilingual approach to education in South Africa.[71]

Bilingualism is an educational approach that empowers deaf people, enabling them to live in a multilingual and multicultural world where it is important to maintain connectedness. This approach shifts attention away from the deaf/Deaf duality and reveals the possibilities for a greater fluidity in Deaf identity as Deaf people live and interact with their hearing family, friends and the world. This new shift in deaf education, McIlroy referred to as a post-audist turn in deaf education.[72]

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[70] 'SASL soon to become 12th official language,' *Cape Argus*, 28 July 2017. Accessed on 7 August 2018 url: www.iol.co.za/capeargus/news/sasl-soon-to-become-the-12th-official-language-10522103.

[71] See Sheila Steinberg, 'Sign language as the bridge across Deaf boundaries: A South African experience,' *Communicatio*, 24,1 (1998), 59-66; Claudine Storbeck, 'Bilingual education for the Deaf in South Africa – Can it work?' *South African Journal of Communication Disorders,* 47, January 2000, 51-59; Philemon Akach, *Application of South African Sign Language (SASL) in a bilingual-bicultural approach in education of the Deaf*, (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of the Free State, 2010); Guy McIlroy, 'Sign bilingualism in South Africa, moving towards dynamic bilingualism?' A paper presented to the International Symposium of Bilingualism 9: Singapore, 11 June 2013. Accessed 7 August 2018. url: www.academia.edu/3739205/Paper_for_ISB9_Sign_Bilingualism_in_South_Africa_moving_towards_dynamic_bilingualism.

[72] Guy McIlroy, *The implementation of South African Sign Language (SASL) and Sign Bilingualism in a school for the Deaf interpreted through the identity metaphors used by school leadership (SMT) and teachers*, (Unpublished Doctoral dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 2017), 25-27.

This emphasis on language and connectivity between people is one which interested Emmanuel Levinas and which he emphasised in his philosophy of intersubjectivity.

1.5. Why a Levinasian reading?

The philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas will be utilised to throw light on the situation in which Deaf Catholics in South Africa found themselves during the apartheid years. Historians are divided in their opinions regarding the value of theory in historical research. Some historians have pointed out that history is essentially a study which moves from the particular to the general and fitting facts to theory undermines the whole historical research process, a process which is to identify the 'uniqueness', complexity and the particularity of events as well as the power of human agency.[73] From this perspective, history is understood as getting to the truth of the past by focusing on the facts and the evidence that can be uncovered from archival documents.

The use of theory could also encourage determinism, giving the impression of a certain inevitability of the historical process.[74] Events inevitably support the theory. John Tosh, a historian who has reflected on the role of theory in history, pointed out that there are theories that do not fall into determinism, but which take the relationship between human agency and social structure seriously.[75]

The questions historians asked was whether human beings were the protagonists of history or was human history the result of their being shaped and often deformed by the structures of society. In South African historiography, the debates between liberal historians and Marxist or structuralist historians bore testament to this.[76] In more recent times, the post-modern and post-colonial approaches to history also continue to emphasise structuralist approaches to history.

In contrast, Levinas' philosophy of alterity offers another vantage point on history as ethical. Like some structuralist approaches, it alerts the historian to the needs and struggles of the

[73] John Tosh, *The Pursuit of history: Aims, methods and new directions in the study of modern history*, second edition, (London/New York: Longman, 1991), 158.
[74] Tosh, *The Pursuit of history*, 158.
[75] Tosh, *The Pursuit of history*, 161.
[76] For more on these debates, see Christopher Saunders, *The Making of the South African past: Major historians on race and class*, (Cape Town: David Philip, 1988).

vulnerable and marginalised people in society. Levinas' emphasis on the 'face of the Other' as accusing, traumatising, disrupting the self, is language employed to unsettle, to disturb the comfortable and those at home in their own economies. Yet it also calls people to personal responsibility and an ethical response to the suffering Other. It is not a historical theory but a challenge to praxis. Levinas' approach is more akin to a pair of new shoes which are never a perfect fit, but which constantly chafe one's feet.[77] These shoes chafe our conscience, helping us recognise our bad conscience, that we have not done enough to respond to the suffering, the marginalisation or the exclusion of our neighbour or the Other. David Tracy referred to this view of history as interruptive and ambiguous.[78]

> History is not only contingent; history is interruptive. Western history is, through and through, an interruptive narrative with no single theme and no controlling plot. To be American, for example, is to live with pride by participating in a noble experiment of freedom and plurality. But to be a white American is also to belong to a history that encompasses the near destruction of one people (the North American Indians, the true native Americans) and the enslavement of another people (the blacks) [...] To cherish the Christian scriptures as a charter document of liberation is entirely right. Yet we must also face its anti-Judaic strands, […] centuries of Christian "teaching of contempt" for the Jews [as well as its] subjection of women in Christian history.[79]

Levinas reminded us that the face of the Other calls one to responsibility; to breach totality and to move from being a self for-itself to becoming a self for-the-other. Edith Wyschogrod referred to this task of the historian as heterological.[80] The heterological historian is one who studies Otherness or alterity in history.[81] This means that the historian has the ethical

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[77] For the image of shoes, I am indebted to Glenn Morrison. See his article 'Practical theology from the heart: Becoming children of God,' *Compass: A review of topical theology*, Spring, September 2016, 30-34. Morrison compares practical theology with well-worn shoes which he said carry the memories of our daily lives. I have changed the image slightly by referring to Levinas' philosophy as new shoes. These shoes chafe our consciences and make us aware of our responsibility to the suffering neighbour or the Other.

[78] For Tracy, 'the Holocaust is a searing interruption of all the traditions of Western culture … We must recognize that Western humanist history includes all the guards at Auschwitz who read Goethe and listened to Bach and Mozart in their "spare time". See David Tracy, *Plurality and ambiguity: Hermeneutics, religion and hope*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 68-74.

[79] Tracy, *Plurality and ambiguity*, 68-69.

[80] Edith Wyschogrod, *An Ethics of remembering: History, heterology and the nameless others,* (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), 38.

[81] See Edith Wyschogrod and Carl Raschke, 'Heterological history: A conversation,' *Journal for cultural and religious theory*, 1, 2, (2000). Accessed on 2 May 2019. url: www.jcrt.org/archives/01.2/wyschogrod_raschke.shtml.

responsibility or obligation and liability to tell the truth about the past of the marginalised, and often, nameless others of history.

For Wyschogrod, all history is apophatic, an absent presence where 'the past itself is inscrutable and thus always an unsurpassable negation.'[82] History can only be recovered as a trace. So rather than only focusing on truth as correspondence with the evidence as 'facts', the heterological historian also finds truth in memory and remembrance.

> It is not the 'facts of history' that bring the other to the fore, but the relationship with the other that allows the 'facts of history' to emerge.[83]

Memories expose us to the other person and their world. 'They open up a world that is not ours.'[84] Memories lay bare the existential ethical truth of a person, a community, a people or even a nation. In every person or community there are the hidden or shadow elements of a personality, a community or a nation which people repress or conveniently forget about. Memory performs the function of uncovering that which has been covered over in forgetfulness or pushed to the margins of society. Memory and the ethical relation with the Other uncover the lives and experiences of those who remain 'invisible'[85] to history and often written out of history, that is the forgotten or unrecognised Other.

Memory is also a powerful Biblical motif through which believing Jews and Christians are called to deeper faith and experience of God's redeeming work in history. The Jewish people are constantly reminded that God led them out of Egypt when they were slaves and brought them to the Promised Land. God also released them from exile in Babylon and instructed them to rebuild the Temple. The Gospel accounts recount the dangerous memory of Jesus' life, death and resurrection which is remembered and celebrated in the Eucharist. Memory functions to remind people of God's love for them and their need to respond in love towards their suffering neighbour.

Levinas' language unsettles the researcher, the historian and the theologian. Levinas' philosophy questions our intentions. What is our starting point? Are we motivated for

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[82] Wyschogrod and Raschke, 'Heterological history,' 1.
[83] Robert Eaglestone, *The Holocaust and the postmodern*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 178.
[84] Eaglestone, *The Holocaust and the postmodern*, 158.
[85] Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 243.

personal gain and self-interest? Are we willing to open ourselves to being unsettled by proximity to the Other? If we are to become heterological or ethical historians or theologians, we need to be conscious and sensitive to the marginalisation of others by our language, thinking, social systems and church institutions.[86] This places a large responsibility on the researcher, historian, theologian in the writing of the history of Christian mission to aim for greater humility in approaching their research, to be self-critical and to be reflexive. Researchers can never claim that they know or that now they understand. The alterity of the Other always calls researchers to move beyond their present knowledge and preconceptions. The marginalised and suffering Other calls one's own existence into question. The German philosopher Heidegger understood self's existence as *Dasein*, 'being there.' But this 'being there' is always *mitsandersein*, a being-with-others.[87] Authentic existence for Heidegger was becoming your own person and individuating out from the group and realising one's potential in the world.

For Levinas, alterity undermines this project of the self in its attempts to realise itself. Alterity challenges the self's egoist pursuit and presents a call to act with compassion and mercy to the suffering Other even to the extent of self-sacrifice. For Levinas, this willingness to respond in compassion to the pain of the Other is what constitutes our being human, a subject. Subjectivity is always intersubjectivity in alterity. The failure to respond is merely a continuation of our long history of inhumanity and our lack of subjectivity. The true human being is always a self-for-the-other.

Becoming a subject is always a work in progress. Morrison described this as 'the (im)possibilities of Levinas' philosophy for Christian theology.'[88]

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[86] See Davis, *Levinas: An introduction*, 45: Colin Davis summed up the problem when he wrote: 'The difficulty in describing the encounter with alterity lies in the constant danger of transforming the Other, however unwittingly or unwillingly, into a reflection or projection of the Same. If the Other becomes an object of knowledge or experience (my knowledge, my experience), then immediately its alterity has been overwhelmed … Even to describe the relationship with the Other as a relationship implies a totalizing perspective from which both self and Other are seen to share common ground, which has the consequence that the Other becomes another version of the Same.'

[87] Roy Hornsby, 'What Heidegger means by Being-in-the-world,' url: www.royby.com/philosophy/pages/dasein.html.

[88] See Glenn Morrison, 'The (im)possibilities of Levinas for Christian theology: the search for a language of alterity' in J. de Tavernier, J.A. Selling, J. Verstraeten and P. Schotsmans (eds), *Festschrift Roger Burggraeve: Responsibility, God and society: Theological Ethics in Dialogue*. Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium, 217, (Leuven: Peters, 2008), 103-122. I share with Morrison an interest in the relation of Levinas' philosophy with theology but more specifically its relevance for the history of Christianity.

> Doing theology with Levinas is both possible and impossible. It is largely possible because Levinas' thought is like a treasury of keys to unlock the mysteries of personhood, prayer and ethics. Yet, we also face a sense of the impossible as the language of alterity itself beckons a whole eternity to be proclaimed. We seem to be always late for the other and find it so hard to welcome our neighbour with a heart and a smile.[89]

In reading Levinas, Morrison understood that the living of the Christian faith is coming to God by way of ethical transcendence or what he called Trinitarian praxis.[90] Trinitarian praxis, in the language of alterity, is a Christian life and practice that is self-emptying, kenotic and passive. In passivity, 'the self may encounter new possibilities and new ways of seeing and hearing the truth of the Other.'[91] The church in its ministry to the Deaf stands accused of ignoring the face, and at times, repressing the 'signs'[92] of the Deaf Other.

This study is an attempt to write an interruptive and a heterological history to record how the institutional church's approach to deaf ministry both served and failed the Deaf Other. Using a Levinasian lens, it will be necessary to gauge the extent to which Catholic Deaf education and ministry was experienced by Deaf people as totalising and oppressive; and the extent to which it empowered some Deaf people to transform and to shape their lives in a more liberating way.

1.6. Reflexity in research

Engaging in historical research means to also be conscious of reflexivity. Reflexivity is a self-critical awareness that researchers adopt knowing that it is impossible for them to be completely objective or stand 'outside of the research field'[93] and therefore they try to integrate and 'incorporate that knowledge creatively and effectively'[94] into their research.

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[89] Morrison, 'The (im)possibilities of Levinas for Christian theology,' 106.
[90] Morrison, 'The (im)possibilities of Levinas for Christian theology,' 105.
[91] Glenn Morrison, *A theology of alterity: Levinas, von Balthasar, and Trinitarian praxis*, (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2013), 69.
[92] I have used 'signs' rather than voice.
[93] John Swinton and Harriet Mowat, *Practical theology and qualitative research*, second edition, (London: SCM Press, 2016), 57.
[94] Ibid.

In this research, I recognise that I am a hearing person reflecting on the experience of Deaf people. My experience of the Deaf world is primarily from my maternal grandparents who were both Deaf. This experience has made me very sympathetic to the challenges that Deaf people experience.

As we discussed in the previous section, Levinas' philosophy is a challenge to the researcher to recognise one's own worldview or being-at-home-with-oneself and to put oneself under question. Being a white, hearing, South African-born male, a Catholic priest and a chaplain for the Deaf affects the way I see and understand the world and so it will also affect my epistemological assumptions when approaching a subject like Deaf ministry. I cannot position myself as an objective outsider.

My own life history has been influenced by growing up with deaf grandparents and my mother being a child of deaf adults (CODA). I remember being impressed with my grandfather's excellent lip-reading ability. He had been trained by the Dominican Sisters at the Sacred Heart School for the Deaf in Kingwilliamstown in the 1920s. This made it easier for me, as the hearing grandson, to communicate with him. He seemed to adjust well to the challenges of working and functioning in a hearing world. He had excelled at sport all his life.[95] My grandmother was the opposite. She was profoundly deaf and relied on sign language, she was not as proficient at lip-reading. Her voice production, for me as her grandson, had much to be desired. I battled to understand her.

Due to my grandparents both being deaf, I thought I had some idea about what being deaf meant. I had tried to learn a little sign language. However, my grandfather was orally trained and only used sign language when he was with other deaf people. Knowing that my grandfather had benefitted from his education at the school for the deaf in Kingwilliamstown, I had a very positive view of the oral method of deaf education.

In this sense, I have chosen sides in the debate even though, academically, I try to keep an open mind. I believe that we, as hearing people, have an enormous amount to learn from the

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[95] Joseph Hirst played rugby for Transvaal from 1938-1942 earning 21 caps at fullback. He played in the Transvaal team that beat Western Province, captained by the famous Danie Craven, in the Curie Cup final at Ellis Park in 1939. This was the first time Transvaal won the Curie Cup. See 'Inspiring sportsman passes away,' *The Springs and Brakpan Advertiser*, 25 May 2001, see Appendix, 474.

experience of Deaf people and, like Mary of Bethany, we need to choose the better part and learn from their experience (Luke 10:42).

Since 2006, I have been involved with Deaf ministry in Johannesburg, Soweto and Eswatini.[96] My ability to sign has improved, although I am far from being fluent. Through contact with the various Deaf communities, my understanding of Deaf culture and Deaf identity has grown and developed. When I started out, I incorrectly assumed that, I already had some insight to the lives of Deaf people because of my previous contact with my grandparents, and that it would not be difficult for me to learn sign language.

Being in contact with the Deaf community has challenged me to undergo a conversion in my perspective and understanding of Deaf people. I shared the misconception of many hearing people that being deaf was an affliction. I was bowled over when I first heard a Deaf friend and congregant, Francois de Villiers, explain to me that he was happy and content with being Deaf. He was enriched by being part of a Deaf community which shared a language that enabled them to communicate with each other.

For me, this was one of the first encounters with a Deaf person who put my life under question. The self-satisfied economy by which I had previously lived my life was questioned. I had approached deaf people primarily from a perspective of benevolence. A benevolence of feeling sorry for them and the predicament in which they found themselves. I wanted to help and put things right.

The transformation that I underwent made me realise that I have much to learn from the Deaf community. The first was to learn sign language. Previously I had not realised that sign language was a separate language from English with its own grammatical structure. Prior to this, I had assumed my signed English was sign language. By participating in courses in SASL run by Sign Language Education and Development (SLED), an NGO in Johannesburg, I was introduced to the fundamentals of SASL. With practice, I was able to improve my signing. I consider myself a second-language signer.

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[96] In April 2018, King Mswati III announced that the name of the country had been changed from Swaziland to Eswatini.

Another challenge was to revise the way in which I looked upon my ministry and mission. Previously, I saw myself as working for the deaf and even used that terminology. However, in conducting the research I received a brochure from DeafSA where the transformation of the organisation from the South African National Council of the Deaf (SANCD) to DeafSA was described as a shift from being an organisation working 'for' the deaf to being one 'of' the Deaf community.[97] This change of preposition challenged my previous mindset.

No longer did I work from the assumption that Deaf people were victims of hearing loss but rather a community with agency that was bonded together through their use of sign language. Deaf people had skills and talents that could be included in ministry. I did not have a monopoly on skills. With my limited ability to sign, I realised that in this ministry it was I who was the one who was handicapped and not any Deaf person. This forced me to become humble in my approach to ministry.

I recognised that I had lots to learn from the Deaf community. I sought to discuss with the Deaf community about the best way to minister in the Deaf environment. For example, Deaf people taught me that in the Eucharist it is important that everyone see what is being signed. This meant we agreed to change some of the customary practices of the hearing. The hearing normally stand at the reading of the Gospel out of respect for the word of God, we sit so everyone can see the person signing. Whenever possible we also turn the lectern a little to one side so that the congregation can have a clearer view of the signer's hands.

Even though I have grown in my understanding of the Deaf community and my participation within it, nevertheless, I realise that I am not deaf/Deaf. As a hearing person I am an outsider to the Deaf world, but I am nevertheless privileged to share in the life of the Deaf communities in which I minister. My experience is limited and it does not equip me to speak on behalf of Deaf people or think that I can understand what it means to be Deaf. I recognise that I am an outsider to the Deaf experience and this limits the scope of this study too.

Taking a cue from Steve Biko, who in the struggle against apartheid, was insistent that white people should not presume to know what black people think or feel or try to fight the struggle

[97] Doreen Hayhurst, DeafSA, personal email to Mark James, 20 September 2014.

against apartheid on their behalf,[98] I have tried to do the same with respect to the Deaf community. In a similar way, I do not want to present myself as a champion for Deaf people's rights. In the research, I have strived to allow Deaf people to speak for themselves. Consequently, I have resorted to quoting them as often as possible, rather than paraphrasing what they have said and advocated. Ladd has said that 'Deafhood is a verb and not a noun.'[99] His meaning is that Deafhood is about the self-actualisation of Deaf people, a movement and an action that they must embark upon themselves. Biko also believed that black people would 'carving out their own destiny.'[100]

My intention in this dissertation is not to represent Deaf people but rather to address a hearing audience. I call on hearing people to have 'open minds open hearts'[101] to the struggles of Deaf people in our midst. As hearing people there is much to learn from Deaf people about what it means to be human. Sign language also broadens our horizons about what constitutes language and human communication. Deaf discourse is a teaching from which hearing people need to learn. Hearing people need to learn the local sign language of their country as they continue to meet more Deaf people in the shops, as bank tellers and in the workplace.

A more extensive history of Deaf organisations and movements in South Africa like DeafSA and the contributions made by Deaf people from other churches still need to be written. It is a rich history and one which needs further research. In writing this history, I attempt to bring to the fore Deaf perspectives from a historical perspective that show how Deaf people, like Black people, have come to understand themselves anew. In doing so, it is my hope that this research will contribute towards a greater appreciation of the contribution made by the Deaf community to the life of the Catholic Church in South Africa.

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[98] See Julian Brown, *The road to Soweto: Resistance and the uprising of 16 June 1976,* (Johannesburg: Jacana Media, 2016), 42.
[99] Ladd, *Understanding Deaf culture*, 448.
[100] It is the sub-title for chapter 2 on the South African Students' Organisation (SASO) in Brown, *The Road to Soweto*, 40.
[101] I have intentionally chosen this phrasing in tribute to a book written by a team of writers hearing and Deaf, lay people and Dominican Sisters, with Sarah Fitzgerald, a lay Catholic Deaf woman, as narrator. The book describes and details the experiences of Catholic Deaf people in Australia from 1875 to 1995. See Sarah Fitzgerald, Diana Santleben et al, eds, *Open minds open hearts: Stories of the Australian Catholic Deaf Community*, (Lidcombe, NSW: CCOD, 1999).

1.7. Methodology

In collecting data for this research, I invariably use the qualitative rather than the quantitative approach in historical research. The qualitative approach involves the accumulation of data from archival research which involves: firstly, the uncovering of the primary sources through archival research; secondly, complementing archival research with oral history research through interviewing individuals who actively participated in the historical events under study or who are knowledgeable about these matters; and thirdly, through reading of secondary literature of a historical, philosophical and sociological nature.

1.7.1. Archival research

Archival research is integral to historical research. McKemmish and Gilliland pointed out that until the mid-1990s, the archive was seen 'as an institution that systematically promotes, preserves and makes accessible memory, culture and identity in the form of bureaucratic and social evidence.'[102] The archive was the place where the facts about the past were stored. In uncovering this evidence in texts and documents from the past, it was presumed that the past could be brought back to life. This was also my approach when I first started consulting various archives.

For material on St Vincent School for the Deaf and St Thomas School for the Deaf in Woodlands in the Eastern Cape, the Kingwilliamstown Dominican Sisters Archive (KDSA) in Johannesburg was incredibly valuable. There is a near-complete collection of the St Vincent School magazine which was incredibly instructive in understanding the method of deaf education employed at the school from 1948 until 1994. The archive also had extensive information on the foundation of St Thomas School for the Deaf in Woodlands in the Eastern Cape. There was a limited amount of information on KwaThintwa school in Inchanga with which some of the Sisters had been involved. The Cabra Dominican Sisters' Archive (CDSA) in Cape Town had extensive information on the Dominican-Grimley School, the Wittebome School and the Hammanskraal School that were established by the Cabra Dominicans.

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[102] Sue McKemmish and Anne Gilliland, 'Archival and recordkeeping research: Past, present and future,' in Research methods: Information, Systems, and Contexts, edited by K. Williamson and G. Johanson, (Prahan, Victoria: Tilde Publishing, 2013), 84. Accessed on 3 May 2019, url: www.uzk.unizd.hr/rams/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Chapter4.ResearchMethods-WilliamsonJohanson-2.pdf.

Much of the work on the Deaf chaplaincies was accessed from newspaper articles in *The Southern Cross*. The Catholic History Bureau (CHB) in Victory Park, Johannesburg was very helpful in this respect as it houses all the copies of *The Southern Cross* newspaper from 1921 to 2013. While in Cape Town, I got the opportunity to consult the *The Southern Cross* Archive in Cape Town too.

The Archive of the Archdiocese of Durban (AAD) had extensive information on the establishment and development of KwaThintwa School for the Deaf in the Archbishop Hurley Archives collection. However, this collection has now been moved over to the Denis E. Hurley Library at St Joseph's Theological Institute at Cedara, near Pietermaritzburg. The Archive of the Diocesan of Port Elizabeth (ADPE) had useful information on St Thomas School for the Deaf in Woodlands and information on the work of Bishop Ernest Green. The Archive of the Archdiocese of Cape Town (AACT) at the Chancery in Cape Town had a limited amount of information on the two schools for the deaf in the Archdiocese. Unfortunately, there was virtually no information on the work of Fr Ernest Green before he went to Port Elizabeth, or after his retirement as bishop, and his return to Cape Town as a chaplain to the deaf.

The Archive of DeafSA agreed to email to me all the electronic copies of *The Silent Messenger* from 1935-1995. This was the magazine of DeafSA's predecessor and the now defunct organisation called the SANCD. This proved incredibly helpful in supplying background information about work with the deaf community in South Africa during the period under study. Unfortunately, much of the information was from a hearing perspective but occasionally there were valuable articles written by deaf authors.

The University of the Witwatersrand Archive at William Cullen Library (UWA) was helpful in finding information regarding Rev Arthur Blaxall, an Anglican priest and a co-founder of the SANCD.

However, I began to recognise that most of the archival material was written from the perspective of the Dominican Sisters who taught in the school or the priests who worked with the deaf and not the deaf people themselves. In the case of the church archives, they often reflected the history of the schools or parishes that they represented. What was considered worthy of inclusion were the thoughts, reports, comments of the school principals, teachers, the Board of Governors and Boards of Management. Even *The Southern Cross* newspaper

reflected the thoughts and opinions of various church authorities like the popes, cardinals, archbishops, bishops, chaplains of the deaf, religious sisters and principals of schools rather than the opinions of the Deaf people themselves.

A notable exception where the Redemptorist archive had an excellent collection of accounts of Fr Cyril Axelrod's life, some of his papers and letters, and journal and newspapers articles on him. He was also a contributor to *The Southern Cross*. The Archive of the South African province of the Redemptorists (RA) in Cape Town had extensive information on Fr Cyril Axelrod CSsR and his life and ministry in South Africa.

Taking on board, Edith Wyschogrod's idea of reading history from a heterological historical perspective, it became more apparent to me that no archive can be accepted uncritically as value-free and objective.

> Increasingly the Archive is being explored as a contested, political space, a societal concept associated with the promotion of asymmetrical power, grand narratives, nationalism, surveillance, and the omission, dimunition or silencing of alternative narratives.[103]

Archives are spaces of power which allow narratives to be told through voices that can be heard and recorded.[104] This power of the archive, however, is selective because often only some narratives and some voices are permitted. This is because the archive is a record of those narratives whom the archivists consider to be valuable and important. The documents collected in the archive represent the perspectives of what the archivists consider to be of historical value and worth keeping for posterity's sake. The archive is, therefore, a social construct and it contains 'the information and social values of the rulers, governments, businesses, associations, and individuals who establish and maintain them.[105]

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[103] McKemmish and Gilliland, 'Archival and recordkeeping,' 86.

[104] Rodney G. S. Carter, 'Of things said and unsaid: Power, archival silences, and power in silence,' *Archivaria*, 61, (Spring 2006), 215-233. This is paraphrase of thoughts on page 216. Accessed on 3 May 2019, url: www.archivaria.ca/archivar/index.php/archivaria/article/view/12341.

[105] Joan M. Schwartz and Terry Cook, 'Archives, records and power: The Making of modern memory,' *Archival Science*, 2, 1-19, (2002), 3. Accessed on 3 May 2019, url: www.nyu.edu/classes/bkg/methods/schwartz.pdf.

In the church context, the archive reflects the interests of the organisation or church community that maintains the archive and at times the interests and thoughts of individual archivists, who in the church environment are not trained historians or archivists.

The archive is also a place of silence where some voices are missing.[106] However, the 'voice' the ordinary deaf school pupil or the deaf adult in the church was ostensibly absent from this archival record. They were truly an 'absent presence' referred to in the third person but seldom in their own 'voice' or in sign. There is also a dearth of information available, even in the Archive of the Congregation of Mariannhill Missionaries (ACMM) in Mariannhill, on the life and work of Fr John Turner CMM. An archivist once explained to me that 'Fr John's work was not typically the work of a Mariannhill priest!' The history of DCCT is also absent and silent in the archive. Very little has been recorded or documented in any significant way. For Carter, these 'archival silences, however they occur, have a potentially disastrous impact on marginalised groups,'[107] like the Catholic Deaf community. These memories can be easily lost. Silence can mean that societal and ecclesial memory is compromised.[108] For these reasons, the oral history approach was also employed to recover and record some of these Deaf memories or what Carter called 'finding voices in silence.'[109]

1.7.2. Oral history research

Due to the silences in the archival research, it was necessary to complement it with oral history research. Introducing an oral history research component to this study was necessary because of the large gaps in the archival material. Equally important, the archival material reflected the interests and concerns of the hearing principals, management boards and teachers. These documents also record the attitudes of the bishops, priests, sisters and hearing laity. Seldom ever were Deaf people's perspectives recorded in the archival material. In this respect, oral history functioned as a way of uncovering the Deaf perspective.

> Oral history can provide a corrective to the bias of the written sources. Social history aspires to treat the history of society as a whole, not just the rich and the articulate.[110]

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[106] Carter, 'Of things said and unsaid,' 217.
[107] Carter, 'Of things said and unsaid,' 220.
[108] Carter, 'Of things said and unsaid,' 220.
[109] Carter, 'Of things said and unsaid,' 222-224.
[110] In this case, 'the hearing and the articulate.' See Tosh, *The Pursuit of history*, 210.

Oral history assisted in uncovering the stories of the deaf children in the schools and the deaf adults in the church pews. Many of the stories related have not been recorded before.

> Oral history is a history built around people. It thrusts life into history itself and widens its scope. It allows heroes not just from the leaders, but from the unknown majority of the people […] It brings history into, and out of, the community. It helps the less privileged, and especially the old, towards dignity and self-confidence. It makes for contact – and thence understanding – between social classes and between generations.[111]

The oral history approach was used to try to capture the perspectives and self-understanding of Deaf people themselves, rather than having someone speak on their behalf. This was sourced through the conducting of interviews. The experience of the Deaf community members themselves needed to be expressed. But I did not restrict interviews to the Deaf community. I also interviewed some hearing people especially retired principals and teachers to clarify some details that I did not find in the archival material. Nevertheless, I interviewed six Deaf people and only four hearing.

At the beginning of the interview process, my view of oral history concurred with Kros and Ulrich's definition as 'history that has been passed down through word of mouth.'[112] They distinguished between two different approaches. There is the first-hand oral testimony or eyewitness accounts of the events which the person interviewed experienced and the second is oral testimony based on oral tradition, stories, praise songs or narratives passed from one generation to the next.[113] In this study, oral history has been applied in the first way as eyewitness accounts.

Interviews were conducted with those who had attended or taught in a Deaf school in South Africa or had participated in pastoral ministry in the Deaf community. This included both hearing and Deaf laity, priests and religious sisters and deaf pupils. The choice of those interviewed was conducted by the snowball approach to data collection. This approach to

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[111] Paul Thompson, *The Voice of the past: Oral history*. Third edition. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 23.

[112] Cynthia Kros and Nicole Ulrich, 'The truth of tales: Oral testimony and teaching history in schools,' in *Oral history in a wounded country: Interactive interviewing in South Africa*, Philippe Denis and Radikobo Ntsimane (eds), (Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal, 2008), 91.

[113] Kros and Ulrich, "The truth of tales,' 91.

sampling is also known as the network, chain referral or reputational method. Like a snowball, it usually starts with one or a few people and then spreads out to others by means of the links or connections of people to each other. [114]

Once I was granted ethical clearance on 3 July 2014, I conducted my first interview with Fr Cyril Axelrod CSsR, a deaf-blind priest, who ministered extensively throughout South Africa during my period of research. It was invaluable in validating and confirming various events and developments among Deaf people. It was my first time to interview a deaf-blind person. As I signed and Axelrod who read my signing with his hands feeling the signs I was making with my hands. When I finger-spelled I did so using the deaf-blind alphabet on the palm of his left hand. When Fr Cyril responded, he primarily voiced his responses, but used signs on occasion, so that I could capture what he was saying on video.

I chose to interview Fr Cyril Axelrod first and after being in discussion with him, I identified other key people to interview. It was by this way, I identified members of DCCT who had attended either the Dominican-Grimley School or the School for the Deaf in Wittebome. I interviewed them in the following order for no other reason than that it was convenient for them: Jennifer Gillespie had been a pupil at Dominican-Grimley School in Cape Town; then Carmen Kuscus, Suzanne Lombard and Faith Cronwright who attended the Wittebome School. Thereafter, I interviewed my first hearing person, Sr Liguori Töns, a Kingwilliamstown Dominican Sister, who taught at both the St Vincent School in Johannesburg and the St Thomas School at Woodlands in the Eastern Cape. Then was the turn of Sisters Macrina Donoghue, Siobhan Murphy and Jacinta Texeira who are Cabra Dominican Sisters each involved in a different Cabra school. Sr Macrina taught at Dominican-Grimley, Sr Siobhan was at Hammanskraal and Sr Jacinta at Wittebome. The last person I interviewed was Francois de Villiers was a previous pupil from St Vincent School. Since beginning this study, sadly two interviewees have passed away. Sr Liguori passed away on 9 September 2017 and Francois de Villiers on 28 September 2018.

I filmed seven of the interviews using the camera on my computer. I would position the computer in such a way that it could record both people and record our signing to each other.

[114] See W. Lawrence Neuman, *Social research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches*, Fourth edition. (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2000), 199-200.

Permission to record these interviews was sought from each interviewee. I transcribed the interviews from the video footage. Transcriptions are much easier to use as documented history in a written text than visual data. None of the Deaf people refused to be filmed. It made the interview process much easier as it is not possible for me to take notes and watch the person's signing at the same time. After transcribing the interviews, I sent them to the interviewees to verify their veracity.

I transcribed the interviews myself. I am proficient in SASL (NQF level 5), even though I am not completely fluent. Signing can differ from one region to another in South Africa. Even in one city, deaf people can sign differently because the signing one learnt was influenced by the deaf school one attended. When it was difficult to interpret some of the material or when I was not familiar with some of the signs being used, I requested the assistance of a Deaf signer, Faith Cronwright, to check the accuracy of my transcriptions.

Three hearing interviewees refused to allow the filming or taping of the interview. I had to write down notes during the interview and then, from the notes and from memory, write up the interview. I then sent the transcripts back to those interviewed for their comments and corrections. We finalised the documents together to their satisfaction.

Two separate interview schedules were developed one for hearing interviewees and another for Deaf interviewees. It is not the purpose of the study to delve into any psychological or traumatic experiences. In the letter explaining the purpose of the interview given to each interviewee before the interview took place, it was made clear that the interviewee could refuse to answer a question or even terminate the interview at any point.

I had been apprehensive prior to the interview with some of the hearing teachers at the schools for the deaf that they may have resisted participating in the research. Some of them have given their whole lives to teaching Deaf children and I was afraid that they may take exception to the focus of the study. However, this fear proved to be unfounded as all the hearing participants were happy to be interviewed and explain the methods employed in the schools. What was particularly helpful about the hearing teachers and principals interviewed was that they helped give important background information about the oral method of deaf education.

The Deaf people were willing interviewees too. The research focused on the role played by Deaf people in shaping their own faith experience. While many found the interview questions affirmed their experiences of school and church life as Deaf people, there were some instances when an interview question brought to mind a hurtful experience suffered by the interviewee. These included derogatory attitudes held against Deaf people by hearing people, incidents of racial intolerance or audist impositions.

Care was given to explain to each Deaf interviewee in sign, prior to the interview taking place, that what they disclose in the interview will be kept confidential. It was also explained that they had the right to refuse to answer any question during the interview. They could also stop the interview at any point. It was also explained that they could also refuse to be quoted by name in the research.

Two respondents replied to questions via email. The first was Fr Cyril Axelrod who sent me a timeline of his work in South Africa and other chaplains who preceded him and those who were his successors. This helped when interviewing him later.

Lindsay Moeletsi Dunn, the second respondent, lives in the United States. He agreed to share his experiences of Deaf education at Wittebome school via email. It was not possible to interview him due to distance and my limited budget. In two separate emails he detailed his experiences at Wittebome School in 1976. He did all this while engaged in full-time lecturing and marking at Gallaudet University in Washington DC.

A third respondent, Nigel Pickford, gave me a copy of a talk he had prepared for the 50th anniversary for St Vincent School for the Deaf detailing his experiences at the school.

One of the problems I experienced when engaging in the interview process was that occasionally, when interviewing a Deaf person, my question did not always come across clearly enough. I would have to repeat the question and express it in a different way so that the person could get a better idea of what I was asking. I think that this was partly due to my limited signing ability and partly due to not formulating the question well enough. It is one thing to formulate the question in English and write it down, but when it comes to expressing it in sign language, it needs to follow sign language structure. Signing is not just using the English grammatical structure but rather finding a way to translate words and sound into signs

and space. It needed careful preparation before the interview but often questions would arise spontaneously in the interview process and it was not possible to prepare these spontaneous questions.

But more significantly, during the interviewing process, I noticed the difficulties interviewees sometimes had to remember the past. They made mistakes or shaped events in a specific way. I began to realise that the memories of those I interviewed were not flawless and not always accurate.

> Memory is a dynamic process. When we remember, we select, organise, omit and sometimes invent aspects of our past experiences according to what we need, feel and believe in the present moment. The memories of the past are fluid.[115]

More than 'inaccurate' and fluid, their memories were also very personal. The responses were always tempered with their own standpoints and perspectives on the ministry offered and received. While their contributions added the personal face and colour to what they narrated, as well as clarified events from the archival evidence, they were expressed subjectively.

Robert Grele, an American oral historian, has written extensively on memory and subjectivity in the interview process.[116] He defined 'oral history as a conversational narrative created by the interaction of the interviewer and the interviewee and determined by linguistic, social and ideological structures.'[117]

Grele argued that there has been a shift in oral history from seeing the interview as a document revealing the truth about the past to one where the interview is understood as a text that was constructed through dialogue. 'This was a basic epistemological shift from a concern with accuracy to a concern with narrative construction.'[118] Previously, interviews were done to provide the historian with facts and information about the past. The truth lay in facts that the historian could uncover through the interviewing process. The concern with memory was in relation to its accuracy as a true reflection of the past without bias.

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[115] Philippe Denis, 'Memory and commemoration as a subject of enquiry for African Christianity scholars,' *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae*, 41, 3, (2015), 7.
[116] Ronald J Grele, 'Reflections on the practice of oral history: Retrieving what we can from an earlier critique,' *Suomen Antropologi: Journal of the Finnish Anthropological Society*, 32, 4, (Winter 2007), 11-23.
[117] Grele, 'Reflections on the practice of oral history, 1, 16-17.
[118] Grele,'Reflections on the practice of oral history,' 13.

However, memory and remembering the past is understood as much more complex when one begins to understand the interview as a text constructed through dialogue. Firstly, Grele pointed out that the role of the interviewer is much more important than what was thought before. 'Among documents used by historians, oral histories were created by the interest of the historian.'[119] Oral histories are not just documents that tell stories about the past. They are documents that record the present time too. They reveal how the past continues in the present. Consequently, Grele believed that 'if historians were to build an interpretation upon their own interviews it was necessary that they be very clear about their position in the process of creation.'[120]

Secondly, Grele said 'the person interviewed was no longer simply a source but a key creator and interpreter of a history.'[121] The interviewee shapes the past in accordance with what they experienced, perceived and understood. The interview becomes a place where there is a conversation, a dialogue and even where, at times, a negotiation takes place between the interviewer and the interviewee. Often the two have very different positions or understandings of the past: the one because they lived in that past, and the other because of what they have read about this past. For Grele, the historian is 'no longer a collector of observations but a co-creator of verbal texts.[122] The historian shares 'interpretative rights'[123] with the interviewee. This allows the interviewee the right to their own perspective of the past, even though the historian may disagree.

Thirdly, there is the question about memory. People live through the same events but remember them differently. This is often due to the complex interplay between individual and collective memory, where individual memories are affected by various religious, economic, political, social and cultural influences. Also, it is not just a question about the interviewee, but also the interviewer. Grele said that an understanding of the interview as dialogic means that the historian also needs to be aware of their own memories and ideological perspectives that they also bring to the interview.[124]

[119] Grele, 'Reflections on the practice of oral history,' 13.
[120] Ibid.
[121] Ibid.
[122] Ibid.
[123] Ibid.
[124] Grele, 'Reflections on the practice of oral history,' 15.

This new understanding of oral history as conversation and dialogue means that the oral historian needs to consider the ethics involved in doing research to ensure that those who volunteer to be interviewed, especially the Deaf people, do not come to any harm in the interview process.

1.8. The ethical challenges

A major ethical issue in historical research, especially one which involves oral history, is the preservation of the oral history archive. As outlined in a previous section on research methodology, the interviews done in this research have been placed on a memory stick and will be kept in the Archive of the Vice-Province of Order of Preachers in Southern Africa in Springs, South Africa. Transcribed versions of some interviews form the appendix of this study. In contrast to interviews done by sociologists and journalists, historical researchers understand that 'the main purpose of an interview is to collect oral information for future use.'[125] It is vitally important to keep a record of the experiences of Deaf people so that their history and memories are not forgotten or silenced. Those interviewed have signed a form giving permission for the interview to remain part of the oral archive and that their names can used in the research. In this respect, Denis says, the oral historian 'always doubles up as an archivist.'[126]

The research was conducted with the four basic ethical principles in mind: respect for people's dignity and autonomy; non-maleficence; beneficence and justice.[127] In the interviewing process it is vital to respect the dignity of each person interviewed but greater sensitivity needs to be paid to the Deaf participants. Deaf people have been unfairly treated by hearing people in the past and without proper respect. Hearing people often assumed that being deaf was equated with having an intellectual disability too. It still happens that hearing people often speak in the company of Deaf people, without interpreting what they are saying to the person. This makes the Deaf person feel left out of the conversation and excluded. Deaf people feel offended by this treatment. Sometimes hearing people will even speak about the

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[125] Philippe Denis, 'The ethics of oral history,' in *Oral history in a wounded country: Interactive interviewing in South Africa*,' edited by Philippe Denis and Radikobo Ntsimane, (Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2008), 65.
[126] Ibid.
[127] See Denis, 'The ethics of oral history,' 67-70.

Deaf person in their presence knowing that they will not hear them. In these cases, Deaf people feel slighted and disrespected.

At times hearing people will also take it upon themselves to tell Deaf people what to do without explaining the process of what is expected or happening. Again, Deaf people feel they are being treated differently to the way a hearing person would have been treated. The dignity of the Deaf person needs to be taken seriously especially relating to behaviour which respects the Deaf person's culture and what is considered acceptable modes of behaviour.

So that the autonomy and identity of respondents was protected, each interviewee received and signed an informed consent form before the interview was conducted. The contents of the consent form stated that each Deaf interviewee had the right to refuse to do the interview; that they could also refuse to answer any question which they considered problematic; and that they had the right to anonymity. Written consent was requested from them to give consent for their names to be mentioned in the final research document. They were also informed that they could refuse this request. For Deaf respondents, this was explained to them in sign language.

The ethical principle of non-maleficence is concerned with ensuring 'that any harm resulting from the interview process is kept to an absolute minimum.'[128] During an interview with a respondent on one occasion, answering one of the interview questions recalled a particularly painful moment in his life when he felt rejected and unappreciated. He paused a little and then decided not to continue relating the story indicating that if I wanted more information about what transpired, I should contact a third person whose name he gave me. It would have been completely unethical of me at this point to pursue this question or to pressurise him in any way, to reveal what he was obviously not willing to divulge.

The principle of beneficence means that those people who were interviewed need to benefit from the interview process. As there will be no financial gain from this study, it is not possible to offer any financial benefit. However, each person interviewed was given a copy of the interview transcript.

[128] Denis, 'The ethics of oral history,' 69.

Denis argued that justice 'requires that those who stand to benefit from the research should bear the burdens of the research.'[129] To this end, I ensured that those interviewed did not have to incur any expenses. We conducted the interviews in places which were convenient for the interviewees. I paid for my own transport costs to get to the places of their own choosing to conduct the interviews. Most often, I conducted the interviews in people's homes. However, while I was in Cape Town, I interviewed a few of the Deaf participants at their place of work which was a Deaf centre. I was given a separate room in which to interview the participants.

All these safeguards were put in place to ensure that the interview process did no harm to those who volunteered to participate in this research project.

1.9. Outline of the chapters

In section, I outline the way that I will go about reflecting on Catholic deaf ministry in apartheid South Africa.

In Chapter 2, the focus will be on outlining some aspects of the philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas that will provide the theoretical framework for this dissertation. The main concepts will be outlined and explained with reference to a newspaper article as a pedagogical tool. The reason for adopting this approach is to demonstrate the deconstructive and reconstructive potential of a Levinasian analysis that will be used throughout the rest of the dissertation.

Chapter 3 is concerned with outlining the history of Catholic deaf ministry down the ages. The purpose of this chapter is to develop a working knowledge of the different ways in which ministry was done with deaf people until 1948. In this survey, I will also highlight the way key concepts like audism and phonocentrism were prevalent throughout this period. As this period is extensive, it has been necessary to pick some pertinent moments in this history.

Chapter 4 will move to understanding of the South African context of apartheid through a Levinasian lens. In this chapter I will attempt to illustrate how Levinas' political thinking can

[129] Denis, 'The ethics of oral history,' 70.

assist in uncovering the totalising and violence of apartheid as a system of exclusion and repression.

Chapter 5 explains the origins of the history of Catholic deaf education in South Africa and the first twenty years under apartheid. The purpose of this chapter is to show how the Church ministered within this totality and its response to apartheid often reflected an ambivalence.

Chapter 6 will involve a detailed explanation of how the oral method of deaf education operated. The purpose of this is to clarify the way in which this was a systematic way of trying to shape the lives of the deaf children so that they could function in a hearing world. I will try to show how this impacted upon the lives of deaf children and outline some ways in which they resisted.

Chapter 7 will identify the shift that took place during the 1970s in South Africa deaf education. This shift was discernible in the debate that developed at this time as to whether or not Total Communication was a viable alternative to the oral method of deaf education. This chapter will focus on the South African debate that was initiated in the United States but became a local one. This debate proved to be a turning point towards a greater acceptance of sign language in schools for the deaf.

In dealing with the oral method of education and Total Communication in chapters 5, 6 and 7, the focus is skewed towards recording the history of the experiences and perspectives of the principals, teachers and church officials. This is partly due to the skewed biases of the archival material but more importantly because I want to show that the importance of Levinas' understanding of the totality and how it throws light on the oral method of education and its violence in repressing and ignoring the struggles of Deaf people.

Chapter 8 marks a distinctive shift from focusing on a reading from totality to one of infinity. It introduces the contributions of the Deaf chaplains and lay people who through the promotion of the sign language contributed to a marked shift in deaf people self-understanding within the Catholic Church.

Chapter 9 documents the ongoing introduction of Total Communication and later SASL in South African schools for the deaf and the contribution made by Deaf Catholics and Deaf

Catholic organisations to support the poor Deaf community and to advocate for the rights in South Africa.

Chapter 10 sums up the conclusions that can be drawn from a Levinasian reading of the history of Catholic Deaf ministry in apartheid South Africa.

1.10. Conclusion

As we have outlined, we hope to show through this research how Catholic Deaf people or those who participated in the structures of the Catholic Church in South Africa sought to face the challenges of overcoming the prevalence of audism and apartheid in the Catholic Church. This process was one which included the task of developing Deaf identity, facing the power exercised over and against them at times by hearing people, growing in appreciation for sign language and finding a voice, finding a way to express their own sense of Deafhood and to collaborate with those lobbying for a new dispensation for Deaf people in South Africa in post-apartheid society.

We first turn in the next chapter to a fuller exposition and exploration of the theoretical framework being employed in this research.

Chapter 2 The philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas as a key to the Deaf Other

2.0. Introduction

Bishop Kevin Dowling CSsR, the Roman Catholic bishop of Rustenburg in the North West province, gave the 21st annual Hurley Memorial Lecture at the Denis Hurley Centre in Durban on Tuesday 8 November 2016.[1] He asked whether 'atrocities and wars, the use of violence to force through whatever one wants to get, the destruction of property, the violation of the human rights of others, the culture of impunity and so on [...] has this to be accepted as the norm today in our world, and here in South Africa?'[2] In analysing and presenting the problems of the rising violence in today's world, Dowling answered his own question by saying that a 'vision of active non-violence and just peace-making is a challenge we need to take up in South Africa, to develop a different way of thinking about violence in all its forms […] to be able to see that violence is not the way to solve any problem or any conflict.'[3]

The issue of violence is central to the history of Christian mission down the ages. Jean and John Comaroff have argued that many missionaries to South Africa could not easily distinguish the gospel message from the civilising and dominating mission of colonialism.

> The essence of colonization inheres less in political overrule than in seizing and transforming "others" by the very act of conceptualizing, inscribing, and interacting with them on terms not of their own choosing; in making them into pliant objects and silenced subjects of our scripts and scenarios; in assuming the capacity to "represent" them.[4]

Some missionaries failed to distinguish the differences between universal salvation and their own cultural identity. 'Consequently, conversion required not only that would-be Christians accept the gospel, but that they discard all marks of degeneracy and primitivism [...] The coupling of salvation to civilization would complicate the meaning of redemption – and, with

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[1] Kevin Dowling, 'Non-violence and peacemaking,' *The Mercury*, Wednesday 9 November 2016, 1,9.
[2] Dowling, 'Non-violence and peacemaking,' 9.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Jean and John Comaroff, *Of revelation and revolution: Christianity, colonialism and consciousness in South Africa*, Vol 1, (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1991), 15.

it, the practical theology of mission.'[5] Converts had to wear Western-style clothes and live in Western-style homes leaving behind the marks of their own cultural traditions.[6] The missionaries brought the gospel, but one dressed up in Western culture, which was injurious and oppressive to the indigenous cultures and traditions of African people.

In reflecting on the relations between hearing and deaf people in the Catholic Church in South Africa during the apartheid years, it is important to acknowledge that these relations were violent and oppressive. In the United States, Harlan Lane was one of the first to point out that the relations between the hearing and the deaf is akin to the violence of colonialism.[7] He sought to peel away the mask of benevolence in which relations between hearing and deaf have been couched for centuries to reveal a true relationship of oppression. Deaf people have been oppressed by the benevolence of the hearing community which has denied the validity of their language and cultural identity. Paddy Ladd supported this argument and highlighted that Deaf people have their own way of being in the world, both culturally and linguistically, which hearing people for many generations denied and attempted to suppress.[8] Taking up the baton, Hannah Lewis called for the development of a Deaf liberation theology which starts from the assumption that for centuries Deaf people have been oppressed and suffered violence at the hands of hearing people.[9]

Does this mean that Christian mission to those who are different and 'Other' is always oppressive? How are we to develop an approach to mission which itself is non-violent and respectful of the difference of the 'Other.' The French philosopher Emmanuel Levinas (1906-1995) sought to address this question. He tried to explain how western philosophy and rationality were violent in relation to the Other. For Levinas, it is our attempts to understand or comprehend the Other which lie at the origin or heart of violent interpersonal relations.[10] This will be explored further in this chapter.

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[5] Comaroff and Comaroff, *Of revelation and revolution Africa*, 64.
[6] For more information, see chapter 5, 'Fashioning the colonial subject' and chapter 6, 'Mansions of the Lord,' in Comaroff and Comaroff, *Of revelation and revolution*, Vol 2, 218-322.
[7] Lane, *The Mask of benevolence*, 31-39.
[8] Ladd, *Understanding Deaf Culture*, 4-9.
[9] Lewis, *Deaf liberation theology*, 13.
[10] See Brian Schroeder, *Altared ground: Levinas, history and violence*, (New York, London: Routledge, 1996), 1.

Levinas' philosophy will be a dialogue partner to help reflect on violence and its implications for Deaf ministry in the Roman Catholic Church in South Africa during the apartheid period. Dowling's concern that 'a different way of thinking about violence in all its forms'[11] was one that Levinas himself shared. Outlining Levinas' philosophical thinking and investigating his ethical priority in interpersonal relations in this chapter will assist in reflecting on the relations between hearing and Deaf people within the context of apartheid throughout the rest of the dissertation. It will also clarify Deaf agency and its contribution to developing less oppressive relations between hearing and Deaf people.

However, before I explore Levinas' philosophical ideas, it is necessary first to something of his life.

2.1. A brief biography of Emmanuel Levinas

Emmanuel Levinas was born in Kaunas, Lithuania on 12 January 1906. He was born of Jewish parents, who spoke both Yiddish and Russian at home. In 1923, Levinas left home at the age of 17 to study at the University of Strasbourg in France.[12] Thereafter he went to the University of Freiburg and studied phenomenology under Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger.[13] His doctoral dissertation was based on the theory of intuition in Husserl's phenomenology.

On his return to France in 1930, Levinas taught at the *École Normale Israélite Orientale* in Paris which was a school for Jewish students from an orthodox upbringing.[14] He began writing about Husserl and Heidegger at a time when they were not household names in France.[15] However, Levinas regretted his enthusiasm for Heidegger when, in 1933, Heidegger publicly announced his support for the Nazi Party in Germany. Levinas began to challenge the starting point of phenomenology and all Western philosophy and its concern for ontology and its preoccupation with the egocentric self. Levinas began to see himself as a post-phenomenologist.[16]

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[11] Dowling, 'Non-violence and peacemaking,' 9.
[12] Peter Steinfels, 'Emmanuel Levinas, 90, French ethical philosopher,' *The New York Times*, 27 December 1995, 1. Accessed on 3 May 2019, url: www.nyti.ms/29iQumz.
[13] Anya Topolski, *Arendt, Levinas and a politics of relationality*, (London: Rowman and Littlefield, 2015), 6.
[14] Steinfels, 'Emmanuel Levinas,' 3.
[15] Colin Davis, *Levinas: An introduction*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996), 1.
[16] Topolski, *Arendt, Levinas and a politics of relationality*, 6-7.

During the Second World War, Levinas was captured as a French soldier and interned as a prisoner of war in a labour camp. Many of his family from Lithuania died in the Shoah. However, his wife Raisa and his daughter Simone survived due to the help of friends and Catholic nuns who hid them during the war.[17] This experience shaped his philosophy from there on. After the war, Levinas returned to this teaching post in Paris where he remained until taking up a post at the Nanterre branch of the University of Parish in 1967 and then the Sorbonne in 1973.[18] He retired from teaching in 1973. He continued writing many books and articles until his death on 29 December 1995.[19] His most famous works were *Totality and Infinity* (1961) and *Otherwise than Being* (1974). His writings influenced many philosophers like Jean-Paul Sartre, Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault and recently also post-colonial thinkers like Edward Said.

Before we embark on explaining his philosophy, we need to understand Levinas' style of writing and his peculiar use of language and grammar. In so doing Levinas challenged his readers to engage with a new way of thinking about violence and our relationship with the Other.

2.2. Travelling in a foreign and strange land

From the outset, it is useful to realise that to read Levinas, especially his two-major works, *Totality and Infinity* (1961) and *Otherwise than Being* (1974), is to recognise that one has ventured into a different and foreign country. Levinas used words that reflect ordinary life and religious language but constantly tweaks their meaning so that they carry a specific meaning in his writings. His works are very complex and without apparent logical structure.

To read Levinas is to be like Abraham, leaving one's own country and travelling to a foreign land. It is to step into the unknown,[20] to be unsettled, to be confused and at times mystified about what he is saying. Just when you think that you are beginning to grasp what Levinas is saying and arguing, you are suddenly tripped up and made to feel unsure of yourself and whether you are following his argument or not. Levinas' texts are so designed, according to

[17] Topolski, *Arendt, Levinas and the politics of relationality*, 8.
[18] Steinfels, 'Emmanuel Levinas,' 3.
[19] Ibid, 3.
[20] Davis, *Levinas*, 35.

Davis, to give one the experience of the encounter with the Other, with alterity and with difference.[21]

> Alterity turns out to be not only the *theme* of Levinas' text, but also the key to its complex textual performance . . . aiming at exposure to alterity rather than exposition of it.[22]

Within Levinas' writings there is an ongoing struggle to wrest the Other from traditional understandings, to show dissatisfaction and 'dis-ease' at the language being used. The Other is different from who we think they are and so the most honest response in relation to the Other, for Levinas, is to recognise our ignorance and admit that we do not know them.

Levinas used language in a double-edged way, continually remoulding grammar and punctuation.[23] In the spelling of other and Other, he distinguished between two different ways of relating to the external world. The word 'other' was used to refer to all those things and elements of life, like food, that can be assimilated into one's body, for one's own sense of enjoyment of the world. The capitalised 'Other' he used to speak about the relation of alterity where other human beings call us to accept ethical responsibility.

Hilary Janks, South African educationalist, has spoken about the importance of understanding the meaning potential of language in texts: 'If one takes a sentence in a text and makes different linguistic choices, one can ask students to explain what the change does to the meaning.'[24] Similarly, for Levinas, the one who faces us is not just any other but the Other, the one who points to infinity. Changing the words spelling or a sentences punctuation gives the word or sentence a different meaning. In the same way, Levinas spelled the French word *désinteressement* as dés-inter-esse-ment (English translation dis-interestedness) to show the break with being (*esse*).[25]

Some commentators on Levinas distinguish between his secular and religious writings, but in many instances when one reads Levinas' religious commentaries one gains insight into his so-

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[21] Davis, *Levinas*, 55-56.
[22] Davis, *Levinas*, 56.
[23] Davis, *Levinas*, 57.
[24] Hilary Janks, 'Language and the design of texts,' *English teaching: Practice and critique*, 4, 3, December 2005, 109. Accessed on 4 May 2019 url: http://education.waikoto.ac.nz/research/files/etpc/2005v4n3art6.pdf.
[25] See Morrison, *A Theology of Alterity*, 133.

called 'secular' writings. His understanding of the Jewish approach to exegesis of scripture is a case in point. In discussing revelation, Levinas highlighted how in understanding the Biblical text one moves beyond the *plain meaning*. This meaning is valid at its own level but in Biblical exegesis, one needs to go back to the Hebrew text.

> It is by going back to the Hebrew text from the translations of the Old Testament from the translations, venerable as they may be, that the strange or mysterious ambiguity or polysemy authorized by the Hebrew syntax is revealed: words coexist rather than immediately being co-ordinated or subordinated with and to one another, contrary to what is predominant in the languages that are said to be developed and functional.[26]

Levinas typified Jewish exegesis as recognising the difference between the plain meaning and the meaning that needs to be uncovered. One word or even verse of the Old Testament can open up a whole world that at first was unexpected, but which uncover 'new and penetrating readings,'[27] that reveal a plurality of renewing and even 'cleansed' meanings[28] within the Word of God.[29] 'Once God has spoken, twice have I heard' (Ps 62:11).[30]

Levinas' 'double vision' is central to his writings.[31] He regularly referred to the contrasts between the ethical and the political; between totality and infinity; between the saying and the said. The naive and plain meaning of a text is that which arises from the perspective of the political, from totality, from the said. Uncovering the ethical reading of the text means to deconstruct these plain or totalising readings. An ethical reading unlocks an understanding from infinity or transcendence and that is what he called a cleansed reading. The cleansed reading reflects 'the Saying' rather than 'the said'. A plain reading can perpetuate violence against the Other whereas a cleansed reading encourages responsibility for the Other, a responsibility that is non-violent and which promotes justice and peace-building. The one is a reading from an imperialism of the same, whereas the Other opens one up to the infinity of

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[26] Emmanuel Levinas, *Beyond the verse: Talmudic readings and lectures*, (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1994), 132.
[27] Levinas, *Beyond the verse*, 133.
[28] Davis, *Levinas*, 56.
[29] This way of reading scripture is referred to as Midrash. See Levinas, *Beyond the Vers*e, 132-133.
[30] Levinas, *Beyond the verse*, 132.
[31] See Robert Eaglestone, 'Postcolonial thought and Levinas' double vision' in *Radicalizing Levinas*, edited by Peter Atterton and Matthew Calarco, (Albany: SUNY Press, 2010), 57-68.

alterity and difference. Transcendence, face, height, infinity, proximity are Levinas' terms that point to a relation with the Other which is just and open to discourse.

The rest of this chapter is dedicated to outlining Levinas' philosophy as pertinent to this study. As a pedagogic tool and to embark on both the plain and cleansed readings of the text, I have chosen to use a newspaper article and photograph that appeared in the Johannesburg newspaper *The Star* on Wednesday 15 July 1964. In doing so, I hope to explain how I am making use of Levinas' philosophy for understanding the Deaf Other. Levinas often reiterated that the Other was not to be too readily identified with specific human faces[32] even though he often described the Other as neighbour, or even as the poor, or the widow, orphan and foreigner.[33] The face reveals the infinity of the Other and so can not to be limited to one representation or another.

The following newspaper article (figure 1 below) and a detail of the photograph (figure 2 below) will be utilised for pedagogic purposes:

[32] Emmanuel Levinas, *Ethics and Infinity: Conversations with Philippe Nemo*, (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1985), 85-86.
[33] Levinas, *Ethics and Infinity*, 142.

THE STAR JOHANNESBURG WEDNESDAY JULY 15 1964 Page 33

At St. Vincent's her spirit found liberation

ABOUT SIX YEARS AGO May was a pupil of St. Vincent's School for the Deaf, Melrose. Today she is a young woman leading a normal life. The education and training she received made all the difference to her life.

She had scarcely turned four when her parents brought her to the school.

As her home was 120 miles away she was admitted as a boarder. Poor mute little mite as she was, she resented the separation and fought tooth and nail for her freedom.

Little did she realize that at St. Vincent's her imprisoned spirit would find liberation. She felt frustrated and the only way to find relief was by emotional outbursts. As her education advanced these violent reactions ceased and little May became a contented, eager pupil interested in the life around her.

Every year May made the grade, leading in most of the subjects. In due course she mastered the art of lip-reading and speech. Henceforth pointing and gestures were replaced by oral communication.

The sound barrier had been broken. Her parents were thrilled to hear her call them by their names. Life was again worth living. May could now express her wishes and needs and understand what others were saying.

Deaf from birth

Unfortuntely May derived no benefit from either a hearing aid or acoustic training. She was profoundly deaf from birth. Yet today she is a pure oralist and one of its most fervent devotees. She becomes indignant at the mere mention of gestures or signs with which, at times, deaf people help themselves.

Socially May is all one could wish for. She has won a large circle of hearing friends with whom she associates freely. Among her deaf friends she has assumed the role of leader.

Her ambition was to matriculate and pursue her studies at a university. She matriculated without claiming any concessions.

However, changed circumstances compelled her to abandon a university career and look for a job. Ever bent on self-improvement, she successfully completed courses in dress-designing and commercial art in her spare time.

CHARITIES PAGE CONDUCTED BY *Robin Hood*

The art lessons she had received at St. Vincent's were an excellent preparation for further training in that field.

It speaks well for May that she has persevered at her first job. Her efficiency at office work has earned her several promotions and an increase in salary.

That May should have a sense of humour is not unusual, for many deaf people possess this spice of life.

What is unusual is that she can hold her own in a normal conversation where her wit and repartee are outstanding. In her flat she has a wide range of books which she calls her friends.

May deserves to be congratulated on the courage and determination with which she overcame her handicap.

BOOK SALES

There will be no book sales on the City Hall steps this week or next because the City Hall is booked for that period.

NEEDS:

Cabinet

The Johannesburg Branch of the National Council of Women (728-2484) is in need of a second-hand steel filing cabinet.

Noah

The age of miracles is not past. They are being performed daily at St. Vincent's School for the Deaf at Melrose. One of them is described in the accompanying article. Another is shown above: Linda, aged three, is being taught lip-reading and voice production. Having no idea of sound, Linda is shown to place her hand on the sister's chest to enable her to feel that something goes on inside when the sister talks. Linda, who was born deaf, was being taught to vocalize the word "dog." The lesson is made easier by the presence of a toy dog.

Diary of events

African Self Help Association annual general meeting, Darragh Hall, today, 2.30 p.m.

Cripples' Care Association of the Transvaal annual general meeting, Hope Training Home, today, 3.00 p.m.

Annual Delville Wood commemoration service, organized by the Johannesburg branch of the

Book Sale in aid of the Joint Fund for the Blind, Southdale Shopping Centre, August 22, 8.30 a.m.

Jewish Women's Benevolent and Welfare Society's fete at its occupational centre, 136 Sivewright Avenue, Doornfontein, on August 26, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Gala film premiere "Night of

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Detail of the photograph (Figure 2)

2.3. A plain reading: Liberating imprisoned spirits

In the article and accompanying photograph (see figure 1 above), entitled: 'At St. Vincent's her spirit found liberation', there is a reference made to two different deaf children. The article refers to an interview with May and the photograph depicts the experiences of Linda. Both article and photograph appeared on 15 July 1964 on the Charities Page of *The Star*. It was written by Robin Hood (most likely a *nom-de-plume*). It is clearly the intention of the article to praise the work that the Dominican Sisters of Kingwilliamstown were doing for deaf children at St Vincent School. The Sisters' work and ministry is portrayed as noble and charitable.

The left-hand column of the article described how a young Deaf woman referred to as May was living a normal life. This was due to the education she had received at St Vincent School. Originally, she had resented and resisted having to come to school at the age of four, but she was not to know that it would be at this school that 'her imprisoned spirit would find liberation.'[34] This liberation was precisely the education and training she received by being taught to lip-read and to use her voice for speech. 'Henceforth pointing and gestures were replaced with oral communication.'[35] She learnt how to express her wishes and needs as well and understand what others were saying to her by learning to speak. Even though she was profoundly deaf and could not benefit from the use of a hearing aid or acoustic training, nevertheless she remained 'a pure oralist and one of its most fervent devotees.'[36]

> She becomes indignant at the mere mention of gestures or signs with which at times, deaf people help themselves.[37]

The article outlined how she had many hearing friends as a consequence of receiving this education and had become a leader among her deaf friends. May was liberated and able to live a normal life with normal (hearing) friends and a normal job. After she matriculated, she found employment in dress-design and commercial art. The article ended by congratulating her:

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[34] See Robin Hood, 'At St. Vincent's her spirit found liberation,' *The Johannesburg Star*, Wednesday 15 July 1964, 33.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Ibid.

> May deserves to be congratulated on the courage and determination with which she overcame her handicap.[38]

In the accompanying photograph we see a picture of a young girl, Linda, who is three years old. She is being taught the basics of lip-reading and voice production by a Dominican Sister. The deaf girl's hand is directed to the Sister's throat where she can feel the vibrations produced by the Sister's larynx. She is being taught how to vocalise the word 'dog.' The caption reminded its readers that what they are seeing is a miracle in the making. A deaf child is taught how to speak.

The picture's composition was intended to be informative. It revealed an intimate face-to-face encounter between a teacher and learner. It was presented as a caring and benevolent relationship. The teacher commanded height through imparting knowledge and skills that equipped the learner to function in a hearing world and thereby transcend her handicap and disability. The teacher of deaf children was a miracle-maker by empowering them and giving them an education through which they learnt to communicate in a spoken language, by means of lip-reading, voice production and concept formation. In grateful response, the learner looked back to her teacher with a responsive gaze of wonder, appreciation and even perhaps adoration. The Dominican Sister appeared to be the gateway to the numinous, opening the child to her deepest dignity.

The idea that the deaf school, through its dedicated teachers, was liberating deaf children from their prisons of silence was a way of representing and celebrating the work being done by means of the oral method of education. This was the method that St Vincent School for the Deaf in Melrose, Johannesburg had adopted since it started in 1934.[39]

Underlying this perspective was the view that deafness is the lack of the physiological ability to hear sound. This limited the child's ability to communicate and so to function adequately in the hearing world. The task of the teacher was to teach the child had to learn how to speak and communicate. Without these abilities, the child was condemned to be forever imprisoned in a world of silence.

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[38] Ibid, 33.

[39] 'History/Development of St Vincent School,' *St Vincent School Magazine*, 1999, 5.

This narrative seems right and self-evident. It is only natural that deaf people be incorporated into a hearing world. It seemed the compassionate thing to do.

In reading Emmanuel Levinas, I began to recognise how his philosophy could contribute towards a rethinking and renewing of the relationship between deaf and hearing. For this reason, I adopted it as the theoretical framework for this dissertation.

2.4. A plain reading is an argument from totality and the same

Levinas can assist in deconstructing this naive reading of the image and the narrative in the newspaper article. In returning to the photograph, we can see that the perspectives expressed in the caption and photograph give very little, if any, consideration to the otherness of the deaf child. She has the name Linda. The photographer, more than likely, wanted us to see Linda as the recipient of the teacher's benevolence and skill. Linda is deaf and handicapped. The teacher is hearing and empowered. The one is the adult and the other the dependent child. What the picture and the narrative depict is familiar. It is what we understand as the relationship between teacher and learner but within the family also the relationship between parent and child, and so by implication the relationship between hearing and deaf. The hearing are the adult and teachers and the deaf are the children and the learners.

For Levinas, this is a reading of the same and the Other from the perspective of what he calls totality. By totality, Levinas means a way of viewing and understanding the world from a subject's or self's own comprehension of the world. When a person tries to grasp and understand the world of another person through means of their own subjective lenses (in this case, from the perspective of the hearing Dominican Sister), often it is done with little or no regard or respect for the alterity of the Other. In effect, the Other's '*alterity* is thereby reabsorbed into my own identity as a thinker or a possessor.'[40]

For Levinas, this pointed to a disturbing defect within Western philosophy and the Western way of life in general. Western rationality that emanated from Greek philosophers like Socrates, Plato and Aristotle are philosophies which start from totality. Levinas criticised Western rationality as thinking that operated from the perspective that all knowledge is

[40] Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 33.

anamnesis, recollection or maieutics.[41] The Socratic method was based on the idea that knowledge and truth were innate to all people so that when a teacher like Socrates asked the right questions, those persons being taught would remember or recollect the knowledge that they latently had within themselves all along.[42] Consequently, the teacher is the midwife of the truth and knowledge that a person already possessed. This understanding of the role of the teacher as the midwife of truth is reinforced by this picture of the Sister instructing Linda. The teacher is the one who knows, and the child is the one who does not know.

This approach influenced other philosophers like Descartes, Kant and Hegel. It is an approach that Levinas referred to as 'the internal monologue conception of reason.'[43] He criticised Plato's understanding that knowledge arose from the soul's dialogue with itself. A conversation with oneself is not a dialogue but really a monologue.[44] Levinas' critique encompassed all thinking that sought to understand the Other in relation to the concepts and categories of the same.

2.5. The plain reading is ontological and violent

For Levinas, all attempts by a self to comprehend the Other are to be dismissed as ontology. 'Ontology is Levinas' general term for any relation to otherness that is reducible to comprehension or understanding.'[45] It is a type of rationality that colonises and does not allow the Other any independence outside the same's conceptualisations. This is a perspective from totality. The attempt to grasp the Other within the framework of one's own view and perspective, Levinas called 'thematization and conceptualization.'[46] Conceptualising or thematising the Other in relation to the categories of the same, Levinas understood, as related to the work of the hand in grasping something and thereby possessing it.

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[41] See Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 43.
[42] For further discussion on maieutics, see Stephen Minister, *De-facing the Other: Reason, ethics, and politics after difference*, (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2012), 145-150.
[43] See Emmanuel Levinas, *Collected Philosophical Papers*, (Dordrecht: Martin Nijhoff Publishers, 1987), 49.
[44] Minister, *De-facing the Other*, 72.
[45] Simon Critchley and Robert Bernasconi, eds, *The Cambridge companion to Levinas*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 11.
[46] Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 46.

> Possession is pre-eminently the form in which the other becomes the same, by becoming mine.[47]

In possessing the Other, the Other loses independence, loses what Levinas called their singularity or that which makes them unique and different from every other person, and so they become included as the possession of the same. Our grasping, possessing, assimilatory tendencies, Levinas referred to as 'the imperialism of the same.'[48] Otherness is ignored, overlooked or negated because they are understood within my frame of reference and not the Other's. Another way of expressing this is to say that the self treats the Other as an object and not a subject, as a *what* and not a *who*.[49] The Other becomes an instrument in the hand of the selfsame who incorporates the Other into the self's world and frames of reference. The self assimilates to the Other to his own purposes and to satisfy his own needs, as a relation of master to a servant and a factory owner to his workers. The Other exists in relation to the same as a use-value and not in their own right.[50] The Other is acknowledged in relation to what they do rather than who they are. Levinas wrote:

> To be sure, most of the time the *who* is a *what*. We ask "Who is Mr. X?" and we answer: "He is President of the State Council," or "He is Mr. So-and-so." The answer presents itself as a quiddity.[51]

Treating someone as a what rather than a who is an act of violence against the Other. For Levinas:

> violence is to be found in any action in which one acts as if one were alone to act: as if the rest of the universe were there only to receive the action; violence is consequently also any action which we endure without at every point collaborating in it.[52]

This definition highlighted the understanding of violence from the perspective of both the perpetrator and the victim. Even though the Other is recognised in their distinctiveness,

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[47] Ibid, 46.
[48] Ibid, 39.
[49] Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 177.
[50] Diane Perpich, 'Levinas, feminism and identity politics,' in *Radicalizing Levinas*, edited by Peter Atterton and Matthew Calarco, (Albany: SUNY Press, 2010), 30.
[51] Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 177.
[52] Emmanuel Levinas, *Difficult Freedom: Essays on Judaism*, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 6.

nevertheless they are partially negated[53] because they are seen as a possession, an object and at the perpetrator's disposal.[54] This partial negation takes place when a perpetrator denies the Other any opportunity to shape their own lives. This is what Levinas referred to as 'appropriation and power'[55] exerted over and against the Other.

2.6. Totality as an unjust reading

For Levinas, totality is not just about describing the unjust relations between people but also how people begin to transcend totality to the infinity of the ethical relation. For him, human beings are embodied beings who act from totality by arranging life to satisfy their needs. We consume food and drink to nourish and enjoy ourselves in life. But we can extend this idea in relation to Others. They exist for the self, to become part of me, to make my life better and more comfortable.

> Nourishment, as a means of invigoration, is the transmutation of the other into the same, which is the essence of enjoyment: an energy that is other, recognized as other, recognized, we will see, as sustaining the very act that is directed upon it, becomes, in enjoyment, my own energy, my strength, me. All enjoyment is in this sense alimentation.[56]

This approach to life is a subjective one where our world negates alterity. Human ego, my ego, stands at the centre. I am focused on myself and not the Other.

> In enjoyment I am absolutely for myself. Egoist without reference to the Other, I am alone without solitude, innocently egoist and alone. Not against the Others, not "as for me" […] – but entirely deaf to the Other, outside of all communication and all refusal to communicate – without ears, like a hungry stomach.[57]

My economy or the 'world I constitute nourishes me and bathes me'[58] and so 'in enjoyment throbs egoist being.'[59] This is what living life means finding enjoyment and satisfying our needs. Therefore, 'we act according to enjoyment in the construction of our economy, that

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[53] Emmanuel Levinas, *Entre Nous*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 9.
[54] Minister, *De-facing the Other*, 152.
[55] Levinas, *Collected Philosophical Papers*, 50.
[56] Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 111.
[57] Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 134.
[58] Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 129.
[59] Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 147.

is, the structures – practical, intellectual, moral, religious – we employ so that we can be at-home in the world.'[60] It is a way of being, and a failing, common to many human beings to think that the world is my own unique possession. Stephen Minister, an American philosopher and commentator on Levinas' writings, explained that:

> The power of reason thus serves the goal of intellectually conquering the world in order always to remain in control and at-home in the world, feeling justified in one's "own way of life." Reason thus functions to help us sleep well at night, feeling secure, comfortable, and in-the-know, able to remain at-home with oneself.[61]

Topolski related this to the Jewish understanding of *yetzer ra* which describes a certain egoism or selfishness that can be good because it from this selfishness one builds a house for your family and works hard to provide for them. However, it is negative when one disregards the needs of one's poor neighbours and only look towards your own good and neglecting theirs.[62]

Transcendence takes place, and the ethical relation begins, when the self recognises the Other as a who and not a what like food and drink. The Jewish concern for the neighbour and their good is known as the *yetzer tov*.[63] The *yetzer tov* lies at the heart of what Levinas meant by Desire.

2.7. Desire

Levinas developed a critique of economy by distinguishing between our needs that lead to our egotistical being-at-home in the world and 'Desire.'[64] Transcendence occurs for Levinas when a person shifts focus from an economy of fulfilling their needs to developing 'Desire for Infinity.'[65] Gibbs pointed out that 'transcendence occurs in this world not by ecstatically pulling me out to some other world but by changing what it means to be in this world.'[66]

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[60] Minister, *De-facing the Other*, 69.
[61] Minister, *De-facing the Other*, 147.
[62] Topolski, Arendt, Levinas and a politics of relationality, 138-140.
[63] Ibid, 195-196.
[64] Levinas referred to Desire with a capital D to distinguish it from the normal usage of the word desire. See Totality and Infinity, 33-35.
[65] Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 50.
[66] Robert Gibbs, 'Jewish dimensions of radical ethics' in Adriaan T. Peperzak (ed) *Ethics as first philosophy: The significance of Emmanuel Levinas for philosophy, literature and religion* (New York and London: Routledge, 1995), 14.

Consequently, Desire is desire for the good of the Other, my neighbour. It transcends the economy of my egotistical needs and my being-at-home-with-myself.

> Desire is not interested in satisfaction or exchange; it does not assimilate or integrate, because it is not oriented toward enrichment or expansion.[67]

While Desire transcends and challenges us to move beyond the economy of enjoyment it does not deny it. Peperzak explained that 'transcendence does not condemn the joys of life, but it prevents them from becoming absolute; it despises idolatry.'[68] By being-at-home-with- myself I can offer hospitality to the Other. This is the beginning of a change in relation. I am still inviting people into my world, relating to them from the comfort of my place in the world but I start to extend a hand of friendship to the Other. It can be the beginning of the discovery of alterity.

> Desire transcends economy by desiring the other - not for satisfaction or consolation, not as a partner in love, but as the one whose face orients my life and thereby grants it significance. In desire I discover that I am not enclosed within myself, because I am "always already" to and for the Other, responsible, hostage, substitute.[69]

In this sense, being at-home-with-myself is not just a selfish experience but one which can begin the transition to discovering the Other through the offer of hospitality. This made it possible to develop a cleansed or changed understanding of the Other and the self that is not possessive, grasping or egoist but rather becoming open and responsible to the Other. This is the beginning of a different vantage point and the self's opening up to the ethical relation with the Other.

2.8. Singularity of each person

For Levinas, this shift comes with a renewed and a cleansed view of rationality. He held out hope for the liberation of philosophy from the pursuit of autonomy and a narrow reading from one's own economy.[70] As we have already argued, philosophy and reason are opposed

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[67] Adriaan Peperzak, 'Transcendence,' in Adriaan T. Peperzak (ed) *Ethics as first philosophy: The significance of Emmanuel Levinas for philosophy, literature and religion* (New York and London: Routledge, 1995), 189.
[68] Peperzak, 'Transcendence,' 190.
[69] Peperzak, 'Transcendence,' 190.
[70] See Minister, *De-facing the Other*, 156.

to ethics because they are deemed to be essentially violent. They strip persons of their humanity in a violence that 'does not consist so much in injuring or annihilating persons as in interrupting their continuity, making them play roles in which they no longer recognize themselves, making them betray not only commitments but their own substance.'[71]

For Levinas our humanity is not determined by the unifying characteristics of the universalisation of the human, those things that make us all the same and equal with one another, as expressed in the human rights debate. For Levinas, it is, rather, the singularity of each person, those things which make us different from each other, that is, our irreducible differences that make us unique. It is through relating to one another in our uniqueness and not in our sameness, that we discover the mystery and wonder of being human. In other words, it is not in harmonising and unifying people, equalising people, but rather in recognising their singular specificity and alterity that we discover the gift and wonder of human intersubjectivity.

> Singularity expresses the idea that each human being is a unique, irreplaceable self, irreducible to any of the attributes or qualities that could be used to describe her and that would inevitably reduce her to what she has in common with others.[72]

Rather than focusing at what unites us, like a human essence that we all share, we need to recognise that it is our alterity as singularity rather than as difference or a binary opposite,[73] and our inability to be fully known, that makes us who we are.[74] Alterity makes people unique, a singular being.

Appreciating the Other's singularity and alterity is an invitation to travel beyond our comfort zones into foreign territory. How do we learn something new if all we ever encounter is more of the same? For Levinas, we only learn when we come across something that is different from what we already knew or someone different. Consequently, he encouraged people to leave behind the security, comfort and familiarity of their own economies and their being at home in the world and to venture forth. For Levinas, Abraham is the model of one who,

[71] Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 21.
[72] Perpich, 'Levinas, feminism and identity politics,' 29.
[73] See Perpich, 'Levinas, feminism and identity politics,' 29: Perpich pointed out that 'difference can be determined only by starting from the subject or the same.'
[74] Perpich, 'Levinas, feminism and identity politics,'

leaving behind his hometown Ur, travelled to Israel, an unknown and distant country. Abraham's journey into the unknown revealed a different subjectivity and self, one determined by transcendence rather than sameness. Levinas contrasted Abraham with Odysseus or Ulysses, whose journey led him back to the familiarity of his home town in Ithaca.[75] For Levinas, the encounter with the other is 'a movement going forth from a world that is familiar to us [...] from an "at home" ["chez soi"] which we inhabit, toward an alien outside-of-oneself [*hors-de-soi*], toward a yonder.'[76] Being open to alterity means not just staying at home in our own enjoyment of life but rather to venture forth and approach others who are different from us, especially foreigners, strangers, the widowed and the orphaned.[77]

Appreciating the Other's alterity as singularity is not about gaining a greater comprehension, understanding and knowledge of 'them' as an outside observer. More to the point, it is rather the realisation that one does not know and cannot fully grasp the Other. To try to grasp or comprehend the Other is violent because it treats the Other as a what, an object of power or knowledge and so denies that the Other is a who, a face whose 'eyes look at you.'[78] The Other is beyond my grasp, beyond my comprehension. The Other is truly incomprehensible, a mystery and a trace of infinity.[79] Levinas referred to the transcendence of the ethical relation as infinity. Levinas explained this in relation to the encounter with the face of the Other.

2.9. The face of the Other commands from height and vulnerability

What the self encounters is the face of the Other which is a transcendent alterity that calls the self to responsibility. Levinas referred to the encounter with the Other as a 'relation without relation.'[80] This means that it is not a relation where we can assume any common ground or mutuality. When one describes the relation with the Other as a relationship of equals one is talking from a totalising perspective where the self and the Other are perceived to share common ground. The consequence of doing this that 'the Other becomes just another version of the Same.'[81]

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[75] Minister, *De-facing the Other*, 73.
[76] Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 33.
[77] Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 34.
[78] Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 178.
[79] Levinas, *Time and the Other*, (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1987), 75.
[80] Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 80.
[81] Davis, *Levinas*, 45.

Levinas even went so far as to suggest that no encounter takes place because there is no mutuality or anything in common between the same and the Other. The Other is a stranger, a foreigner to the self and that there is a vast distance 'an absolute separation'[82] between the two. They are never on the same page. For Levinas, it is better to describe the relation between the self and Other as an asymmetrical one.

In an asymmetrical relation the Other is free if they are separate from me and beyond my physical and mental control.[83] If they are not separate then they fall under my dominating, assimilatory and totalising attempts to grasp, to know and possess them. This separation is what Levinas referred to as height.

> The other person appears higher than I [...] His height is the transcendence beyond my here, my grasp – but the asymmetry is that I cannot say that his here is similarly displaced. His looking down at me, therefore, is not my looking up at him. We have a disparity, an asymmetry in the spatial field that happens vertically and not horizontally.[84]

The encounter with the face of the Other disrupts and breaks into the self's complacent world and questions it from a stance of both 'great height and humility.'[85] For Levinas, the height is not a power relation, but rather height as encountered in 'the other person's poverty, destitution and most importantly humility.'[86] It is both a plea and a command.[87] While the face is vulnerable and naked, it commands the self from a great height and calls it to responsibility. The face of the Other in their vulnerability and humility disturbs one's being at home with oneself. It overturns and disrupts one's own economy of comfort and sense of well-being in the world. The Other also has height in ethically resisting the self's efforts to include them in self's own economy. The face displays great vulnerability in saying: 'Thou shall not kill me.' In doing so, the face challenges and resists the self's grasping, comprehending and totalising efforts.

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[82] Schroeder, *Altered ground*, 15.
[83] Robert Gibbs, 'Jewish dimensions of radical ethics,' 14.
[84] Gibbs, 'Jewish dimensions of radical ethics,' 14-15.
[85] Minister, *De-facing the Other*, 77.
[86] Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 200.
[87] Michael Morgan, *The Cambridge introduction to Emmanuel Levinas*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 67.

The Other who is 'vulnerable, nude and fragile and in need of welcome'[88] commands a height way above me. It is for me to recognise that I am responsible for the Other and that my relation needs to be an ethical one. This height is an ethical demand that questions my life and shows me that I am unjust in relation to the Other, to my neighbour.

2.10. The ethical relation as epiphany and election

When I realise that I am unjust in relation to the Other then I recognise that I need to act justly in relation to them. In changing from a self-for-itself to a moral or ethical self-for-the-other, the self recognises that the needs of the Other take priority over the self's own needs. To act justly means that I have an ethical and moral responsibility to put their lives ahead of my own. For Levinas, this means that I need to go to the extent of giving them the food that was destined for my own mouth, food I received for my own survival.[89] I am obliged to ensure that my existence is not the violent cause of the Other's suffering. Consequently, the face of the Other holds me accountable and responsible, just as Cain was responsible for his brother Abel.

> Morality begins when freedom instead of being justified by itself, feels itself to be arbitrary and violent.[90]

When the self goes beyond self-interest, realising that the world is not my own possession but a place I share with the Other, an epiphany takes place. The self listens and hears the voice of the Other and undergoes a transformation. No longer does the self attempt to comprehend the Other, but rather sees that it is called to respond to the Other in a morally and an ethically responsible way.[91] For Levinas, this is a true expression of freedom, where the self responds to the need of the neighbour in solidarity.

> Man (sic) is not only responsible for himself and for his acts before others, he is responsible for others in such a way that he loses his innocence when he looks at them.

[88] Minister, *De-facing the Other*, 77.
[89] Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 74.
[90] Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 84.
[91] Minister, *De-facing the Other*, 85.

> He becomes really human when he is ready to answer, "Here I am" ("Hinneni") to the call of the other.[92]

Responding by answering this call to responsibility for the Other is what Levinas called 'election.' Election is accepting responsibility for the Other. In relation to the Deaf, it is important that hearing people recognise that they have been acting unjustly in relation to the Deaf. They have to recognise the call to change and become for-the-Deaf-Other. The ethical relation is a call to set aside their own convictions regarding what is good for the Deaf and stand in solidarity with their Deaf neighbour. Doing this means to recognise that one accepts election and to act justly and responsibly in relation in to the Other.

2.11. Discourse and teaching

Levinas said that 'the manifestation of the face is discourse.'[93] Discourse is to recognise that one is in relationship with the Other even before any conversation has started. One is in relationship even before a word is uttered. Discourse is about the interhuman relationship between the self and the Other. Discourse is 'the Saying' before there is any 'Said', the ethical relation that exists prior to any speech taking place between them. The self engages in a discourse which is separate from and exterior to the self's world and its familiar frames of reference. Discourse is a teaching from the Other that the self could never have discovered or understood on its own. It comes to the self from without as an epiphany or revelation from the Other.

> The face is a revelation, an unforeseen and unforeseeable breach within what is known and knowable. It entails the production of new, unexpected meanings rather than communication of what is already familiar.[94]

As a result of this, new meaning which is beyond the self's own experience is produced. It is a good that emerges from beyond the self's usual frames of reference and thereby exceeds

[92] Catherine Chalier, 'Levinas and the Hebraic tradition,' in Adriaan T. Peperzak (ed) *Ethics as first philosophy: The significance of Emmanuel Levinas for philosophy, literature and religion* (New York and London: Routledge, 1995), 8.
[93] Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 66.
[94] Davis, *Levinas: An introduction,* 47.

its own ability to be rational and good.[95] For this reason, Levinas talked about the good that is beyond being or otherwise than being.

The way in which the self responds to the discourse initiated by the face of the Other is thus vitally important.

> Face and discourse are tied. The face speaks. It speaks, it is in this that it renders possible and begins all discourse. I have just refused the notion of vision to describe the authentic relationship with the Other; it is discourse and, more exactly, response or responsibility which is the authentic relationship.[96]

The ethical relation presents the self with a choice! The self can choose to ignore this command and even reject the call. The self can go on to reduce or assimilate the Other to some of 'the socio-historically mediated meanings through which I interpret the world.'[97] Or the self can respond to the face's call and accept its moral or ethical responsibility towards the Other. The self can engage in discourse and dialogue with the Other and become open to their teaching? By accepting this teaching, the self accepts responsibility to live justly and non-violently in relation to the Other.[98]

Throughout his writings, Levinas sought to promote relations that were just and not violent or oppressive. He argued that the only truly human response is one which accepts:

> the irreducible ethical proximity of one human being to another, morality, and through that encounter a relation to all others, justice.[99]

The practice of just relations between the self and the Other is the ethical relation.[100] It is the way in which we discover our humanity and the humanity of the Other.[101] Not even if I choose

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[95] Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 69-70.
[96] Levinas, *Ethics and Infinity*, 87-88.
[97] Minister, *De-facing the Other*, 75.
[98] See Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 203-4.
[99] Richard Cohen, 'Foreword' in Emmanuel Levinas, *Otherwise than being or beyond essence*, Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, xi.
[100] See in Levinas, *Collected Philosophical Papers*, 149: Levinas wrote that: 'The free man (sic) is pledged to his neighbour.'
[101] See Lewis, *Deaf Liberation Theology*, 3: In the previous chapter, Hannah Lewis highlighted that there needed to be greater justice for Deaf people in the church.

to kill or murder the Other, can I deny that I am in an ethical relationship with the murdered Other.[102] Murder is an unjust choice of action in relation to the face of the Other.[103]

For this reason, Levinas argued that the ethical relation is pre-original, that is, it pre-exists any relation between the same and the Other. It is a moral or ethical prerogative that exists prior or anterior to any interaction with the Other. Unlike the violent discourse of a tyrant who undermines people's freedom, the face engaged in discourse is essentially non-violent and grants the self the freedom to respond ethically or to turn away in hatred or indifference.

2.12. The transformed understanding of rationality

If ethical responsibility challenged the subject to a different way of understanding self as essentially an intersubjective or inter-relational way of being human,[104] then reason and knowledge need to be reconceptualised.'[105] Levinas proposed that we start with alterity. So instead of reason being an internal monologue with the self, it should be a dialogical response to others by an ethical subject. Reason must call the subject into question and invite them to practice justice in relation to the Other.[106] It is only a subject, already concerned with others and their perspectives, who can recognise the need to go beyond their own limited perspectives and accept the validity of the Other's experiences.[107]

Reason can be reconceptualised 'as an ongoing, honest, open, reason-giving dialogue an ethical subject has with others.'[108] So instead of seeing reason as a way to win an argument, or that one alone possesses the truth, rather, reason needs to be seen as a way of encountering the Other, listening to their perspectives, being open and receptive to their worldview and insights. In doing so, we also get an opportunity to share why we act and think in the way we do. Central to listening to others is not to 'listen only when their views make sense to us, but also and especially when they do not.'[109] So it is vitally important to develop

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[102] Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 198.
[103] Robert Eaglestone, 'Postcolonial thought and Levinas' double vision' in *Radicalizing Levinas*, edited by Peter Atterton and Matthew Calarco, (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2010), 61.
[104] Minister, *De-facing the Other*, 157.
[105] Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 44.
[106] Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 88.
[107] Minister, *De-facing the Other*, 157.
[108] Ibid, 165.
[109] Ibid, 166.

a way of 'reasoning with others.'[110] By this means, we can become open to the perspectives and criticisms of others which then 'teaches and introduces the new into thought.'[111]

> Rational dialogue presupposes a plurality of perspectives, which it makes no guarantee of overcoming.[112]

Reason and thought open us to alterity and to singularity and thereby also to polysemic readings of reality and experience. When we engage with the Other and read them from the perspective of the subjective self, we relate to the Other in a totalising way. Overcoming the dangers of totality can take place through the encounter of the face of the Other, when reason is open to alterity, and the self embraces its responsibility for establishing an ethical relation to the Other. This opens the self up to the trace of infinity.

In this regard it is necessary to return to our reading of the newspaper article and the photograph and see how we can understand it afresh not from the perspective of totality but rather infinity.

2.13. A cleansed reading from infinity

From the perspective of the hearing Dominican Sister who taught deaf children, her mission was to overcome the disadvantages that the deaf child experienced in life, in not being able to hear, and to give her a better chance of making it in the world and to find her 'place in the sun.'[113] The deaf child had to find her place in a predominantly hearing world and so for her to succeed she would need to be well-equipped to find her rightful place. This required, therefore, the child to learn how to lip-read, how to vocalise and to have a skill which she could use to find gainful employment. In referring to May, the article explained how she 'deserves to be congratulated on the courage and determination with which she overcame her handicap.'[114] She has made it in the hearing world, she matriculated from school 'without claiming any concessions,'[115] she completed a course in dress-design and commercial art, she

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[110] Ibid, 166.
[111] Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 219.
[112] Minister, *De-facing the Other*, 167.
[113] Blaise Pascal, *Pensées and other writings*, 98, Honor Levi (translator), (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 25. Levinas' uses this quote from Pascal: '"That is my place in the sun." That is how the usurpation of the whole world began' in his list of quotations before contents page in *Otherwise than being*.
[114] Hood, 'At St. Vincent's her spirit found liberation,' 33.
[115] Ibid, 33.

persevered in her first job and her efficiency at doing office work contributed towards her being promoted and receiving increases in salary. She is a success story because she can flourish in normal life. She can 'hold her own in a normal conversation where her wit and repartee are outstanding.'[116]

Underlying what is presented in the article and supported by the photograph, is an assumption that hearing is the norm and deafness a deviation from that norm. Those who deviate must be brought into alignment with the majority so that they should conform to what is normal, with what is the same. Deafness is not normal, in fact, it is abnormal. It is considered a handicap or a disability that needs to be rectified and rehabilitated. Consequently, from a hearing perspective, the deaf child, as deficient in hearing, needs to be trained and educated to fit and function into a hearing world. These are the lenses through which the hearing Dominican Sister (ironically wearing spectacles) read into the experience of the deaf child. This eisegetical[117] reading of the Other is what needs to be problematised! It is a totalising reading of the deaf experience by the hearing. Not only is it paternalistic because hearing people assume that they know what is best for Deaf people, but it is also colonising and imperialistic. It is hearing people who determine how the deaf should be trained and educated without any reference to the deaf child's own preferences or that of the adult deaf community. The experience of the deaf child is ignored. There is no dialogue with or input from Deaf people themselves. It denies the world of the Other.

When we refer back to our photograph, we can see that a Levinasian reading of this picture, would call into question a reading of it – which the article presents – that puts the Dominican Sister, as teacher and representative of the divine and infinity, at the heart of the discourse. In sharp contrast, it is the teacher who is called into question by the deaf child. It is not the teacher who comes 'from the position of height and transcendence'[118] but rather the little girl, Linda. She is the Deaf Other. She commands great height but also vulnerability. She knows the experience of being deaf from the inside contrary to the Sister who can only project her

[116] Ibid, 33.

[117] 'Eisegesis' in contrast to 'exegesis' is the reading of one's own subjective understanding and interpretation into a Bibilical text rather than reading the text in its historical context and drawing its meaning from the intention of the author. See 'How do exegesis and eisegesis differ,'url: www.compellingtruth.org/exegesis-eisegesis.html.

[118] Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 86-87.

hearing understanding onto the deaf child. The Sister may feel compassionate and loving towards the child evident in the intimacy of the teaching relation. Nevertheless, her service, compassion and love are expressed from within her hearing economy. In no way does the Sister recognise the need for discourse or to receive teaching from the deaf child. What do the deaf have to say or teach the hearing about what it means to be human, about human agency, about language, about education of the deaf, community life and culture? If the teacher was willing to be the learner and allow the face of the Other to disturb and disrupt her economy and her being a self-at-home-with-itself, maybe something new would have emerged. The egoity of the audist teacher triumphs because she knows best. Consequently, hearing people imposed their solutions on deaf people and created social structures of injustice that were detrimental to many deaf people. Practicing justice in relation to the Other is to be open to the idea that we are not the teachers but the learners.

Audism constructs the hearing to be the knowledgeable ones and the deaf to be ignorant. When the hearing presume that they can shape the lives of the deaf without regard for deaf people's own views and self-understanding, then the hearing can be justly accused of acting in a totalising and violent way.

2.14. Conclusion

The focus of this chapter has been to outline the philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas as a key to understanding the Other. The main ideas and concepts of Levinas' philosophy have been outlined and will provide the basis for the theoretical framework of this dissertation. When approaching Levinas' writings it is as if one is entering a foreign country as he is confounding to read and not always easy to understand. This is a warning to those who would venture into an encounter with alterity and the Other that one is venturing into a foreign country of the Other.

Using a newspaper article as a heuristic device, it has been possible to reflect on the model of education for deaf children practiced in Catholic schools for the deaf. This model was known as the oral method of deaf education and its basic tenet as liberating the deaf from a world of silence. Using Levinas' philosophy, it was possible to deconstruct 'the plain reading' of the deaf experience as a projection of hearing attitudes and assumptions onto the deaf experience. This plain reading is a reading from totality which does violence to the experience

of deaf people. Violence is 'found in any action in which one acts as if one were alone to act: as if the rest of the universe were there only to receive the action; violence is consequently also any action which we endure without at every point collaborating in it.'[119] Hearing people assumed that they knew what was best for the deaf without regard for the views of deaf people themselves. This violent relation between hearing and deaf has been referred to as audism.

In contrast to audism and the plain reading of deaf experience, Levinas' philosophy can assist in providing a cleansed reading of the Deaf Other. This is possible when hearing people are willing to acknowledge that they need to listen and learn from deaf people.

In the following chapters 3 and 4, we will continue to outline the value of Levinas' philosophy in uncovering in chapter 3 the history of audism and its relation to Church ministry to the deaf and in chapter 4 how in South Africa from 1948 to 1994, apartheid was a violent imposition on deaf and black people. Nevertheless, both Deaf and black people in South Africa were able to resist and transform these totalities which resulted in societal transformation through transforming discourse about how Deaf and Black people understood themselves and their position in society.

[119] Levinas, *Difficult Freedom*, 6.

Chapter 3 A historical survey of Christian ministry to the deaf

3.0. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to reflect on the historical origins of audism and phonocentrism and its influence of Catholic ministry and western society. Down the ages, deaf people have been subjected to the disparaging or pitiful gaze of church and society. Deafness has been considered a handicap or a defect that distinguished deaf people from the hearing majority. Being deaf made them different but it also marginalised them. To find oneself as the Other of history is to discover oneself to be ignored, treated with contempt and one's human dignity denied. It is to find oneself trampled underfoot in what Wyschogrod has called the 'mud of history.'[1]

The questions addressed in this chapter are how does Levinas' philosophy firstly, reflect on the encounter with the face of the Deaf Other in the church; secondly, critique Catholic ministerial praxis for the times when it lacked vigilance of this face and acted in totalising ways; and thirdly, acknowledge the occasions when hospitality was offered to the Deaf Other. In doing so, I will illustrate the ways in which Catholic ministry has been both a totalising and a liberatory praxis.

Christian ministry to Deaf people has biblical roots in Jesus' own ministry. However, the only response envisaged was the miraculous cure. Discourse about deaf people was primarily one focused on deafness as a symbol for the lack of faith in God or even the inability to have faith. Consequently, the first period, will include the Biblical and patristic[2] approaches to the Deaf. The second period will look briefly at the middle ages. Both these periods can be typified, notwithstanding some exceptions, as a neglect of ministry to deaf people. The third period starts with a look at the Renaissance period, and the beginnings of deaf education and pastoral ministry to the deaf. The fourth period will focus on the Enlightenment until the second half of the nineteenth century. During this period there is increasingly the institutionalisation of ministry to the deaf through schools and chaplaincies, as well as the

[1] Wyschogrod and Raschke, 'Heterological history,' 2.
[2] The patristic period is considered to have commenced after the New Testament period (100AD) and to end with the Second Council of Nicaea in 787.

method of education debate. The fifth period, from the first Education Conference of Milan in 1880 until 1951, will attempt to explain the triumph of oralism and the use of modern scientific methods in deaf education. During this period Deaf people resisted injustice and founded an organisation that became a vehicle to assert Deaf rights and Deaf people's growing desire for liberation.

3.1. The first beginnings of 'ministry to the deaf'

The first reference to ministry for the deaf, or at least to those without speech, goes back to the First Council of Orange in 441 AD. The bishops of South Gaul called this Council prior to the collapse of Roman Imperial rule in the West in 476 AD. During the period 314-506, the bishops called approximately twenty-three Councils to discuss dogma and disciplinary questions. [3] The task included developing local and regional laws for the smooth running of the Church in this region especially with the decline in the influence of the Imperial authority in Rome.

The first Council of Orange focused entirely on disciplinary questions. It was presided over by St Hilary of Arles with 17 bishops in attendance. A total of 30 canons or church laws were produced. In this regard, Broesterhuizen pointed out that this Council permitted that 'Deaf persons who were able to indicate by means of clear signs that they understood their [the sacraments] meaning were admitted to the sacraments.'[4] This practice is maintained to the present day where Canon Law permits Deaf people to contract marriage using signs.[5] However, Canon 12 of the 1983 Code of Canon Law directed that:

> persons suddenly deprived of the power of speech shall be reconciled or baptised if they give, or shall have given beforehand, a sign that they wish it.[6]

This formulation highlighted two important points which are pertinent for the Catholic Church's approach to deaf ministry. Firstly, the text spoke of those who are without speech and secondly, it acknowledged the use of signs was a valid way of showing comprehension

[3] Michael Edward Moore, 'The spirit of the Gallican Councils, AD 314-506', *Annarium Historiae Conciliorum*, 39, (January 2007), 10. Accessed on 8 September 2018 at www.academia.edu/1998868/The_Spirit_of_the_Gallican_Councils_AD_314-506.

[4] Marcel Broesterhuizen, 'Faith in Deaf culture,' *Theological Studies*, 66, 2, (June 2005), 307.

[5] Canons 1101 §1 and 1104 §2.

[6] Edward Landon, *A manual of Councils of the Holy Catholic Church*, vol II, (Edinburgh: John Grant, 1909), 1.

and consent for the receiving of the sacraments. While this shows, as Broesterhuizen has argued, that from the earliest centuries the Church embarked upon the ministry to the deaf,[7] it also highlighted the tension, even the contradiction that has existed in Catholic ministry to the deaf from its beginnings. This is the tension between the preference for a speech-centred understanding of deafness and the secondary acceptance of signing. This tension is still present in Catholic deaf ministry today. It is important to outline the nature of this tension and its effects on Catholic ministry.

3.1.1. Being deprived of speech

The origin of this speech-centred approach to deafness dates back to the Greek period. The Hippocratic physicians in the fifth century BC were the first to make the connection between deafness and speechlessness. A question to ask is why was this emphasis on speechlessness considered so important in relation to the deaf in Greek society?

3.1.1.1. The importance of speech as a sign of rationality

In Greece, speech was considered a sign of rationality. In his dialogue with Theaetetus, about knowledge and its attainment, Plato had Socrates say that true knowledge was to hold the right opinion and to be able to define or explain it rationally. This was manifested when thought was expressed through speech. Socrates said: ‘And everyone who is not born deaf or dumb is able sooner or later to manifest what he thinks of anything.’[8] Speech was a manifestation of rationality and the ability to think. The philosopher most influential in this regard was Aristotle.

In a similar vein, Aristotle made the connection between hearing, speech and intelligence. Aristotle remarked that:

> It is hearing that contributes most to the growth of intelligence. For rational discourse is a cause of instruction in virtue of its being audible [...] Accordingly, of persons destitute from birth of either sense, the blind are more intelligent than the deaf and dumb.[9]

[7] Broesterhuizen, ’Faith in Deaf culture,’ 307.
[8] Plato, *Theaetetus*, 206d.
[9] Quoted in Bonnie Gracer, 'What the Rabbis heard: Deafness in the Mishnah,' in Judith Abrams (ed), *Jewish perspectives on theology and the human experience of disability*, (Binghamton, NY: Haworth Press, 2006), 89.

Speech results from the vocalising of words that make sense. Aristotle argued that it was through the spoken word, namely language, that people expressed rationality. The spoken language was crucial in distinguishing between human beings and animals.[10] While animals make sounds and use voice they do it without recourse to *logos* or reason.[11]

Logos is both intelligence or discursive reasoning but also the 'principle within us that enables us to understand and govern ourselves.'[12] Aristotle's view was that the person imbued with *logos*, who can reason, make conscious choices and perform virtuous actions was fully human. It was the *logos* that defined a human being and from his understanding of *logos*, Aristotle argued that human beings were not all equal. Some were more able to attain the full stature of becoming fully human whereas others were lacking in some aspect or other. Predictably, only men and among them the free and well-born elite (like himself), who were educated and wise, could attain full humanity.

> Only men, and of them, only those who are free and well born, are capable of perfect happiness.[13]

Others like women, slaves and barbarians were incapable of ever attaining the fulness of humanity. Aristotle had a hierarchical understanding of the differences between people. Women were misbegotten males and were only able to realise their humanity and happiness in the family context by performing their duty of procreation and child-raising. Slaves were also only able to realise a limited happiness as servants in the family. They had to accept their station in life. Likewise, children and the handicapped also had their place.

Greek society practiced infanticide. Children were left to die next to a statue and then were consumed by dogs or wild beasts. Prominent philosophers like Plato (427-347 BC) and Aristotle 384-322 BC) agreed that unhealthy and defective individuals should be left to die. Aristotle wrote:

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[10] 'Voice is a certain sound of ensouled beings and belongs only to ensouled beings,' Aristotle, *De Anima*, 420b 5-7 in *The Basic works of Aristotle*, edited by Richard McKeon, (New York: Random House, 1941), 572.

[11] Aristotle, *De Anima*, 420b 34. Book II, chapter 8 in *The Basic works*, 573.

[12] Jean Vanier, *Made for happiness: Discovering the meaning of life with Aristotle*, (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2001), 18.

[13] Vanier, *Made for happiness*, 183.

> With regard to the choice between abandoning an infant or rearing it, let there be a law that no crippled child be reared.[14]

This applied to deaf children too and not only those with physical or mental disabilities. Despite this practice, many deaf children survived because deafness was only identified later in the infant's life when a lack of spoken language development became noticeable.

When we look at scripture, and particularly the New Testament, we see a similar priority given to speech and speechlessness.

3.1.2. Scripture and 'ministry to the deaf'

At the heart of Christian ministry is the desire to be faithful disciples of Jesus Christ. Scripture is the starting point for ministry and mission. Christ served and ministered to people in his life through preaching the coming reign of God, teaching people, healing the sick and the disabled, and exorcising demons. Faithful disciples are called to take heed of Jesus' words: 'I have set you an example: you are to do as I have done for you' (John 13:15).

3.1.2.1. Salvation for deaf people as miraculous healing

In this respect, Catholic ministry to the deaf through the ages has been greatly influenced by three gospel passages, namely: Matthew 11:5, Mark 7:32-37 and Mark 9:17-27. In Matthew 11:5, Jesus responded to the question set to him by John the Baptist: 'Are you the one to come or are we to expect another?' Jesus answered by pointing to the eschatological signs that were being made manifest through his ministry: 'the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised to life and the poor hear good news (Matthew 11:5). God's power breaks into the world through the ministry of Jesus. This theme is one taken over from the Jewish scriptures, especially Isaiah 29:18-19 and 61:1-2. In these passages, it is emphasised that on the day when the Lord God will deliver his people from bondage, not only will the fortunes of Israel be reversed, but also those of the poor, the deaf, the blind, the lame and even the dead.

In a similar way, Mark's accounts of Jesus healing the man who is deaf and has a speech impediment (7:31-37) and the boy possessed by a demon that made him speechless (9:17-

[14] Aristotle, *Politics*, 7, 1335b, 20-26 in *The Basic works of Aristotle*, edited by Richard McKeon, (New York: Random House, 1941), 1302.

27) highlighted Jesus' heavenly power to cure the sick and possessed. The emphasis was on Jesus' power to heal and cure the deaf and those with various disabilities. Jesus' miracles were signs of God overturning the disorder of the world and restoring the natural order, the order of being hearing, sighted and able-bodied. Healing the bodily defect was, therefore, equated with sanctity, as following the example of Christ and being close to God.

Healing was not a new theme introduced by Christianity. The earliest medical reference to attempts to cure deafness date back to the Egyptian Ebers papyrus which was written in 1500BC. In this papyrus reference is made to the ancient writings of Imhotep, an Egyptian physician, who lived around 3000 BC.[15] His treatments for deafness included a varied list of injections of olive oil, red lead, bat's wings, ant eggs or goat's urine into the deaf person's ear.

3.1.2.2. Deafness as lack of faith or inability to have faith

Another New Testament approach, which also has roots in the Hebrew Bible, is to understand deafness and the deaf metaphorically. This means that deafness is used to speak about believing people's lack of faith or their unwillingness to respond to the word of God. It is first used to show Israel's lack of faith in God. Israel's hardness of heart and unwillingness to follow God's law is described in many passages as being deaf to God's commands.

Similarly, in the New Testament writings, the disciples are often described as deaf meaning that they lack faith in Jesus. This negative understanding of deafness and disability are perspectives derived from the hearing world. John Hull has argued in relation to blindness that these passages have hindered blind people (and the same could be said of the deaf) from reading their experience in the scriptures.[16]

The extent to which Christians took over Greek thinking on the deaf into their scriptures and thinking shows displayed insensitivity to the face of the Deaf Other. However, it also inherited a Jewish tradition too.

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[15] Regi Theodore Enerstvedt, *The Legacy of the past II: The development of education for the deaf*, (Dronninglund: Nord Press, 1996), 4. Accessed on 28 June 2015 at url: www.folk.uio.no/regie/litteratur/index.htm.

[16] John M. Hull, 'Open letter from a blind disciple to a sighted Saviour,' in *Boundaries, borders and the Bible*, edited by Martin O'Kane, (London/New York: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 154-177.

3.1.3. Law to protect the deaf

The Hebrew Scriptures, in Exodus 4:11, understood disability and deafness as a way of being human. 'The Lord said to Moses: "Who makes a person dumb or deaf, gives sight or makes blind? Is it not I, the Lord?" In the book of Leviticus 19:14, the first legal provision for the protection of the Deaf is provided. 'You shall not curse the deaf or put an obstacle in the way of the blind, but you shall fear your God. I am the Lord.' The Hebrew Bible was based on a tradition of protecting the vulnerable and marginalised because the Jewish people were themselves slaves in Egypt who were led out of oppression into greater freedom. They were excluded, however, from being members of the temple priests and a Levite.

Except for the exclusion from belonging to the Levites and becoming priests in the Temple, the attitude towards Deaf people was 'optimistic, empathetic and positive – deaf people are not cursed, damned or shunted aside; they are to be treated with the respect due to all manifestations of the divine plan.'[17] They were protected by the Torah and so the Jewish understanding of disability and deafness developed as benevolent and compassionate protection of the disabled rather than focusing only on their healing.

In this tradition, the vulnerability of the suffering one is acknowledged and respected. It informed Levinas understanding that the encounter or epiphany with the face with the Other was both a plea and a command from height and vulnerability. Levinas wrote:

> The being that expresses itself imposes itself, but does so precisely by appealing to me with its destitution and nudity – its hunger – without my being able to be deaf to that appeal.[18]

For Levinas there is an obligation on the self to respond to the suffering of the vulnerable Other in being hospitable. This was the beginning of the ethical relation where the Other is more important than the self.

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[17] John V van Cleve, Barry A Crouch, *A Place of their own: Creating the Deaf community in America*, (Washington DC: Gallaudet University Press, 1989), 2.
[18] Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 200.

Within the Christian perspective, there was also a liberating praxis which arose from the Jewish understanding that the vulnerable one needed legal protection. We turn to St Paul and St Augustine to reflect further on church ministerial praxis.

3.1.4. Faith comes from hearing

The early Greek understanding of speech influenced the New Testament. One of the most controversial texts that has affected the Deaf negatively is St Paul's saying in Romans 10:17 that 'faith comes from hearing.' In fact, it is worthwhile to read this in the context of the whole quotation: 'Faith, then, comes through hearing, and what is heard is the word of Christ.'

Similarly, in Galatians 3:2 Paul asked the Galatian community if they had received the Holy Spirit through adherence to the Law or through 'the hearing of faith.' Faith is the kind of hearing that internalised and grasped the meaning of the proclaimed word and lived it out. ‘Hearing the faith’ is a metaphor referring to the faith that came to people through proclamation rather than from adherence to the Jewish Law.

A literal interpretation of Paul's writing in Romans 10:17 that 'faith comes from hearing' meant that, for many centuries, Deaf people were treated as if they were incapable of faith. This confusion has often been attributed to the writings of St Augustine.

3.1.5. St Augustine (354-430)

St Augustine, the bishop of Carthage in North Africa, was one of the greatest theologians of the Latin Church. He was a convert from Manichaeism and wrote extensively on Christian theology. In his writings, Augustine referred to the deaf twice. The first occasion was to reaffirm the teaching of St Paul that 'faith comes through hearing' (Romans 10: 17). In doing so, Lewis pointed out, Augustine seemingly supported the view that deaf people could not become believers.[19]

However, if Augustine's text 'Against Julian' is scrutinised more closely it becomes apparent that this was not his intention. He wrote:

> You say: 'At the beginning of life, human nature is adorned with the gift of innocence.'
> We agree wholeheartedly, so far as personal sins are concerned. But, since you also

[19] Hannah Lewis, *Deaf liberation theology*, 78.

> deny that an infant is subject to original sin, you must answer why such great innocence is sometimes born blind; sometimes deaf. Deafness is a hindrance to faith itself, as the Apostle says: "Faith is from hearing" (Romans 10:17)'.[20]

A closer and more faithful reading of Augustine's text shows that this comment was made in the context of Augustine's polemical debate against the heresy of Pelagianism.[21] Augustine used the example of blindness, deafness and other disabilities to argue against the Pelagianist idea that infants were born without original sin. Deafness, blindness and other disabilities in infants for Augustine were understood as arising not from personal sin but from being born into a disordered damaged world, one tainted with sin. Baptism was required to ensure that these infants could be saved. Deafness or any disability did not prevent the acquisition of a faith, it only hindered it.

While the text stated that 'deafness was a hindrance to faith,' some commentators interpreted this to mean that the deaf were either incapable of attaining faith or could only be educated by means of a spoken language and the use of the oral method. The corollary to this was to also dismiss the usefulness of sign language especially in the field of education and Christian worship.

In fact, when we consider the other text that Augustine wrote about deaf people and signing, he is very positive.

The second text is much more important: in it, Augustine acknowledged that deaf people used sign language as a means of communication and that they were able to marry and to have children. In *De quantitate animae* (The magnitude of the soul)[22] written in about 388, Augustine asked his friend Evodius:[23] How a deaf married couple, if they lived in an isolated place, could communicate with their hearing son? Evodius responded that they would communicate in sign because both speaking and signing pertain to the soul.[24] Communication

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[20] St Augustine, 'Against Julian,' Book 3, chapter 4, paragraph 10 in *The Fathers of the Church* vol 35, edited by Roy Joseph Deferrari, (New York: Fathers of the Church, 1957), 115.

[21] See E A F 'What did St Augustine say?' *American Annals of the Deaf*, 57, 1 (January 1912), 108-120.

[22] St Augustine, 'The magnitude of the soul (De quantitate animae),' in *The Fathers of the Church*, vol 4, edited by Hermigild Dressler, (Washington DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1947), 51-152.

[23] Evodius and Augustine met in Milan when Augustine still lived there. Evodius was already a Christian believer. He agreed to join Augustine in returning to Thagaste in North Africa to start a lay Christian community there. He later became a priest and was made bishop of Uzalis, a town near Carthage.

[24] St Augustine, *De quantitate animae*, chapter 18, paragraph 31, 92-93. Also see Lorraine Leeson and Haaris Sheikh, *Experiencing Deafhood: A snapshot of five nations*, (Dublin: Interesource Group Publishing, 2010), 90.

between people, and not the physical ability to hear and speak, was what was a determinant of being human. The fact that there is communication is more important than the means of that communication through spoken words or signs. The significance of this insight is profound because in other writings Augustine distinguished between natural and intentionally given signs.

In *De Doctrina*[25] Augustine distinguished between 'natural signs' and 'given signs'. The natural signs are the audible words we use when we communicate that correspond to what they refer. When these signs are used in a language for the purposes of communication then they become given signs, that is, signs which are intentionally given for the sake of communication. Spoken words are natural signs but a spoken language is a given sign. It is the intentional giving and receiving of signs for communication. For Augustine, even non-verbal forms communication which take place between people and which are expressed through gestures, like nods of the head, coughs and facial expressions are given signs. Consequently, in Augustine's understanding communication can be realised either through the hearing of spoken words or by the seeing of gestures.

> When we nod, we are giving a sign only to the eyes of the person whom we desire through this sign to make a sharer of our will. Some express ever so much by the movements of the hands. Actors by the motions of their limbs give certain signs to those who understand and, in a certain sense, speak to their eyes [...] All these signs are like visible words [*verba visibilia*].[26]

Augustine's theory of signs[27] can be applied to sign language. Augustine's insight that signs or gestures can be understood as visible 'words' *verba visibilia* rather than audible ones [*verba audibile*] could easily have led him into a discussion about sign language. Signing is itself an intentional giving and receiving of signs for communication. The only difference between spoken languages and sign language is that signing is based on sight rather than on hearing.

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[25] St Augustine, 'Christian Instruction (*De doctrina Christiana*)' in Roy Joseph Deferrari (ed), The *Fathers of the Church*, vol 2, (Washington DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1947), 3-235.

[26] St Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana*, Book 2, Chapter 3, paragraph 4 in Roy Joseph Deferrari (ed), *The Fathers of the Church*, vol 2, 63.

[27] For more information on Augustine's theory of signs, see B. Darrell Jackson, 'The theory of signs in St Augustine's *De doctina christiana*,' *Revue d'Etudes Augustiniennes et Patristiques*, 15, 1-2, (1969), 9-49.

While Augustine was not thinking of sign language as a *verba visibilia*, it is, nevertheless, compatible with his argument.

Unfortunately, Augustine's insights into the world of the deaf were never developed in relation to sign language, even by himself. His concern was not rooted in the experience of the deaf community and, so, a golden opportunity to appreciate the value of sign language and to positively influence deaf ministry within the Christian tradition went unnoticed. Hence, the tension and contradiction between speech and sign remained in Catholic ministry.

3.2. A renewed reading of Catholic deaf ministry

Sign language is central to Deaf people's experience. While the Church has acknowledged the possibility of using sign language theologically and in ministry, it was always seen in the context of the person being a rational being who communicated through language. However, going back to Aristotle, language was understood as vocalised or spoken language. We will take a detour, to reflect on Levinas' and Derrida's understanding of language, so that they might help us understand how the church missed an opportunity in Augustine's statements on language, deafness and faith.

3.2.1. Levinas' understanding of language and speech

Unlike Aristotle, Emmanuel Levinas' understanding of language and speech is rooted in the interpersonal capacity to communicate, engage in conversation and dialogue. Levinas pays no attention to the voice or the vocalisation of speech. In his second major work, *Otherwise than Being* (1974), Levinas distinguished between 'the Saying' which existed prior to any linguistic concepts or the content of what can be articulated, which is 'the Said'. How are we to understand this distinction?

When commenting on this distinction between 'the Saying and the Said', Simmons said that it was best understood when compared with the traditional understanding of language.[28] We usually assume that language originates with the speaker who, intending to speak, first formulates thoughts into words and then expresses them. In this traditional formulation, the

[28] William Paul Simmons, 'The Third: Levinas' theoretical move from an-archical ethics to the realm of justice and politics,' *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, 25, 6, (1999), 88.

speaker, or the self, is pre-eminent and the focus is on what the speaker says.[29] In contrast, by emphasising ‘the Saying’, Levinas began not with the self speaking but rather with the one addressed. He shifted the emphasis from the self to the Other.[30] This shift changed the focus from what was said – the content of communication or what Levinas called 'the Said' – to the encounter with the Other. This encounter happened prior to anything being said. Before any act of speech, there was always the approach or the encounter with the Other first. Even prior to any word being uttered, the self was exposed to the Other. The epiphany with the Other happened prior to any passing on of a message.

> The saying includes not only the content of speech, but the process itself which includes the Thou who is addressed and the speaker as attendant to the spoken word.[31]

This ‘Saying’, the approach and encounter with the Other, which happened prior to speech, is what Levinas also referred to as proximity. Proximity is the encounter with the face. The face as the vulnerable one, the suffering one, the oppressed one, the stranger, the widow and the orphan. Proximity to the face or the neighbour called the self into question. The self discovered itself to be unjust. ‘The Saying’ de-posed, de-centralised and de-situated the self.[32] In Levinas' terminology, the an-archical, the anterior ethical relation or ‘the Saying’ was otherwise than Being. This new non-ontological foundation of ‘the Saying’ allowed Levinas to reassert and extol a responsibility that is concrete, infinite and asymmetrical. Before any intentional actions, the self through proximity to the Other was ethically responsible for the Other.

Levinas' understanding of ‘the Saying and the Said’ highlighted that this encounter exists prior to anything that is said between the interlocutors. This encounter initiates a conversation where, even without speaking, the Other calls the self, cocooned in its own economy, to accountability. Language is the ethical language and a signification of transcendence and infinity.

[29] Simmons, ‘The Third,’ 88.
[30] Simmons, ‘The Third,’ 88.
[31] Simmons, ‘The Third,’ 88.
[32] Simmons, ‘The Third,’ 89.

> Conversation, from the very fact that it maintains the distance between me and the Other, the radical separation asserted in transcendence which prevents the reconstitution of totality, cannot renounce the egoism of its existence; but the very fact of being in a conversation consists in recognizing in the Other a *right* over this egoism, and hence in justifying itself. Apology, in which the I at the same time asserts itself and inclines before the transcendent, belongs to the essence of conversation.[33]

In and through facing the Other, the self comes to understand language. Language is not discourse, if by discourse, one means the communicating meaning and the expressing words between interlocutors. Rather for Levinas, language is primarily the encounter and the ethical relation between the self and the Other.

This is an asymmetrical relation between the interlocutors, where the self is called to respond to the ethical demand of the face.[34] In this exchange and conversation, the two interlocutors remain independent of each other. The Other approaches the self from a height and infinity that transcends the world of the self. The Other cannot be murdered, that is to be contained or assimilated into the world of the self. The Other has a dignity, is an infinity, a transcendence, that resists any attempt of the self to grasp or control them. Any attempt by the self to use language to grasp or understand the Other is exposing the self's violence. Rather in the face to face encounter the self is passive.

Rather than assimilate the Other, the self needs to learn from the Other, to listen and engage in discussion. It is important to recognise the error, the injustices committed against the Other, and the prejudices perpetrated against the Other. There is a need to apologise but also to move from being a solitary ego to recognising that it is in a conversation and dialogue with the Other. Hereby the Other is the teacher and the self the learner. When this happens, communication takes place which goes beyond the words spoken. This movement can also involve finding a new land like Abraham where the differences between the self and the Other can be acknowledged and appreciated. It is not about welcoming the Other into one's own economy but travelling to a new land, perhaps even the Other's land. For the hearing person

[33] Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 40.
[34] Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 40.

accepting responsibility towards the Deaf Other, it would mean accepting the need to learn sign language.

Even though Levinas did not understand language as vocalised discourse, nevertheless, he confusingly used language and speech interchangeably in his writings. In so doing, showed that he still assumed that language involved a spoken language. In this regard, Jacques Derrida's concept of phonocentrism is a critique that can be applied to Levinas too.

3.2.2. Phonocentrism

The privileging of speech and the vocalisation of sound over other forms of communication, going as far back as Aristotle, has been identified by the French philosopher Jacques Derrida as 'the most original and powerful ethnocentrism.'[35] For Derrida, phonocentrism is the limiting of language to speech and thus use of the voice and vocalisation, and ignoring other ways of communicating. Language has alterity and so goes beyond merely speech and vocalisation. For Derrida, language can also be expressed through the written word.

H-Dirksen Bauman has applied Derrida's concept of phonocentrism in relation to sign language and argued that phonocentrism, that is the privileging of speech and orality over sign language, as the main contributing factor to audism.[36]

According to Humphries, audism is the 'notion that one is superior based on one's ability to hear or behave in the manner of those who hear.'[37] Lane extended this definition to include the institutional forms of oppression of the Deaf akin to colonialism.[38] For Lane, colonisation is 'a process of physical subjugation, imposition of an alien language, culture and mores, and the regulation of education on behalf of colonial goals.'[39] This oppression Deaf people have experienced as a denial of the value of sign language and Deaf culture by the dominant

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[35] Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), 3.
[36] See H-Dirksen Bauman, 'Listening to phonocentrism with Deaf eyes: Derrida's mute philosophy of (Sign) Language,' Essays in Philosophy, 9,1, (2008), 2. Accessed on internet 7 September 2018 at http://www.commons.pacific.edu/eip/.
[37] Tom Humphries 'Audism: The birth of a word,' unpublished essay, 1975, quoted in H-Dirksen, 'Listening to phonocentrism,' 3.
[38] Audism is 'the corporate institution for dealing with deaf people, dealing with them by making statements about them, authorizing views of them, describing them, teaching about them, governing where they go to school, and, in some cases where they live; in short, audism is the hearing way of dominating, restructuring and exercising authority over the deaf community.' See Harlan Lane, *The Mask of benevolence*, 43.
[39] Lane, *The Mask of benevolence*, 31.

hearing culture.[40] For Levinas, this would indicate that hearing people are engaged in an imperialism of the same denying the alterity of Deaf people.[41] They are 'famished stomachs without ears', people caught up in their own egoist and totalising worldview without compassion and sensitivity for the suffering of the neighbour.[42]

Derrida opened up the possibility that the language of the interlocutors does not necessarily need to be a spoken language. Levinas' openness to the Other may mean therefore openness to communicating in the language of the Deaf Other, namely sign language, rather than one's own. The writings of Derrida and Levinas support the idea that Augustine had that communication is more than what is spoken and heard. It is more than speech. Signs themselves are a form of communication and so 'Sign'[43] is itself a language through which people communicate.

In this chapter, I hope to show how both Church and western society have primarily been tainted with audism and has been deeply entrenched in phonocentrism for many centuries. However, this history is also where there have been many missed opportunities to accept the ethical relation between the Church and the Deaf as Other. I will continue to explore how 'the Saying' was and was not recognised in 'the Said' throughout the rest of the chapter.

3.3. The Middle Ages (476-1400)

The Middle Ages continued the New Testament emphases on the healing of the deaf as miraculous and as a metaphor. In this respect, the Middle Ages maintained a totalising attitude towards the deaf person. The pastoral needs of the deaf were largely ignored and a miraculous healing was the only benefit they could receive from the church. Nevertheless, there were two pockets of hope: firstly, the introduction of the idea that the deaf could be educated, even though little education was done, and secondly, the use of sign language in the monasteries.

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[40] Lewis, *Deaf liberation theology*, 32.
[41] Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 39.
[42] Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 118, 134.
[43] Sign is capitalised to refer to signed language and to distinguish it from other uses of the word sign. See Oliver Sacks, *Seeing voices: A journey into the world of the Deaf*, (London: Picador, 1990), xi.

3.3.1. St John of Beverley

Healing became the paradigm for Christian attitudes to the deaf and the disabled through the ages. As discussed earlier, the paradigm of healing with seen from an audist and phonocentric perspective. Christian saints like John of Beverley (d. 751), a bishop in Northumbria in England, was remembered for his miraculous healing of a deaf boy. However, the way Bede the Venerable described the account of this miraculous healing, in his book *The Ecclesiastical history of England*, the emphasis was not on healing but on how St John of Beverley painstakingly taught the young boy to speak.[44]

In this regard, St John of Beverley shifted the miraculous cure motif to one of education. Educating the deaf boy was perceived to be the miracle. This indicated a shift in mentality and consciousness because prior this deaf people were thought to be ineducable. The least one can say is that it was not recorded before this time. In this shift, St John of Beverley anticipated the oral method of deaf education by almost a thousand years.

3.3.2. St Vincent Ferrer

Another saint in the Middle Ages recognised for his healing ministry was Vincent Ferrer (1350-1419). There were many deaf, blind, lame and people with other disabilities that Vincent is claimed to have healed. All the healings were attributed to his powerful prayer and intercession. On 29 March 1418, Vincent healed Guillaume de Villiers, a youth stricken dumb as a child, in the presence of the King of Spain.[45] Unlike St John of Beverley, Ferrer's contribution remained within the framework of the miraculous. There is no reference made to educate him.

A Biblical motif that was expanded during the Middle Ages was to use deafness as a metaphor for faithlessness.

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[44] See Mike Gulliver, 'Bede's St John less a healer more a teacher?' Accessed on 7 September 2018 at https://mikegulliver.com/2016/10/21/bedes-st-john-less-a-healer-more-a-teacher.

[45] See Stanislaus Hogan, *Saint Vincent Ferrer OP*, (London/New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1911), 80-81.

3.3.3. Deaf as a metaphor

Theologians, like St Gregory the Great (540-604), used deafness as a metaphor for sin and the deaf as a metaphor for the sinner's lack of faith. In his sermon on Mark 7:31-37, Gregory spoke about sinners as the spiritually deaf and dumb, 'who do not, because they will not, hear those things that belong to their great and eternal interest.'[46] Distinguishing between the corporally deaf and the spiritually deaf, Gregory said:

> To be corporally deaf, so as not to hear what is said, is a very great misfortune and deserves compassion, though there is nothing criminal in it. But a wilfully spiritual deafness, and an obstinate refusing to hearken to what is said, is more than a misfortune: it is a voluntary crime.[47]

Gregory spoke about remedies that needed to be put in place to cure the spiritually deaf and dumb with regular recourse to the sacrament of penance. It is there that Jesus will put his fingers in their ears and touch their tongue and say the powerful words: *Ephpheta*, be thou opened. Even though Gregory the Great had the best of intentions in using deafness as a metaphor, the negative connection between deaf as sinner was reinforced.

Within a hearing context, however, sign language was used in the monasteries and this was another pocket of hope that the Church may begin to develop an appreciation for the natural sign language of deaf people.

3.3.4. Monastic sign languages

The Rule of St Benedict called upon monks to live in silence. Under the Cluniac reform of the Benedictine monasticism established at Cluny in France in 910, the monks there developed a system of manual signs for both communicating with each other and maintaining monastic silence.[48] By 1100, the Cluniac signs had spread to other monasteries throughout France, southern England and Germany.

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[46] Pope Gregory the Great, 'Homily on Mark 7:31-37,' Accessed on 8 September 2018 at https://thedivinelamp.wordpress.com/2011/08/22/sunday-august-28-pope-st-gregory-the-greats-homily-on-mark-731-37/.

[47] Pope Gregory the Great, 'Homily on Mark 7:31-37.'

[48] Scott Bruce, 'The origins of Cistercian sign language,' *Cîteaux: Commetarii cistercienses*, 52, (2001), 199.

Sign language was taken over by the Cistercians with the establishment of their reformed Benedictine monasteries. In 1152, the Cistercian General Chapter listed the punishments to be meted out to those who chose words over signs during meals. The novice master had to instruct novices in sign language too.[49] While they borrowed Cluniac signs, they also developed their own.

> By the thirteenth century, the use of manual signs in place of spoken words had become a common aspect of monastic discipline in Cistercian abbeys and remained so until the end of the Middle Ages and beyond.[50]

While the monks used these signs in their monasteries, phonocentrism continued to colour the way that natural sign language was seen. Vocalised speaking was still to be preferred to gestures. A new initiative emerged during the Renaissance period which was to have long-term benefits for the deaf.

3.4. The Renaissance period (1450-1700)

The Renaissance marked the period of the re-birth of interest in classical culture among artists and scientists from the mid-fifteenth century until the end of seventeenth century. It was also the period within which the beginnings of deaf education emerged in Europe.

3.4.1. Girolamo Cardano

During the Renaissance, Girolamo Cardano (1501-1576), an Italian psychist and mathematician, was the first person who advocated for the education of deaf people. He wrote that the deaf person 'when reading, hears, and when writing, speaks.'[51] This was a vital shift away from healing to education. The formal education of deaf people began to be envisaged.

El Mudo, a Spanish artist, was one of the first beneficiaries of this new type of thinking.

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[49] Bruce, 'The origins of Cistercian sign language,' 203.
[50] Bruce, 'The origins of Cistercian sign language,' 208.
[51] Savino Castiglione, 'Deaf people in the world: Between the past and the present,' *Dolentium Hominum*, 73, (2010), 14.

3.4.2. Juan Fernandez Navarette

There is no indication that Cardano's views had influenced the monks of Spain who taught a deaf man known as El Mudo, or the mute. His baptismal name was Juan Fernandez Navarette (1526-1579). In sixteenth century Spain, he was appointed as the court artist to Philip II of Spain.[52] He knew sign language. He could also read, as well as write, and he knew history and Scripture. It is not clear where he learnt all this. It could well have been in a monastery.

At an early age he went to live in the monastery of La Estella at Logroño in Spain. These monks were from the enclosed Order of St Jerome, also known as the Hieronymites, and kept a life of silence. It was in the monastery that he learnt to draw and paint. He was taught the basics of art by one of the monks, Vicente de Santo Domingo. He went to Italy to study art and greatly influenced by the works of Titian and Bassano. He spent over 20 years there before returning to Spain in 1568, where he was appointed the court painter for Philip II. Juan Fernandez Navarette or *El Mudo* was a well-educated deaf person, who knew how to sign but not speak.

Sign language was making much more of an impact on a small island off the United States' coast which proved to be an example of the value of sign language. This had no relation to the Catholic Church but it was an example of what was possible when there is proximity to the face.

3.4.3. Martha's Vineyard

In the United States in 1640 an island called Martha's Vineyard was inhabited by Protestant immigrants from Kent in south-east England. What is particularly striking about this community is that it was comprised of a high percentage of Deaf people. The net effect was that virtually everyone on the island became bilingual. Islanders knew how to both speak English and to sign. Many of the signs used originated from Kent which meant that there was a strong affinity between British Sign Language (BSL) and the version used on the island.[53] Sometimes hearing people were seen signing to each other and not only in their interactions with a Deaf person. It is significant that:

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[52] Leeson and Sheik, *Experiencing Deafhood*, 26.
[53] Ladd, *Understanding Deaf culture*, 101.

when both hearing and Deaf are able to sign together, no-one is handicapped at all.[54]

This is the first recorded account of a community of hearing and deaf people who used sign language without prejudice, without phonocentric and audistic attitudes. A new relationship between the hearing and the deaf existed where totality was breached and the ethical relation honoured.

Within the Catholic Church, education was to prove to be both an obstacle and a boon to deaf people. It opened up the door to limited empowerment of the deaf and was certainly a positive move away from the Aristotlean neglect of deaf people.

3.5. The beginnings of deaf education

An attempt to systematise the education of wealthy deaf individuals was done by a Spanish Benedictine monk, Pedro Ponce de Leon. This was to have serious implications for the pastoral practice of the church as in the following centuries many schools for the deaf were established.

3.5.1. Pedro Ponce de Leon OSB (1520-1584)

Pedro Ponce de Leon was born in Vallodolid in Spain in about 1520 and was educated in Salamanca. He became a Benedictine monk at the monastery at Oña, near Burgos in northern Spain. Ponce de Leon taught the sons of noble families in Spain how to speak, read and write. This was required so that they would be able to receive their inheritance. According to the Justinian legal code that had influenced Spanish law, those who were deaf and were unable to speak were limited in their legal rights.[55] Only deaf people who could speak had full legal

[54] Ladd, *Understanding Deaf culture*, 102.

[55] In 530 AD, the Roman Emperor Justinian classified the legal rights of Deaf people through laws he passed. These laws have become known as the Justinian Code. In these laws, speechlessness was considered an impediment to citizenship. The Code, therefore, distinguished between three different groups of deaf people. Firstly, it identified those born deaf and dumb and who had no legal rights or any obligations whatsoever. Guardians were to be appointed to control their affairs. Secondly, there were those who became deaf and dumb after birth and who had learnt how to write. They were permitted to marry and to conduct their own affairs through the means of writing. Thirdly, there were those who were deaf from birth but not dumb. Included in this category were those who became deaf while being born but were not dumb. These were assumed to have the use of language and, therefore, had no legal restrictions placed upon them. They were treated just like hearing people who could not speak. They had all the rights of hearing people. For more information, see Leeson and Skeikh, *Experiencing Deafhood*, 89-90.

rights. For example, if the family heir was deaf and unable to speak, the family then risked losing its estates.[56]

Ponce de Leon recognised the importance of educating the sons of deaf nobility so that they could receive their inheritance. Ponce de Leon's first students were two brothers, Francisco and Pedro de Velasco. He began by teaching them how to write the names of various objects. From there he taught them how to articulate these written words. In this way they were able to acquire the Spanish language. There is no evidence of his using a manual alphabet, but there is an indication that he used signs with which to communicate with his deaf pupils. As previously discussed, the Benedictine and Cistercian monks, used signs in their monasteries to communicate with each other so that they would not break the solemn silence necessary for a contemplative life. In Oña, a fifteenth-century manuscript shows that the community used about 360 signs.[57] This would indicate that Pedro Ponce de Leon was familiar with the use of signs. However, the weight for Ponce de Leon lay heavier on the side of speech than sign.

Ponce de Leon is credited with being the first teacher of the deaf and the founder of the oral method of education. However, a distinction needs to be made between education and the teaching of speech. Ponce de Leon was more interested in the teaching of speech and not necessarily providing education of the Deaf. However, Leeson and Sheikh acknowledged that despite some reservations, there was a definite shift in attitude:

> This shift recognises that deaf people have the same intellectual abilities as hearing people.[58]

Ponce de Leon’s work was ground-breaking at the time. However, it remained tied to phonocentric thinking and audism. Deaf people’s alterity was not recognised but this was a move in a better direction. They were taught to speak and were educated to a limited degree. They were enabled at least to inherit property and were not condemned to a life of poverty and dependency on the welfare of others.

[56] Leeson and Sheikh, *Experiencing Deafhood*, 25.
[57] Leeson and Sheikh, *Experiencing Deafhood*, 26.
[58] Leeson and Sheikh, *Experiencing Deafhood*, 27.

Ponce de Leon’s work inspired others to teach the deaf. One of these was Juan Pablo Bonet who was also Spaniard.

3.5.2. Juan Pablo Bonet

Juan Pablo Bonet (d. 1629?) published the first book on how to teach speech to deaf pupils. He sought to teach deaf people how they could learn a spoken language using various means like fingerspelling – also known as dactylogy – the use of signs or gestures, as well as reading and writing. His method included teaching the sounds of each letter of the alphabet. Thereafter, his pupils were encouraged to develop a vocabulary of nouns, verbs, conjunctions, adverbs and prepositions. It was his idea that deaf people needed to develop the use of a spoken language so that they could develop intellectually. He also encouraged the use of lip-reading.

He influenced several educationalists such as Sir Kenelm Digby, John Bulwer and John Wallis who began to employ his methods in England.[59] Most of the Deaf people who received an education throughout the seventeenth century were the sons of the wealthy. This was to change later in the eighteenth century. In the Catholic Church, another saint was continuing where St John of Beverley left off.

3.5.3. St Francis de Sales

Francis de Sales (1567-1622) was considered the protector of the deaf because he was regarded to have healed a young deaf boy called Martin in 1605. In fact, Francis de Sales was involved in catechising the boy more than in healing him. They communicated with each other in sign language. De Sales did not teach him to speak a spoken language but learnt sign language.

De Sales never developed a system of education as Ponce de Leon and Bonet attempted. After his canonisation he was made the patron saint for pastoral care of the deaf community because his approach was more pastoral than educational. The next century would become famous for the shift that took place in the education of the deaf.

[59] See Kenneth W Hodgson, *The deaf and their problems: A study in special education*, (London: Watts and Co, 1953), 95-104.

3.6. The Enlightenment period (1700-1815)

The Enlightenment is marked by the shift in human consciousness that was ushered in by the thinking of René Descartes. Descartes believed that all human beings were distinctive individuals with their own self-awareness and conscience. In the western world, people became aware that they were 'more than just a cog in the machine.' [60] They were individuals in their own right, with their own inner life and desires to be discovered.

For many thinkers of the enlightenment, education and schools were important institutions for bringing light to darkened minds. A major shift was not it was not just restricted to the wealthy and middle class even poor needed to be educated. Education was salvation.

This had an important impact on Catholic and Christian understandings of ministry. This awareness of people's individuality made it:

> unbearable that in Christian communities and villages there were persons baptised who were not able to receive the Christian message and the sacraments: outsiders not only in the hearing society but also in the hearing church.[61]

There was a pastoral goal to Deaf education and that was to ensure that the Christian message and the sacramental life of the Catholic Church were accessible to deaf people. Again, the tension between speech and sign was evident and, in fact, intensified. It centred around two Christian pastors, one a French Catholic priest Abbé de l'Épée and the other, a German Lutheran pastor, Samuel Heinecke.

3.6.1. Abbé de l'Épée (1712 -1789) and manualism

Charles-Michel de l'Épée was born in 1712 at Versailles. After receiving his education, he desired to become a priest. However, he was not accepted for ordination because he was a Jansenist, an ascetic theology based on the writings of the Dutch theologian Cornelius Jansen. He tried studying law but did not find this inspiring. He returned to the idea of being a priest and recanted his adherence to Jansenism. The Bishop of Troyes ordained him. During his pastoral ministry, he met two young girls whom he greeted and with whom he attempted to

[60] Broesterhuizen, 'Pastoral ministry with the Deaf,' 2.
[61] Broesterhuizen, 'Pastoral ministry with the Deaf,' 2.

speak, but they did not answer. The mother explained that the girls were deaf and had been receiving tuition from another priest, Père Vanin. Unfortunately, this priest had died and so their education had been halted.

Abbé de l'Épée decided to teach them himself. Instead of using Vanin's method of teaching using pictures, de l'Épée decided to use signs and the manual alphabet. He was concerned that the children also did not know their catechism and were not educated in their faith. He wanted to ensure that they were not only educated but also catechised.

De l'Épée established the first school for the deaf in Paris for deaf children from poor families. It was called the Institute for Deaf-mutes. He took on 60 children and often provided for these children from his own pocket. Teachers prior to him emphasised speech but de l'Épée emphasised the importance of a good education through the medium of his methodical signs. De l'Épée developed his methodical signs from those used by a Deaf child but his signs were not strictly speaking a natural sign language. He changed the signs to what he called methodical signs and used them along the grammatical structure of French rather than using the grammatical structure inherent in sign language itself. He did this because he wanted the deaf children to be able to write in good French. De l'Épée used an oral-based sign language what would now be called Signed French.

De l'Épée's ministry was a major breakthrough for Catholic deaf education. For the first time, there was an attempt to minister to deaf people who were not just from wealthy families. De l'Épée was able to recognise deaf people in their alterity as no one had before him. He was able to devise an educational system in methodical signs which changed the face of deaf education. Although he was not able to move beyond phonocentrism, de l'Épée's achievements were remarkable for his time. His life marked a new chapter in Catholic deaf ministry and one where the experience of deaf people was taken seriously. De l'Épée revered for being the founder of the manual approach to Deaf education.

We now move to the work of a Protestant pastor, Samuel Heinecke who became known as the founder of the oral method of deaf education.

3.6.2. Samuel Heinicke and oralism

Samuel Heinicke (1727-1790) was born on 14 April 1727 in Nautschütz in the Electorate of Saxony in the eastern part of Germany. He began tutoring students in 1754 to earn a living. One of his students was a young deaf boy. Heinicke used a manual alphabet to teach his deaf pupil. By 1768, he was teaching other deaf children in Eppendorf and he became well-known as a successful teacher of the deaf. His methodology was to use writing and signing at the beginning until the pupil understood German. He was greatly influenced by the Swiss teacher of the deaf, Amman. As a result, he encouraged the use of lip-reading and taught pupils how to speak. He taught them to speak by having them feel the vibrations in the throat. He was adamant that it was having access to a spoken language that enabled deaf children to be educated properly.

Samuel Heinicke was in regular contact with Abbé Charles de l'Épée and corresponded with him by letter.[62] These letters reveal the controversy which has become known as the methods debate: manualism versus oralism.[63] Heinicke was very critical of the manual approach and 'insisted on the transcendent significance of sound.'[64] He even claimed that people dream in sound and through a spoken language, and so he denounced signs as useless and proclaimed oral methods as the only means by which to instruct deaf pupils.[65]

In 1777, Heinicke opened the first oral school for the deaf in Leipzig. Its original name was the 'Electoral Saxon Institute for Mutes and Other Persons Afflicted with Speech Defects'. The school still exists to this day and is known as the Samuel Heinicke School for the Deaf.[66]

It was really after the French Revolution that the educational revolution among the deaf really expanded rapidly.

[62] Hodgson, *The Deaf and their problems*, 136.
[63] Enverstedt, *The legacy of the past*, 58.
[64] Enverstedt, *The legacy of the past*, 58.
[65] Enverstedt, *The legacy of the past*, 58.
[66] Jamie Berke, 'Samuel Heinicke, Father of Oral Education,' Accessed on 11 February 2018. url: https://www.verywell.com/samuel-heinicke-oral-education-1046549.

3.6.3. The emergence of the Deaf community and their culture after the French Revolution

With the French Revolution, came the flourishing of Enlightenment ideas. De l'Épée died in 1789 at the beginning of the Revolution. During the Revolution, many loyal Catholics were persecuted for their faith because they were seen as royalists and against the Revolution. Abbé Sicard, one of de l'Épée's disciples, was not one of these. In 1790, the revolutionary Commission of the Academy appointed Sicard to succeed de l' Épée at the Paris Institute. He was given a government grant for the expenses of the school and was excused from taking an oath of allegiance to the Civil Constitution.[67] However, in 1792, Sicard did run into trouble with the authorities and was arrested with two other priests. He managed to escape, the other two did not and were executed. Massieu, one of Sicard's deaf pupils, petitioned the National Assembly to have Sicard pardoned. This was granted and Sicard went back to teaching his deaf pupils.[68]

During the Revolution inspired Deaf people to grow in dignity gave space for Deaf people the freedom to Many new developments transpired after the Revolution but happened outside the influence of the Church. Many Deaf artists were trained by hearing artists and the Deaf were able to exhibit their art in public. One Deaf artist Claude Deseine became famous and was commissioned to do busts of Voltaire, Rousseau, Mirabeau, Danton and Robespierre.[69]

Some Deaf people wrote popular political pamphlets[70] and were soldiers in the revolutionary army. This showed that Deaf people were politically aware and active in advancing the ideals of the Revolution. Consequently, France became the first country to recognise Deaf people as 'children of the nation' and started the first publicly funded Deaf school.[71]

In 1834, Berthier established the first Deaf national organisation called the *Societe Centrale des Sourds-Muets*. This society met every year on Abbé de l'Épée's birthday for a banquet and the celebration of sign language.[72]

[67] Hodgson, *The Deaf and their problems*, 133.
[68] Hodgson, *The Deaf and their problems*, 134.
[69] Ladd, *Understanding Deaf culture*, 106.
[70] Ladd, *Understanding Deaf culture*, 108. Ladd refers to Pierre Desloges who composed the first Deaf text in 1779. He was a devoted Jacobin.
[71] Ladd, *Understanding Deaf culture*, 106.
[72] Lewis, *Deaf liberation theology*, 22.

The flourishing of education for the deaf in both its manual and oral forms continued to grow and develop throughout the nineteenth century. Many schools for the deaf, both manual and oral, were established throughout the world.

3.7. The flourishing of deaf education (1815-1880)

While de l'Épée was enormously influential in France, his ideas and methods spread to North America, as well as to Italy, the Netherlands, and to Ireland. It was from Ireland that de l'Épée's methods reached the shores of South Africa and Australia.

3.7.1. Deaf education in the United States[73]

One of the most influential families involved in Deaf education in the United States was a Protestant family, the Gallaudet family.[74] They were of French Huguenot descent.[75] In 1815, Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet came to France to study deaf education under Abbé Sicard at the Paris Institute. There he met Laurent Clerc, a deaf Catholic teacher, and the two of them returned to the United States. On the boat-trip back, Clerc taught Gallaudet sign language and Gallaudet taught Clerc English.[76]

With the assistance of Laurent Clerc, who had worked with Abbé Sicard, Thomas Gallaudet went to Hartford in 1817 and started a deaf school there called the American School for the Deaf.[77] This school promoted the education of deaf pupils through sign language.

Thomas Gallaudet's son, Edward Miner Gallaudet established the first Deaf college in the United States. When it was established on 8 April 1864, it was called the 'Columbia Institution for the Deaf and Dumb and the Blind.'[78] The combined method of instruction was used. This included signing and finger-spelling with speech and lip-reading. However, the name was changed in 1894 to the Gallaudet College. Today, it is known as Gallaudet University. It remains the only deaf university in the world.

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[73] For a comprehensive history of Deaf education in the United States, see Harlan Lane, *When the mind hears: A history of the Deaf*, (New York: Random House, 1984).
[74] Enverstedt, *The legacy of the past II,* 67.
[75] Hodgson, *The Deaf and their problems*, 181.
[76] Enverstedt, *The legacy of the past II*, 68.
[77] The school was originally known as the American Asylum for the Education and Instruction of Deaf and Dumb Persons. See Enverstedt, *The legacy of the past II*, 68.
[78] Enverstedt, *The legacy of the past II*, 70.

The manual approach to Deaf education was dominant in the United States until the establishment of the Lexington School in New York and the Clarke School in Northampton, Massachusetts in 1867. These were both purely oral schools.[79]

The first Catholic school for the deaf started in the United States was the St Joseph's Institute for the Deaf in St Louis, Missouri in 1837. The Sisters of St Joseph of Carondolet started it.[80] This was a school that used the oral method of Deaf education.

3.7.2. Catholic deaf education

Besides the United States, de l'Épée's method influenced the establishment of many Catholic schools for the deaf throughout Europe too. Among them were schools for the deaf established in Italy, the Sint-Michielsgested Institute for the Deaf in the Netherlands and, in Ireland, St Mary's School for the Deaf in Dublin run by the Cabra Dominican Sisters.

3.7.2.1. Catholic Deaf education in Italy

The Catholic Church was integral to the development of deaf education in Italy. The first school for the deaf in Italy was established in 1784 in Rome by Abbate Silvestri who trained under de l'Épée. In 1828, another priest Tommaso Pendola started a deaf school in Siena also using the manual approach.

In 1867, Abba Serfino Balestra (1834-86), a deaf teacher in Como, visited a deaf school in Rotterdam in the Netherlands that used the oral method.[81] He returned to Italy a convert to oralism. Another priest in Milan, Abba Giulio Tarra, also became a convinced oralist through growing dissatisfaction with the combined method of signs and speech he was using. In 1870, he decided to abandon signing and focused only on speech and lip-reading.

Most of the schools in Italy unlike France became school for the deaf that used the oral method of deaf education.

[79] Enverstedt, *The legacy of the past II*, 69.
[80] For more information, visit www.csjcarondelet.org/educational-institutions/.
[81] Hodgson, *The Deaf and their problems*, 241.

3.7.2.2. Catholic Deaf education in the Netherlands[82]

The Dutch priest Martinus van Beek, with the encouragement of his bishop Den Dubbelden, began the Institute for the Deaf in Sint-Michielsgested in 1840.[83] Until then, the only school for the deaf was the Guyot Institute in Groningen, a liberal Protestant school.

Van Beek wanted the Catholic deaf children to be educated and know the basic tenets of their Catholic faith. He decided to start a Catholic deaf school along the lines of de l'Epée's school in Paris.

3.7.2.3. Catholic Deaf education in Ireland[84]

An Irish Vincentian priest, Fr Thomas McNamara CM, was concerned about the lack of religious instruction for deaf Irish children. He wrote to the bishops of Ireland in 1845 requesting support for the establishment of a school for the deaf. It took six years to raise the necessary funds to run the school. He had also asked the Dominican nuns in Cabra to take over the school. These nuns were a Second Order or contemplative congregation of the Dominican Sisters. They agreed and sent two nuns and two deaf pupils to a deaf school in Caen in Normandy to study their approach to deaf education. They set out on 11 January 1846. This school in Caen had been started by Abbé Jamet in 1816. Jamet had trained with Abbé Sicard at the Paris Institute for the Deaf.

The nuns and pupils returned in August 1846. There were already 15 pupils ready to start school in September 1846 at the new school that was given the name: St Mary's Institution for the Deaf and Dumb. By 1850, the school had already grown to 50 pupils. The method of education in the school was strictly in Irish Sign Language (ISL) and Signed English.

The Cabra Dominican nuns sent sisters to South Africa and Australia. These nuns started the first Catholic schools for the deaf in both these countries. Two students from St Mary's, Ellen Hogan and Bridget Lyne, were to make an enormous contribution to deaf education, not in

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[82] For a comprehensive summary of Deaf education in the Netherlands in the nineteenth century, see Corrie Tijsseling and Agnes Tellings, 'The Christian's duty toward the Deaf: Differing Christian view on Deaf schooling and education in 19th-century Dutch society,' *American Annals of the Deaf,* 154, 1, (2009), 36-49.

[83] Tijsseling and Tellings, 'The Christian's duty toward the Deaf,' 39-42.

[84] The information for this section was taken from Fitzgerald and Santleben et al, *Open minds open hearts*, 37-42.

Ireland, but in Australia and South Africa respectively. The early beginnings in South Africa will be recounted in the next chapter.

3.7.2.4. Deaf education in Australia

In 1875, a Dominican Sister called Sr Mary Gabriel Hogan was sent to Australia from Ireland to start the first Catholic school for the deaf in Maitland near Newcastle in New South Wales. Hogan was deaf. This was an expression of great confidence in deaf people that Hogan could be entrusted with such an important task and mission.

Hogan was a previous pupil of St Mary's Institution for the Deaf and Dumb in Dublin.[85] Born as Ellen Hogan in Dublin, Ireland in 1842, she started school at St Mary's on 1 December 1851 at the age of 9. Due to scarlet fever, she became profoundly deaf at the age of seven. By this stage she was already proficient in written and spoken English. She remained at the school until 1864 becoming qualified as a teacher's assistant. Contrary to the dictates of the time, she was able to become a teacher which meant she became a choir sister and was not forced to be a lay sister. She entered the convent and was professed in 1867, the first Deaf woman to take this route with the Cabra Dominican nuns.

In 1875, Sr Gabriel Hogan arrived in Australia to start up and teach at the Maitland school. Being deaf and starting a school for the deaf was not as unusual in the nineteenth century as it would seem. The first two schools for the deaf in Australia were founded by two deaf men. In 1860, Thomas Pattison started a school in Sydney and Frederick John Rose started one in Melbourne. Many schools in Europe and North America were employing deaf teachers too. Frederick John Rose had been trained at the Old Kent Road School for the Deaf in England where, between 1841 and 1842, there had been nine deaf teachers in the school and only three hearing teachers.[86]

Except for Italy and the United States, most of the Catholic schools for the deaf took their inspiration from de l'Épée's Paris Institute. His influence during the nineteenth century was extensive although this was to change. The golden era of the flourishing of sign language and deaf teachers in schools for the deaf was to be reversed with the triumph of audism and

[85] Fitzgerald and Santleben et al, *Open minds open hearts*, 42-53.
[86] Branson and Miller, *Damned for their difference*, 142-143.

phonocentrism. This was first noticeable in the chaplaincies for the deaf where hearing chaplains asserted their authority over their deaf flock and turned back the gains made by the deaf themselves.

3.8. Chaplaincies for the deaf

St Francis de Sales and Abbé de l'Épée were pioneers in developing the deaf ministry beyond the school. They were concerned with the faith life of the deaf and not merely their education. They wanted to ensure that deaf children and adults have access to the sacramental life of the Church.

There is very little documentation of Catholic chaplaincies to the deaf in the Catholic Church during the nineteenth century. More extensive work has been done on the ministries in the Anglican Church[87] and evangelical churches[88] in England. This research has demonstrated that the involvement of deaf people in establishing missions in Britain was much more extensive than previously thought.[89] The most striking account is of Charles Davis who started the Stoke-on-Trent mission in 1868.[90] He had been a cobbler but had developed his own shop into a meeting place for adult deaf people. He had a mission to find other deaf adults, teaching them sign language and knowledge of Christ. There were at least two other missions started by deaf people themselves.[91] Branson and Miller have typified this period as one of great flourishing for Deaf people and Deaf communities in many parts of the world with schools with deaf teachers and churches with deaf missioners.[92] This is particularly the case in the Anglican Church and the Evangelical churches.

> The early DEAF-CHURCH[93] of the mid-nineteenth century was largely non-denominational and a place where religious minded Deaf men were responsible for their own worship of God and preaching the Gospel to other Deaf people. It was a place

[87] See Lewis, *Deaf liberation theology*, 39-60.
[88] See Esme Cleall, '"Deaf to the Word": Gender, Deafness and Protestantism in nineteenth-century Britain and Ireland,' *Gender & History*, 25, 3, (November 2013), 590-603.
[89] Lewis, *Deaf liberation theology*, 43-49.
[90] Lewis, *Deaf liberation theology*, 47.
[91] Lewis, *Deaf liberation theology*, 47.
[92] Branson and Miller, *Damned for their difference*, 143-145.
[93] Writing words in capitals like DEAF-CHURCH or DEAF-WORLD is a Deaf way of transcribing or writing down signs called 'Gloss'. When written in this manner it refers to a sign or a Deaf concept which is represented by a sign.

> where two Deaf men were heading for ordination in the 1880s and an all-Deaf management committee flourished. It was a place whether Deaf people could meet together, use their language, relax in their culture; the origin not only of DEAF-CHURCH but also of the adult community of the DEAF-WORLD itself. It was a place where some attempts were made to fight for the right of Deaf people to training and employment.[94]

It would be interesting to know what transpired within the Catholic Church where it is not as easy for laypeople to start a church and Deaf men were still excluded from ordination. Catholic Deaf communities existed but would have been served by hearing priests, who signed. The extent to which they would have allowed Deaf initiative is still to be researched.

Nevertheless, even though Catholic chaplains knew sign language and used it extensively in ministry, as Broesterhuizen pointed out, they still were under the misconception that deafness was a defect. Consequently, they saw the education of the deaf and ministry to the deaf as 'a work of mercy and charity.'[95] Deafness as a defect required a remedy and so this meant that deaf people were never seen as the equal of hearing people. They were always seen as inferior to hearing people and in need of their mercy and charity. Broesterhuizen gave the example of a Deaf man, Antonius Megens, who taught sign language at Martinus van Beek's Institute for the Deaf in the Netherlands. In the school annals, Megens was praised for his intelligence and command of sign language and yet was also listed in the annals as a nursed patient not a teacher.[96]

Lewis argued that prominent Anglican chaplains or missioners for the deaf held similar attitudes. The chaplaincies for the deaf in England were established by hearing people to ensure that deaf people were catechised and Christianised. For example, Rev Samuel Smith, an Anglican missioner, started a mission to the deaf in 1851. He was concerned about the lack of faith among deaf people referring to 'the uneducated deaf and dumb as savages, atheists and heathens.'[97] Once they went to school, learnt to speak the English language and had received some scriptural teaching, they were considered ready to attend church.

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[94] Lewis, *Deaf liberation theology*, 48.
[95] Broesterhuizen, 'Pastoral ministry with the Deaf,' 2.
[96] Broesterhuizen, 'Pastoral ministry with the Deaf,' 2.
[97] Lewis, *Deaf liberation theology*, 41.

Despite the period of Deaf renaissance from the beginning to the mid-nineteenth century, a shift started happening in church and society. There was a move against the use of sign language in education and therefore also the employment of deaf teachers. For example, in 1841, the Old Kent School in England had a predominance of deaf over hearing teachers, this predominance had been reversed ten years later. By 1851, there were eight hearing teachers in the school and only four deaf teachers. What accounted for this shift?

3.9. The Milan Conference, evolutionism and eugenics

The nineteenth century saw the flourishing of deaf education in both its oral and manual forms throughout the world. Schools sprang up throughout Europe, North America as well as in Australia and South Africa. In England, Ireland, Scotland, Germany, Finland, Italy, Spain and Sweden the debate raged on about which was the best methodology for Deaf education: oralism or manualism.

However, towards the end of the nineteenth century the Deaf people's sense of themselves that developed after the French revolution came under threat. Branson and Miller attribute this change to Western societies move towards more professional and bureaucratic administration.[98] Lewis expressed this more bluntly and said that 'scientists and legislators attempted to categorize and control anyone who was not perceived as "normal" by the majority society.'[99] The attitude among hearing people towards to deaf people was greatly influenced by the 'scientific' and evolutionist thinking of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

3.9.1. The Milan Conference of 1880

Another turning point in the manual versus oral debate, or the methods debate, came when one hundred and sixty-four delegates, the majority of whom came from Italy and France, attended 'The Second International Congress of Teachers of Deaf Mutes' in Milan from 6 to 11 September 1880.[100] The outcome of the Milan Congress, as it became known, was a

[98] Branson and Miller, *Damned for their difference*, 145.
[99] Lewis, *Deaf liberation theology*, 23.
[100] See Hodgson, *The Deaf and their problems*, 243: The First International Conference of Teachers of the Deaf was held in Paris in 1878. 'It was international in little but name, but it was a precedent, and agreement was reached there to hold a really international conference two years later in Milan.'

triumph for pure oralism over the manual approaches to Deaf education. While not a Church conference, it was chaired by a priest, who was also a devoted oralist, Giulio Tarra (1832-1889). Most of the delegates at the conference came from schools in Europe and the United States which promoted the oral method of education.

The deliberations of the congress were summed up by the dismissive comment made in English by a Sienese oral educator and Catholic priest, Padre Marchio who said: 'Come hear our children!' Marchio sought to dismiss the arguments of the American, Thomas Gallaudet, who had argued in favour of using sign language in the education of the deaf.[101] Many of the Catholic priests at the Milan Conference were in favour of the oral approach as they considered it the most modern and scientific approach.

This conference in Milan supported the oral approach as the most scientific approach and it vilified manualism. It was the triumph of the oral method and hearing perspectives over those of the Deaf community. It was reflected in the eight resolutions that were passed. The conference passed resolutions which had wide-ranging ramifications for Deaf education worldwide. This conference was to have a detrimental effect on the use of manual signs in schools for the deaf and the employment of Deaf teachers.

The first resolution passed in Milan emphasised the superiority of speech over signs in enabling the Deaf to integrate into hearing society and so concluded that the oral method of education should be preferred to that of a manual system of education. It was striking that at the Milan Congress only two of the 164 delegates were deaf. Both deaf people voted against the oral method of education. It was a conference of the hearing deciding what is best for the Deaf. The oral approach was the remedy to the ills of the deaf by enabling them to function more effectively in the 'normal' hearing world.

The second Milan resolution discouraged the use of sign language or combined methods in education because sign language adversely affected the ability of deaf children to develop speech and lip-reading skills. Therefore, an emphasis on a purely oral approach was recommended.

[101] See www.milan1880.com/daytodayproceedings. Accessed on 25 March 2013.

The third resolution encouraged State aid for dead education for governments to play a greater role in the education of deaf children. At this time most of the schools for the deaf had been established and were run by churches.

The fourth resolution insisted that the methods used for the education of deaf children should be similar to those used in the education of hearing children. They had to know the grammatical structure of a spoken language. They were to learn it first in its spoken form and then in its written form.

The fifth resolution promoted the publication of books by teachers of the oral system that would enhance the learning of language by deaf children.

The sixth resolution encouraged those deaf adults, who had already completed school, to continue using the oral method in different areas of life. They should not forget the lessons learnt at school.

The seventh resolution tried to set a standard for the admittance of deaf children into school from eight to ten years of age; the number of years recommended at least seven years for school attendance; and that classes be not comprised of more than ten children. This was probably an improvement on existing practice at that time. Milan at least acknowledged that Deaf children needed to be educated. However, considering that hearing children probably started school at an earlier age, it set the beginning of education very late and only allowed for seven years.

The eighth resolution suggested the prudent, gradual and progressive introduction of the oral method into schools where it is not yet applied. New pupils should be placed in a separate class where they would be taught in a spoken language; kept from the corrupting influence of other pupils using the manual approach; and each year the manual approach was to be phased out.

This conference had a great impact throughout Europe and the United States as gradually governments insisted on the implementation of the oral method as the most scientific approach to deaf education. In Britain, for example, the Royal Commission on the Blind, the Deaf and Dumb, in 1889, recommended that the oral system of education be utilised in British

for the deaf.[102] By 1905, 96% of all schools in the United States were designated to be oral schools.[103] Sign language was considered a relic of the past and forbidden for use in these schools.

When governments changed their education policies in favour of the oral method of education, it had a negative impact on the training and employment of deaf teachers and education in sign language. Hearing teachers were preferred and therefore employed to teach the deaf how to speak.

The vast majority of those at Milan were in favour of the oral method of education so the outcome was predetermined. This enthusiasm for the oral method was a triumph for audism and phonocentrism. It was bolstered by emerging theories of social Darwinism and the eugenics movement. It meant that those who favoured the manual method of education and the use of sign language suffered further setbacks.

3.9.2. Evolutionism

Branson and Miller pointed out that modern science has been particularly detrimental for deaf people as it pathologised deaf people as defective and deficient human beings.[104] Science in the nineteenth century reaffirmed the phonocentric view that human beings were those who could speak and sign language was not considered to be a language.

> Those without speech, thus, were labelled frequently as "mindless," as less than human. Those who were deaf were assumed to be incapable of learning language, incapable of human understanding.[105]

The evolutionist anthropologist Edward Tylor theorised about the origins of language. He dismissed sign language as a more primitive stage of language development. Gesture came first and was more primitive to the development of spoken languages.[106] Being primitive it

[102] Enverstedt, *The legacy of the past II,* 87.
[103] Enverstedt, *The legacy of the past II,* 80.
[104] Branson and Miller, *Damned for their difference*, 16.
[105] Ibid, 25.
[106] Ibid, 150.

had no place in an advanced civilised society. Subsequently, 'natural sign language was not seen as a viable medium for education.'[107]

These perspectives together with the desire to create an ordered society, out of inherently selfish and anarchical individuals – and evolutionism – created the conditions for the eventual pathologising of deaf people. The scientific theory of evolution promoted the idea of biological progress and supported the idea of the supremacy of human beings over other animals. 'For the Darwinists and the evolutionists, the laws of nature needed to be harnessed to ensure effective human development.'[108]

Linking the theory of evolution and society led to the development of social Darwinism which provided valuable ideological justification for and legitimacy to colonialism. Europeans were evolutionarily more suited to rule over the more primitive peoples of the world.[109] Colonial governments saw themselves as bringing civilisation and modern progress to the natives.

'Evolutionist control over the natural development of humans received explicit expression in eugenics.'[110] This most serious of the assaults came from a Scottish-born American inventor of the telephone and the hearing aid, Alexander Graham Bell.

3.9.3. Alexander Graham Bell and the eugenics movement

Alexander Graham Bell was born in Edinburgh, Scotland on 3 March 1847 and immigrated to Canada in July 1870. He accepted a post to a school for the deaf in Boston in 1871. He met Mabel Hubbard, who had been a former pupil at the school, marrying her on 11 July 1877.

Bell was incredibly hostile to the use of sign language and Deaf culture and was involved in the eugenics movement. This movement 'focused on the development of social control over human reproduction to engineer the physical and mental improvement of future generations.'[111] It was influenced by social Darwinism and debated on the best means to develop racial purity in the United States. Bell was obsessed with the idea that a separate deaf race would evolve if deaf people were permitted to continue marrying each other.

[107] Branson and Miller, *Damned for their difference*, 160.
[108] Ibid, 151.
[109] Ibid, 28.
[110] Ibid, 151.
[111] Ibid, 29.

In 1883, Bell gave a talk entitled: 'Memoir upon the formation of a deaf variety of the human race.' In his talk, Bell argued that the marriage of deaf people held the risk of the emergence of a separate 'race' that would only communicate in sign language.[112] They would be isolated from the hearing world.

He recommended that deaf people should be more fully integrated into a hearing world through promoting the oral method of education. He believed that if this was done, then the intermarriage of deaf people would decrease and consequently fewer deaf children would be born. His hope was that over time the deaf community would become extinct. This was a vain hope because the majority of deaf children are born to hearing parents and not deaf parents.

3.10. Chaplaincy in the twentieth century

The belief in the modern myth of scientific and evolutionary progress linked with phonocentrism meant the resurgence of audism affected the churches too. This meant that deaf people were still looked upon by hearing people, even the most sympathetic of hearing people, as defective human beings. This can account for why the achievements of the deaf after the French Revolution were so easily reversed in favour of the oral method of education in schools for the deaf. Fewer and fewer Deaf teachers were trained and employed in schools for the deaf at the beginning of the twentieth century. While pure oralism predominated in the schools, sign language persisted in the Catholic deaf chaplaincies. These were often too under the control of hearing chaplains. In the Catholic Church, Canon Law forbade the ordination of any person with a physical defect.[113]

Lewis pointed to the attempts of the Anglican bishops to control the deaf missions with the establishment of the Council of Church Missioners to the Deaf and Dumb (CCMDD) in 1905.[114] Deaf missioners began to be replaced by hearing ones because many of the Deaf missioners did not have enough English to participate in the training courses. The effect of these changes

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[112] Alexander Graham Bell, 'Memoir upon the formation of a deaf variety of the human race'. Paper presented to the National Academy of Sciences, New Haven, Connecticut, 13 November 1883. Retrieved on 20 February 2018 from https://archive.org/details/cihm_08831.

[113] Canon 984 § 2 of the 1917 Canon Law stated that 'the following persons are irregular *ex defectu*: 2. bodily defective men who, on account of debility cannot safely, or for reason of deformity with due dignity, engage in the sacred ministry of the altar;' See Stanislaus Woywod, *The new Canon Law: A commentary and summary of the new code of Canon Law*, (New York: Joseph F Wagner, 1918), 197.

[114] Lewis, *Deaf liberation theology*, 53-54.

in the Anglican Church was that many of the Deaf churches run by Deaf people themselves were transformed into a church 'where the (usually hearing) missioner did everything for the Deaf that attended and the focus shifted from a church where Deaf people could meet and worship in their own language to a place where the Deaf came to obtain welfare assistance.'[115]

In the early twentieth century audism and phonocentrism, or in Levinas' terminology the imperialism of the same had won out. The gains made by deaf people in relation to sign language, deaf culture, deaf employment and deaf leadership had been overturned. The situation was far worse for Deaf people in Nazi Germany. The Nazis took eugenic thinking to its extreme conclusion.

3.10.1. The Nazis and deaf people

In January 1934, the Nazis passed a law that permitted the sterilisation of people who suffered 'from a hereditary disease.' The law led to the forced sterilisation of approximately 375 000 German nationals.[116] It is estimated that about 17 000 deaf people were forcibly sterilised often without anaesthesia.[117]

During this period, the Nazi regime also implemented a euthanasia programme called Action T4 for the elimination of people with bodily and mental disabilities. It is estimated that in the period of 1940-1941, about 100 000 disabled, deaf and psychiatric patients were murdered.[118] The deaf and disabled were also experimented upon by being injected with typhoid and by having their bodies tested for resilience to cold and pressure.

In 1941, the German Catholic Bishops protested against the Nazi euthanasia programme. Clement August von Galen, Bishop of Münster (1878-1946) preached against the euthanasia programme on 3 August 1941.[119] Amazingly, the Nazi leadership called it to a halt. However, it more likely it continued but not so openly. The Nazis were afraid that it might affect the war

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[115] Lewis, *Deaf liberation theology*, 55.
[116] Branson and Miller, *Damned for their difference*, 32.
[117] Leeson and Sheikh, *Experiencing Deafhood*, 64.
[118] Leeson and Sheikh, *Experiencing Deafhood*, 64.
[119] Gordon C. Zahn, *German Catholics and Hitler's wars: A study in social control*, (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1962), 86-87.

effort if they arrested and executed von Galen for treason.[120] However, this action of the Catholic Bishops did not go unpunished. In retaliation, 37 priests of his diocese were deported to concentration camps and ten lost their lives.[121] From Levinas' understanding this act of Bishop van Galen could be understood as an example of 'the Saying in the Said.' Van Galen's discovered that he was responsible for the Deaf and disabled Others who were being experimented upon and killed mercilessly. He felt obliged to speak out even though he was in danger of suffering harm from the Nazis. As it transpired, it was the 37 priests of his diocese and especially the ten who died who found themselves persecuted and held hostage by the Nazi regime. This is the substitution which Levinas spoke of which is self-sacrifice and compassion which is the 'giving to the Other the bread destined for one's own mouth.' This is an example of the church ministry which reflects the ethical relation.[122]

However, when it came to the genocide perpetrated against Jews, the Catholic Church has been accused of remaining silent. Neither Pope Pius XII nor the German Catholic Bishops raised any protest against the genocide against Jews being committed in the concentration camps.[123] One argument is that if they had raised their voices against anti-Semitism as they had against the injustice committed against those with disabilities, there is the possibility that the Shoah may have been avoided or curtailed. That they did not do so, opened them up to accusations of complicity with the Nazis.[124] The Vatican has decided to open its secret archives for researchers to study accusations of Pope Pius XII's silence on the killing of Jews during the Shoah. This will take place from 2 March 2020.[125] Despite this, Levinas' point would be that in persecution and being held hostage in compassion for the other, one always discovers that 'in approach I am first a servant of a neighbour, already late and guilty for being late.'[126] In

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[120] 'Three sermons in defiance of the Nazis by Bishop von Galen.' The Church in History Information Centre. Accessed on 5 November 2018. url: www.churchinhistory.org/pages/booklets/vongalen(n).htm.
[121] Ibid.
[122] This topic will be dealt with in greater detail in subsequent chapters.
[123] Robert P. Ericksen, 'German Churches and the Holocaust: Assessing the argument for complicity,' The Raul Hilberg Memorial Lecture, The University of Vermont, 15 April 2013, 17. Accessed on 29 October 2018. url: www.uvm.edu/sites/default/files/media/HilbergLectureEricksen.pdf.
[124] Ericksen, 'German Churches and the Holocaust,' 17-19.
[125] Frances D' Emilio, 'Vatican to open archives on World War II-era Pope Pius XII,' *Crux*, 4 March 2019. Accessed on 23 May 2019, url: https://cruxnow.com/vatican/2019/03/04/vatican-to-open-archives-on-world-war-ii-era-pope-pius-xii/.
[126] Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 87.

the shuddering[127] and trembling before the Other and their suffering one is always late on the scene and guilty of having done too little.

However, even in these desperate times some Deaf people, or saints in Levinas' thinking, asserted their autonomy to choose their own destiny. This was going to set the trend for the twentieth century – Deaf people coming into their own again.

3.10.2. Deaf people in the Resistance

During the Warsaw Uprising against the Nazi occupation of Poland from 1 August until 2 October 1944, there was a platoon of about 29 Deaf Poles, among them men, women and even children, who resisted the German occupation. They were led by a deaf man called Wieslaw Jablonski.[128]

During the 63 days of fighting during the uprising, over 16 000 Polish Home Army fighters were killed. Interestingly, none of the Deaf people died even though some of them were involved in the heavy fighting. After the rebellion had been quelled by the Nazis, eleven Deaf members of the uprising were sent to prisoner of war camps including two minors.[129]

Deaf people showed their willingness to stand up against all forms of oppression and diminishment even to sacrificing their own lives for the common good.

3.11. Oralism dominates

After the Second World War, oralism became the dominant method of education in schools for the deaf. The major shift was due to the medicalisation of education. The school became seen as a clinic where vast amounts of time were expended in getting the deaf children to hear using hearing aids, and amplifiers as well as giving them speech therapy.[130] Modern scientific technology was the saviour of the deaf and the modern world.

It was the modern myth that science and technology would eventually find a solution to all the world's problems. For modernism 'seeks to transcend the limitations of the everyday through heroic action, creativity, and extraordinary religious experience. Modernism is a kind

[127] Ibid.
[128] See Leeson and Sheikh, *Experiencing Deafhood*, 65-66.
[129] Ibid.
[130] See Branson and Miller, *Damned for their difference*, 205-207.

of heroic romanticism.'[131] This heroic romanticism has been exposed by post-modernist thinking which in adopting a redemptive realism that distrusts transcendence but honours the everyday, the prosaic and the mundane.[132] For post-modernists science and technology have not often been able to fulfil its promises but has also has caused untold harm and destruction in the name of progress.

A sign of progress in deaf education was the promotion of the oral method of deaf education in schools for the deaf worldwide. Even though the use of sign language was banned in schools for the deaf that adopted the oral method of education, it persisted in Catholic chaplaincy work. However, the ministry was often referred to as pastoral care for the hearing impaired.[133] It was charitable work which kept the deaf people passive and dependent on the hearing priests. Deaf people were the beneficiaries of the hearing priests' charity. However, as early as 1951 a new initiative by Deaf people themselves was to set the trend for a new development altogether. Ministry not based on pastoral care for the deaf but rather ministry that empowered the Deaf.

3.12. The establishment of the World Federation of the Deaf

In 1951, the first international Deaf association was formed in Rome and was called the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD). The WFD seeks to promote the human rights of Deaf people across the globe and to celebrate Deaf culture and sign languages.[134] This marked the beginning of a whole emancipation movement for Deaf people which took off in the 1970s throughout the Deaf world.

It took some time for the ideas of the WFD to influence Catholic Deaf ministry but influence, it did.

3.13. Conclusion

In this short historical survey, I have tried to outline the reality of Catholic ministry to the deaf down the ages. This involved an encounter between a predominantly hearing church and

[131] Michael Morgan, The Cambridge Introduction to Levinas, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 86.
[132] Ibid.
[133] Broesterhuizen, 'Pastoral ministry with the Deaf,' 1.
[134] See https://www.wfdeaf.org/who-we-are/our philosophy/. Accessed on 20 February 2018.

clergy with the Deaf Other. This encounter Levinas also referred to as proximity. In proximity, the Church has been found to be a reluctant servant of the Deaf Other and in its outreach to be 'already late and guilty for being late.'[135] The Church's reluctant ministry to the deaf was hampered by taking on board a flawed philosophy of the human person as we saw in the discussion on Aristotle. This phonocentrism has contributed towards a denial of deaf people's full human dignity as it adhered to a policy of audism. Hearing people thought themselves to be superior to Deaf people and the institution of the church supported this mistaken view, firstly, in its neglect of the deaf, secondly, in its later educational and pastoral ministries with the Deaf.

In upholding phonocentrism, the Church was unable to reflect more deeply on St Augustine's insight that communication was possible through signs and gestures. They were truly *verba visibilia*. The Church also never fully made the link between the value of sign language used in the monasteries and the natural sign language of Deaf people. The Church missed an opportunity to learn from its proximity to the Deaf Other.

However, emerging from the 'mud of history'[136] there were times when there moments when responsibility for the Deaf Other or 'the Saying in the Said' was more manifest. In this chapter, I have sought to highlight the transcendent moments or liberatory praxis in the history of Church's ministry to deaf people shifted. This happened with the insight that deaf people could be educated firstly to speak and then later through de l'Épée's methodical signs. Even the Church and de l'Épée himself laboured under the misconception of audism and phonocentrism, nevertheless, it was a turning moment for Deaf people worldwide. De l'Épée was fêted by Deaf people after the French Revolution for making sign language socially acceptable. His manual approach to deaf education opened the way for deaf people to become teachers in schools for the deaf. Deaf people found a greater sense of self-confidence and self-belief after the Revolution. There was the flourishing of Deaf culture and art during this period too.

However, during the nineteenth century the distorted phonocentric understanding of the human person as rational and speaking persisted. This happened despite the inroads Deaf

[135] Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 87.
[136] Wyschogrod, 'Heterological history,' 2.

people had made in overcoming prejudice against them in both church and society after the French Revolution. Phonocentrism and audism were strengthened by the new scientific discoveries of evolution and the pseudo-science of eugenics. Hearing and able-bodied people, like Alexander Graham Bell, advocated for the oral method of deaf education rather than de l'Épée's manual method. The culmination of the shift happened with the Milan Congress in 1880 which was a hearing dominated conference where Deaf perspectives were ignored and side-lined. Hearing and able-bodied people never thought they had anything to learn from the Deaf or the disabled. Many of the advocates for the oral method were Catholic priests from Italy who had started their own schools for the deaf. The Catholic approach to deaf education shifted accordingly. We will take up this theme in chapter 5 when we will look at this shift within the South African context.

The pseudo-science of eugenics led to the inhumanity and abuses of Jewish people but also the deaf and disabled during the Second World War. The Catholic Church raised its head above the parapet in condemning the Nazi excesses in experimenting upon, sterilising and murder of people with disabilities including deaf people. This was another moment of transcendence or liberatory praxis in relation to the Deaf Other. Bishop van Galen's act of bravery was not extended to all others, especially not to the Jewish population who were the most affected by this brutality.

In Catholic ministry to the deaf the ambiguity between phonocentrism and its openness to the use of sign language in its ministry persisted. In the next chapter we will deepen our understanding of the philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas and its applicability to understanding Catholic ministry to the deaf in apartheid South Africa.

Chapter 4 Totality, apartheid and the Church

4.0. Introduction

In chapter 2, the newspaper article and the photograph of the Dominican Sister and the deaf child provided a pedagogic tool to help in outlining Levinas' philosophy. The focus was on delineating Levinas' philosophy in relation to the experience of the Deaf Other. In this chapter, I recall this article and photograph but instead of drawing out further insights from it, I will now focus on what is not present in this text. The focus is not so much on what was written or portrayed in the photograph but rather on what was missing in the interaction between the teacher and her pupil. Nothing intrinsic to the picture shows that the interaction between teacher and pupil took place in South Africa. If taken on its own, without reference to the article or explanation, this photograph could easily have been taken in Europe, North America or even Australia.

The missing element is the Black Other which apartheid, through its legislation and policies, sought to keep invisible from the South African political picture. Black people were not considered part of white South Africa. Apartheid policies sought ways to exclude them and eliminate them from the utopia of a purely white South Africa. In Levinas' terminology, this exclusion was the white response to the Black Other as murder or attempted murder, to eliminate black people from the picture. Black people were absent from this photograph because Catholic schools for the deaf as well as Catholic churches were segregated according to apartheid laws like the Group Areas Act. Black and white went to separate schools, sat on separate benches, entered government offices and post offices through separate doors, travelled to work and back in separate buses and trains. The focus of this chapter will be to understand the totality of apartheid in its violent, exclusionary and totalising attempts to exclude the Black Other from the picture of South African life.

I will proceed by, firstly, exploring the triangular relationship between being deaf, apartheid and Levinas' philosophy that forms the crux of this chapter. Secondly, I will then investigate how Levinas could assist with understanding apartheid as a totality. Thirdly, I will look at how Levinas' understanding of politics and resistance may help to understand social

transformation otherwise than being, or beyond totality. Finally, I will consider the significance of Levinas for apartheid studies.

4.1. Deafness, apartheid and Levinas

This historical study focuses on the triangular relationship between deafness, apartheid and Levinas. In this chapter, I reflect on apartheid. Apartheid is the backdrop to the events detailed in this study. I will show how apartheid itself functioned as a totality though differently from that of audism. Levinas never applied his thought to the issue of deafness and neither did he consider the situation of apartheid.

Apartheid was a system that pretended to recognise difference and alterity. Levinas will be employed to illustrate why apartheid failed to respect the alterity of the Black Other. Levinas' thinking will also assist our reflection on how apartheid was a racist, exploitative, oppressive and dehumanising regime. It functioned to protect white people's interests and not those of black people. For these reasons, it was condemned worldwide as institutionalised racism and a heresy.[1]

Apartheid shaped Catholic ministry to Deaf people. It was the context in which this ministry took place. Catholic schools for the deaf were segregated in line with government policies. Three government education departments[2] played a significant role in shaping the curriculum of schools for the deaf but, more importantly, the medium of instruction through which education was imparted was racially determined. Apartheid thinking also affected the perspectives and attitudes of the predominantly white immigrant Dominican sisters from Ireland or Germany as well as the attitudes of the white hearing priests who ministered to black deaf Catholics. Sometimes they perpetuated apartheid thinking and in other instances

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[1] See John de Gruchy and Charles Villa-Vicencio (eds), *Apartheid is a heresy*, (Cape Town, David Philip/Guildford, Lutterworth Press, 1983). Also helpful is Richard Elphick, *The equality of believers: Protestant missionaries and the racial politics of South Africa*, (Charlottesville/London: University of Virginia Press, 2012); Saul Dubow, *Apartheid 1948-1994*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); Deborah Posel, *The Making of apartheid, 1948-1961: Conflict and compromise*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997); Thiven Reddy, *Hegemony and resistance: Contesting identities in South Africa*, (Aldershot/Burlington: Ashgate, 2000) and David Welsh, *The rise and fall of apartheid*, (Johannesburg/Cape Town: Jonathan Ball, 2009).

[2] These were the Department of Education, Arts and Culture for white schools, the Department of Coloured Education for Coloured Schools, and the Department of Bantu Education and later changed to the Department of Education of Training (DET) for African Schools.

contradicted apartheid. Nevertheless, ministry to the Deaf in South Africa was unavoidably affected and infected by the racial attitudes prevalent during the period of apartheid.

Apartheid was the context that shaped deaf ministry and deaf education in South Africa. Similarly, Levinas' philosophy was shaped by the memory and the trauma of the Shoah.[3] Comparisons have often been made between apartheid and the Shoah.

The most obvious similarity was the racial discrimination that both Black people and Jewish people had to suffer and endure. African people were forced to live in homelands and to work as unskilled labourers, while Jewish people were forced to live in impoverished ghettoes and forced to wear yellow armbands. There was a major difference in the way that apartheid and Nazism treated those they marginalised. African people were subjected to a marginalised existence in the homelands, their only value to the white economy being their cheap labour whereas the Nazi engaged in genocide and the attempt at a complete extermination of all Jewish people.[4]

In a similar way, the history of deaf people has been marked by similar totalising events, for example, the Milan Conference of 1880, which resolved that the oral method of education was far superior to deaf education through sign language. During the Second World War, numerous deaf people were sterilised or died in the concentration camps because they were perceived to be defective human beings. The wearing of blue ribbons during the month of Deaf Awareness every September has been introduced to remember those deaf people who suffered under Nazism.

Before discussing apartheid, it is important to first reflect briefly on how the Shoah influenced Levinas' philosophy and worldview.

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[3] Following Anya Topolski, *Arendt, Levinas and a politics of relationality*, xiii footnote 1, xviii: I have decided to use the word Shoah rather than Holocaust. Shoah is a Hebrew word meaning calamity or destruction and is less offensive to Jewish people than the word holocaust. Holocaust is derived from Greek meaning a 'burnt offering.'

[4] See Juliette Peires, *The Holocaust and apartheid: Similarities and differences, A comparative study*, (Unpublished Master of Arts thesis, University of Cape Town, South Africa, 2004). Accessed 23 November 2018. url: https://open.uct.ac.za/bitstream/handle/11427/6743/thesis_hum_2004_peires_j.pdf?sequence=1.

4.1.1. Levinas and the Shoah

Levinas dedicated both his major books, *Totality and Infinity* (1961) and *Otherwise than Being* (1974), to the victims of the Shoah.[5] In his writings he was loath to discuss and reflect upon these events. Nevertheless, most of his philosophy stemmed from this experience as this was the context that transformed his thinking. Eaglestone pointed out that so many of the concepts Levinas developed and the allusions he made in his writings constantly remind one of the extreme conditions of life in a concentration camp. They carry traces of the Shoah.[6] Images he used in this writings, like *il y a* (there is), described the anonymous, harsh, life-threatening and disturbing reality of life lived without the ethical relation, he described the good life of the self as a life of 'good soup and bread', the responsibility for the Other as 'persecution' or being 'held hostage', and the need for a person to learn 'the just war against war.'[7] These are just a few to make a point but there are many other allusions to the camps in his writings. Without focusing on it, Levinas was able to capture the trauma of life affected by the Shoah. His major philosophical task was how to renew philosophy, how to engage in politics and how to understand history, after the Shoah? This was the fundamental challenge that Levinas set himself. In a parallel way, the entry point for this dissertation is the trauma or the *il y a* of phonocentrism and audism.

As we saw in the last chapter, Levinas was not against philosophy, politics or history. Rather he talked about a renewed understanding of philosophy or rationality as well as a different way of living politically, however difficult and limited this may prove to be. He held a similar view of history. For Levinas the problem with history was that:

> [t]he judgment of history is set forth in the visible. Historical events are the visible par excellence; their truth is produced in evidence. The visible forms, or tends to form, a totality. It excludes the apology, which undoes the totality in inserting into it, at each instant, the unsurpassable, unencompassable present of its very subjectivity.[8]

For Levinas, history is often written with a specific understanding of truth in mind. It is the understanding of truth which is correspondence to reality. This is taken to be evidence and is

[5] Howard Caygill, *Levinas and the political*, (London: Routledge, 2002), 1, 5.
[6] Eaglestone, *The Holocaust and the postmodern*, 256.
[7] See Eaglestone, *The Holocaust and the postmodern*, 255-266.
[8] Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 243.

used to fit the historian's, the philosopher's, the politician's or even a cleric's specific way of seeing the world. For Levinas, this approach is a comprehending of the world of the Other and fitting the Other into one's own frames of reference. In this respect, Levinas' understanding of history anticipated some of the perspectives of the post-modernists who were concerned that history cannot tell the truth of the past but only the truth from one's own perspective. There is no absolute truth that does not first have to pass through the language and culture from which it emerged. While Levinas would have no argument with Foucault's assertion that knowledge is power or Derrida's concern for deconstruction, his concern was shaped not by the 'linguistic turn' but rather the ethical one.

For Levinas, history is the story of how the Other becomes an event and their particularity as unique human beings and individuals is ignored. 'For there can be no place for singularity in a totality.'[9] For Levinas, singularity was 'the idea that each human being is a unique, irreplaceable self, irreducible to any of the attributes or qualities that could be used to describe her and that would inevitably reduce her to what she has in common with others.'[10] The person should not be reduced to a representation of their race, creed, sexuality or class. Each singular being is an ethical being with human worth and dignity. If history is to be ethical it must give an account of the singular suffering neighbour standing before the self. Failure to do this means that history continues the story of totality, the story of humanity's inhumane dealings with the Other.

4.2. Levinas' understanding of totality

As I reflected upon in chapter 2, totality, for Levinas understood as the 'whole'. The 'whole' experience of living in the world is that human life is comprised of a unity of two different but interrelated dimensions of life: totality and infinity.[11] The first way to describe and understand totality is to see it as referring to everyday life, or what Levinas called economy.[12] Economy is the self getting on with the daily task of living. This experience Levinas described as

[9] Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 244.
[10] Perpich, 'Levinas, feminism and identity politics,' 29.
[11] Morgan, *The Cambridge introduction to Levinas*, 103.
[12] Morgan, *The Cambridge introduction to Levinas*, 102.

nourishment and enjoyment.[13] The self lives by good soup, spectacles and a warm bed.[14] All these things feed life.[15] This is good and all people need this.

However, for Levinas, everyday life and economic existence also include the encounter with the face of the Other. This is the second way where the encounter with the face of the Other is 'a way of being related to another person'[16] and all the other people in a shared world. This shared world is where we interact with countless others who also face us. The Other is non-phenomenonal but represented by the suffering, the vulnerable or in Biblical terms the widow, the orphan and the foreigner. The Other has needs which call the self's economy into question. It calls for a generous response.[17] This response and taking responsibility for the Other, is what Levinas referred to as hospitality.[18] The face of the Other or infinity breaches the totality of the self's world from its own enjoyment to hospitality.

Without things to give and to share from the self's economy means that generosity is not possible. Without the Other, all we have are just things and not gifts or 'giveables' that can be shared.[19] 'This social world is "the whole" that is the venue for justice.'[20] Justice is not just to impose impersonal laws on others but is to act justly and hospitably in relation to the person or persons who face us in daily life. In this respect, 'economic existence – everyday life in the world – and responsible hospitality or kindness, then, are two points of view on the same human existence, on social and interpersonal human life.'[21]

The second use of totality is linked to the first, but where totality after encountering the face persists in self-interest or what Levinas termed 'being-persisting-in-being.'[22] The self refuses to acknowledge the transcendent face of the Other. The self is consumed by its own economy without reference to the Other or relates to the Other only to grasp, comprehend or assimilate the Other to realise its own needs or economy.

[13] Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 127-130.
[14] Morgan, *The Cambridge introduction to Levinas*, 104.
[15] Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 110-111.
[16] Morgan, *The Cambridge introduction to Levinas*, 107.
[17] Morgan, *The Cambridge introduction to Levinas*, 105.
[18] Ibid, 105.
[19] Ibid, 105.
[20] Ibid, 108.
[21] Ibid, 105.
[22] Levinas, *Entre Nous*, xii.

Levinas called these attempts to comprehend or grasp the Other – ontology. In philosophy, ontology is the study of being or that which exists. Levinas' criticism of ontology was a critique of the views of philosophers from Hobbes and Descartes onwards, who argued that the basic orientation of being and the self was the will to live, to invest in self-interest and self-preservation. Spinoza referred to this as the *conatus essendi*.[23] For Levinas, this way of perceiving being as self-interest has tainted Western philosophy going back to the Greeks especially Aristotle. As we saw in the previous chapter, Aristotle's thinking on ethics was shaped by a concern for the preservation of the city-state elite like himself. Aristotle thought that the true human being was an educated, thinking and rational individual like himself. He considered women, children, slaves, foreigners and the disabled to be inferior human beings. For Levinas, this was an expression of the self-interest that lies at the heart of totality.

In this respect, Levinas contradicted the idea that human beings are to be understood only as natural beings or pure beings[24] competing in a contest for their own survival. We are not beings who only act out of self-interest. To be just for oneself without regard for the welfare of the Other, for Levinas, was a description of war,[25] not of a society of human beings. This approach to philosophy from self-interest, according to Levinas, was also evident in Heidegger's thought.

Heidegger was one of the philosophers who developed a new understanding of ontology. Heidegger argued that being is never being-in-isolation but always being-in-the-world.[26] Being-in-the-world was also being-with-others or in German *miteinandersein*.[27] However, being-with-others could lead to an inauthentic way of life if one conformed to a group mentality. It was preferable to become individuated, to become one's own person. The human being as being-in-the-world achieved authenticity by separating off from the group and become aware of their own identity and their purpose in the world.

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[23] Richard J Bernstein, 'Evil and the temptation of theodicy,' in *The Cambridge companion to Levinas*, edited by Simon Critchley and Robert Bernasconi, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 263.
[24] Bernstein, 'Evil and theodicy,' 264.
[25] 'In war beings refuse to belong to a totality, refuse community, refuse law; no frontier stops one being by another nor defines them. They affirm themselves as transcending the totality, each identifying itself not by its place in the whole, but by its *self*.' See Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 222.
[26] Roy Hornsby, 'What Heidegger means by Being-in-the-world,' url: www.royby.com/philosophy/pages/dasein.html.
[27] Levinas, *Entre Nous*, 6.

Initially, Levinas was influenced by Heidegger's philosophical approach but after Heidegger's flirtation with Nazism, Levinas saw this as another philosophy of totality. Heidegger's argument for authenticity was another example of the *conatus essendi* and a denial of alterity and, as a result, it was hostile to the Other. Authenticity as living for oneself was another form of self-interest. Others are seen not in themselves but in relation to one's capacity to achieve self-actualisation. Levinas saw Heidegger's philosophy as another attempt to possess and grasp the other within the framework of one's own thinking. This was an exercise of power over the Other. For Levinas, 'possessing, knowing and grasping are synonyms for power.'[28] In totality, power is exerted over and against the other and not for the good of the other as in infinity.

For Levinas, traditional Western thinking was typified 'by the tendency to value unity over multiplicity, identity over difference, sameness over otherness, order over chaos.'[29] Within this framework, it is the one who has power, the self, who would decide what constituted that unity, that synthesis and the self usually did this for reasons of self-preservation and for their own good. Self-preservation was privileged at the expense of alterity and the needs of the Other. I use my freedom, my power, to determine what I consider to be good for myself and others like me.

Instead, Levinas argued that we are responsible to others before we are free. In summarising Levinas, Morgan explained that 'our responsibility to other persons is what makes our lives good ones. It is not our capacity to act freely and rationally that does so.' The face of the Other challenges my putting myself first. People are *human* beings. Being a human being means to recognise that, before or prior to being free to act, I am already responsible for the Other.

Another problem, for Levinas, was that Heidegger's ontology of being was that it lacked 'the philosophical resources for confronting the non-integratable malignancy of evil.'[30] When the self persists in its own egoistic pursuits without regard for the Other, it commits murder, it acts in an evil way. 'If I act as if I were a being whose sole concern is with the preservation of my own being (or even with Being), then I commit an evil act.'[31] For Bernstein, Levinas' entire

[28] Levinas, *Time and the Other*, 90.
[29] Schroeder, *Altared ground*, 1.
[30] Bernstein, 'Evil and theodicy,' 262.
[31] Bernstein, 'Evil and theodicy,' 265.

philosophical approach is best understood as developing 'an *ethical* response to evil,'[32] especially the evils of the twentieth century.[33] This means that one can only become fully human when one responds ethically to the evil being inflicted upon fellow human beings.[34]

I will now attempt to show how Levinas' philosophy can assist in reflecting on social relations and political systems. Levinas' philosophy is also political thinking.[35] In the following section, I will investigate how apartheid in South Africa corresponded to Levinas' understanding of totality, how it was an 'imperialism of the same'[36] and an act of evil.

4.3. Apartheid as totality

The modern South African state emerged after the Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902. The war resulted after British colonial interests attempted to wrest control of the rich goldfields of the Witwatersrand from the Boer Republic of the Transvaal. After the British triumph, a period of post-war reconstruction was instituted. Britain sought to fashion and shape South African life, and to address an inadequate supply of labour to build up its new colony's economy.

4.3.1. Deliberating on the 'Native Question'

In 1903, the South African Native Affairs Commission (SANAC), chaired by Godfrey Lagden,[37] was established to deliberate on the so-called 'Native Question.' The 'Native Question' had been considered a 'problem' for colonial administrators, white settlers and missionaries for many years as black people were perceived to be uncivilised, lazy, indolent and unwilling to work.[38] The commission's mandate was to discuss issues related to land tenure, the education and training of the native people to equip them for work, as well as to discuss issues of

[32] Ibid, 253.
[33] Ibid, 257.
[34] Ibid, 263.
[35] Minister, *De-facing the Other*,
[36] Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 39.
[37] Godfrey Lagden was the Transvaal's Commissioner for Native Affairs in the post-Boer war British colonial administration. See Philippe Denis, 'A Case of pastoral myopia? The South African Church's ambiguous response to the erosion of family life in the early years of the migrant labor system,' *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 50, 3, (2017), 448.
[38] On the role of missionaries, see Richard Elphick, *The equality of believers*, 101-103; and Philippe Denis, 'Abbot Pfanner, the Glen Grey Act and the Native question,' *South African Historical Journal*, 67, 3, (2015), 271-292.

administration especially related to marriage and issues of polygamy. The commission met for two years and presented its report to the government in January 1905.[39]

Three unquestioned assumptions marked the thinking of many of those called to give expert testimony. The first assumption was that 'self-interest would guide the colonial enterprise.'[40] The second one was that that the economic needs and interests of the colony came first, above those of African people;[41] and the third assumption, especially among some of the missionaries who gave testimony, was that African people needed to learn the value of work.[42] The commission never reflected on the negative impact that their decisions would make on the life of African people, especially on family life.

> The possible damage to the cohesion of the African family that migrant labor would bring about was justified in advance by the need to fuel the colonial economy through the introduction of cheap labor to commercial farms, mines and industrial centres.[43]

The focus of deliberations was on economic development. The debates about 'civilising the native' were centred around ensuring that they contribute their labour to meet the needs of a developing colonial economy. The official discourses of SANAC reiterated that an adequate labour supply, required for gold-mining, could only be achieved if 'native society' was reorganised and the 'native personality' transformed so that the 'natives' would avail themselves to become useful workers.[44] The commission amounted to an exercise in extending state power and control over the 'native'. Issues concerning the 'native' were treated 'as technical matters of administration; problems requiring rational solution. Hence, the persistently emphasized need for "experts".'[45] These experts were considered to have specialised knowledge that would enable the state to master the world that it had to govern.

In analysing the discourses at SANAC, Ashforth suggested that the philosophical assumptions underlying this approach came from modern western thought which emphasised 'the values and techniques of mastery: mastery of "Man" over "Nature"; mastery of the state over the

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[39] Denis, 'A Case of pastoral myopia,' 448.
[40] Denis, 'A Case of pastoral myopia,' 449.
[41] Ibid.
[42] Ibid, 457-458.
[43] Denis, 'A Case of pastoral myopia,' 449.
[44] Ashforth, *The politics of official discourse*, 23.
[45] Ashforth, *The politics of official discourse*, 2.

social world.'[46] Thus, knowledge was used to exercise power over the indigenous African people, in such a way, that they could be made into docile bodies serving the interests of the colonial government. For Ashforth, this state-appointed commission functioned as a scheme of legitimation.

> Schemes of legitimation can be seen in attempts to systematize the principles underlying policy, to provide explanations of the necessary, possible, and desirable ends of state power.[47]

Besides SANAC's concern to provide labour for the growing economy, the commission also provided insights into the churches' role in the commission. Reflecting on the churches and the missionary contributions to the commission, Philippe Denis, a historian of Christianity, suggested that the missionaries suffered from 'pastoral myopia.'[48] The majority of the missionaries who testified either advocated that African people needed to learn the importance of being industrious, and so saw labouring in the cities as good for Africans, or they criticised life in the cities because of the immorality that African people learnt there.[49] None of them paid any attention to the signs, that were already present at the time, of the detrimental effects that the migrant labour system was having on African family life.[50] Those who did criticise the exploitation of African workers in the cities were only the African ministers or African-American missionaries.[51]

The myopia was broader than just being pastoral, the SANAC revealed the myopia of understanding the Other through the lens of self-interest or to use Levinas' term: totality. African people were to be shaped into becoming useful and productive contributors to the white colonial economy. Little attention or consideration was given to the interests of the African community. The SANAC report, as Denis pointed out, 'prepared the way of the Native Labour Regulation Act of 1911, which gave a legislative framework to the migrant labor

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[46] Ashforth, *The politics of official discourse*, 5.
[47] Ashforth, *The politics of official discourse*, 8.
[48] Denis, 'A Case of pastoral myopia,' 448.
[49] Denis, 'A Case of pastoral myopia,' 455.
[50] Denis, 'A Case of pastoral myopia,' 457.
[51] Some exceptions were the contributions of the indigenous ministers or missionaries from the African Methodist Episcopal Church, an African American church present in SA. See Denis, 'A Case of pastoral myopia,' 458.

system, and the Natives Land Act of 1913, which institutionalised land dispossession and segregation.'[52]

4.3.2. Segregation

Segregation was the term given to the policy that resulted from the implementation of the SANAC Report. The Union government's policies of segregation established racially separated areas of land, separate political representation for whites and blacks, and encouraged the supply of black labour for the benefit of the mines and industry. The impoverishment of the African reserves and the demand for unskilled labour for the mines led to the increased urbanisation of black people.[53] This, in turn, affected the attitudes of many white people who feared being swamped and overwhelmed by the growing number of black people in urban areas. Increased African worker militancy and resistance to government policies, after the First World War, contributed to increased calls by whites for the segregation of the races.

The theories of eugenics and social Darwinism also influenced white attitudes towards African people. These theories reinforced white prejudices of racial superiority.[54] There were growing calls that white people, especially poorer whites, be housed and educated separately from black people to prevent miscegenation and racial degeneration. The Union government, in 1923, passed the Urban Areas Act which entrenched the industrial colour bar and restricted the African presence in the white areas to 'ministering to the needs of whites.'[55]

While whites were in agreement with the need for segregation, there were contested understandings of segregation.[56] The two protagonists were General Hertzog of the National

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[52] Denis, 'A Case of pastoral myopia,' 448.
[53] Martin Legassick, 'British hegemony and the origins of segregation in South Africa, 1901-14,' in William Beinart and Saul Dubow (eds), *Segregation and apartheid in twentieth century South Africa*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), 47-48.
[54] Saul Dubow, 'The elaboration of segregationist ideology,' in William Beinart and Saul Dubow (eds), *Segregation and apartheid in twentieth century South Africa*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), 156-157. For the influence of eugenics within the churches, see Linda Naicker, 'The role of eugenics and religion in the construction of race in South Africa,' *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae*, 38, 2, December 2012, 209-220.
[55] Dubow, 'The elaboration,' 168.
[56] Using the anthropology of Claude Levi-Strauss, Zygmunt Bauman distinguished between the anthropophagic and anthropoemic strategies at work in societies. Phagic strategies are those strategies that eat up or devour strangers in the sense of incorporating them or assimilating them into society and whereas emic strategies are to vomit up or exclude strangers in society by placing them in camps or exiling them. Bauman suggested that both can be operative at the same time. For more on Bauman's use of these strategies in social space, see Zygmunt Bauman, *Postmodern Ethics*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), 163-165.

Party and General Jan Smuts of the United Party.[57] Hertzog's understanding of segregation was exclusionary as it was employed to justify policies like the white 'civilised labour' policy, the industrial colour bar and the abolition of the Cape franchise for black and coloured people. Hertzog's view emphasised 'the economic and political exclusion of Africans from a common society.'[58] In contrast, Smuts understood segregation as a policy of gradual cultural adaptation and the assimilation of a black elite.

The basis for the differences in understanding segregation can be better understood if I turn briefly to the concept of trusteeship which became prominent after the First World War and which was employed to address the ‘race question.’

4.3.3. Trusteeship

Alfred Hoernlé, a leading liberal in the 1930s and 1940s, was head of the department of philosophy at the University of the Witwatersrand and president of the South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR). He was also an advocate for trusteeship. He criticised minority rule and the domination of white people over the majority of black people in South Africa. In 1945, he criticised the segregationist policy of the United Party which, he said, sought to maintain white domination over the black majority.[59] He also criticised racial discrimination. It was rife, he said, because white people believed they were racially superior to black people. Consequently, they believed that they had to the right to govern so that western civilisation could be maintained.

In contrast to the domination of the black majority, Hoernlé wanted the government to exercise trusteeship or guardianship over the black majority. Trusteeship, made popular by the Treaty of Versailles after the First World War, was considered a more enlightened way to govern than that of domination. Hoernlé’s view of trusteeship was that white people had the:

> moral responsibility for the development of the non-European peoples which have come under European rule; that it looked upon domination by White trustees as essentially temporary and transitory, and destined to give way either to the admission

[57] Dubow, ‘The elaboration,’ 167.
[58] Dubow, ‘The elaboration,’ 167.
[59] Alfred Hoernlé, *The South African native policy and the liberal spirit* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1945).

> of the non-White wards into free and equal partnership with their White trustees; or else to their independence in self-governing communities, released from White over-lordship.[60]

His idea of trusteeship was a very broad concept. Trusteeship could be realised in one of three ways: parallelism, total assimilation or total separation. Parallelism was envisaged as a policy of parallel development for each race group. Each group would have parallel institutions and opportunities with inter-racial collaboration for the interests of the state. Total assimilation was where all differences eventually disappear as a new culture emerged. African people would be assimilated into Western ways. However, this had to be done gradually so that under white guidance black people can be sufficiently educated and civilised to warrant equal rights. Total separation was where there is no interaction at all between the race groups. Each group functioned independently of the other.

Liberals usually argued for the gradual assimilation of an educated black elite as a way to distance themselves from the total separation and segregationist approach of Hertzog.

Within the Catholic Church, there was great support for the idea of trusteeship as a solution to South Africa's racial problems. Trusteeship was seen as a liberal alternative to segregation and allowed for the 'gradual inclusion of suitably "matured" blacks into white society.[61] In 1937, the influential Archbishop Hinsley of Westminister[62] gave a talk in Leeds entitled 'The Trusteeship for Backward Races in Africa.'[63] As a solution to the problems being experienced in the African colonies between white and coloured people, Hinsley suggested that collective trusteeship was 'the only just and peaceful, as well as the most profitable system, which advanced peoples can adopt in dealing with races of lower development…'[64] The moral responsibility that the colonial powers had to be acknowledged. 'The relation between the cultured European and the primitive African should be that of a more matured person to one

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[60] Hoernlé, *The South African native policy*, 65.
[61] James Cochrane, *Servants of Power: The role of the English-speaking Churches in South Africa, 1903-1930*, (Johannesburg: Ravan Press), 139.
[62] Archbishop Hinsley came to South Africa in 1928 as an Apostolic Visitator. He came to inspect the state of the Catholic Church in South Africa and submitted his report to Pope Pius XI. See William Eric Brown, The Catholic Church in South Africa: From its origins to the present day, (London: Burns and Oates, 1960), 339.
[63] Hinsley's article was reproduced in *The Southern Cross*. See 'International Board for Africa?' *The Southern Cross*, 24 February 1937, 11/147.
[64] Ibid.

in the stage of childhood.'[65] This new attitude of wise statesmanship was far better than imperialism and had deep roots in international law resulting from the Spanish conquest of Latin America where the writings of the Dominicans, Vittoria and Las Casas. They advocated this approach against the land-grabbing of the Spanish colonists. An international board of colonial powers should be set up to secure the moral governing of the African colonies and to ensure that 'the "Trustee" must be to fit his charge as soon as possible for the responsibilities of self-government.'[66]

At the same time in South Africa, Fr Oliver Clark OP, an English missionary and Dominican priest was promoting Christian trusteeship in his work with mineworkers on the East Rand from 1937 to 1948. During this period, he called on the mine-owners to pay a fair wage, to give sick pay to miners injured while on duty and to build school classrooms for miners so they could attend evening classes and upgrade their qualifications.[67]

In June 1952, the Catholic Bishops released a statement on race relations that coincided with the 300th anniversary of white colonisation of the Cape.[68] The 'Statement on Race Relations' was the first joint statement made by the bishops on political issues in South Africa. It addressed the issue of racial discrimination and discriminatory legislation against non-whites.[69] The document revealed its trusteeship agenda when it stated that 'while it was accepted that non-whites must make an effort to improve themselves, "justice demanded", that they be "permitted to evolve gradually towards full participation in the political, economic and cultural life of the country."'[70]

These statements that the liberal agenda of some of the bishops and priests of the Catholic Church were significantly influenced by trusteeship thinking. The Nationalist government in 1948 looked upon trusteeship with hostility as it would eventually lead to the integration of

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[65] Ibid.
[66] Ibid.
[67] Philippe Denis, *The Dominican Friars in Southern Africa: A social history 1577-1990*, (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 244-245.
[68] John de Gruchy, *The Church struggle in South Africa*, second edition, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans/Cape Town: David Philip, 1979, 1986), 98.
[69] Garth Abraham, *The Catholic Church and apartheid, 1948-1957*, (Unpublished Master of Arts thesis, University of Natal, Durban, 1984), 63.
[70] Garth Abraham, *The Catholic Church and apartheid*, 63.

black people into white society. This was completely unacceptable. They proposed that the alternative to trusteeship must be apartheid.

4.3.4. Apartheid as the rejection of *gelykstelling*[71]

During the colonial period, the British colonial government of the Cape Colony granted internal political autonomy to an assembly elected by a qualified franchise of male voters, white or black, who owned property.[72] Some black people saw this as the way to attain equality with whites and so enrolled in missionary schools. English-speaking church schools became the primary means by which the new African elite could be educated. This liberal approach was strongly encouraged throughout the churches. In the Catholic Church it was encouraged, until the end of 1960s, by leaders like Archbishop Denis Hurley[73] and clerics like Fr Colin Collins and Finbar Synnott OP. This approach was also encouraged in other churches like the Anglican Church with leaders like Archbishop Clayton.[74]

Even under General Smuts and the United Party, the policy of segregation was moving in the direction of a gradual assimilation of an elite group of 'educated' black people into white South African society. This worried the Afrikaner Nationalists. When the National Party won the white general election in 1948, they made it clear that they were against all attempts at the gradual assimilation of the African people and especially the mission schools that advocated it. For Elphick, the roots of apartheid or separate development can be traced back to the conflicts that arose with the success of the Dutch Reformed Church's (DRC) missionary strategy to evangelise coloured and African people.[75] In 1857, white members of the DRC did not want black people worshipping with them in the same church. Therefore, it was decreed at a church synod that due to the weakness of some, the different races would worship in different church buildings.[76]

[71] See Elphick, *The equality of believers*, 44, 178: '*Gelykstelling* is a concept that embodied both the equality of races as well as the uniformity of cultures.'
[72] Elphick, *The equality of believers*, 3.
[73] Denis Hurley, 'School integration,' *The Southern Cross*, 22 June 1960, 5/295.
[74] Michael Worsnip, *Between the two fires: The Anglican Church and apartheid* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1991), 49-59.
[75] Elphick, *The equality of believers*, 43-45.
[76] Elphick, *The equality of believers*, 45.

Apartheid policy focused on stopping what the National Party perceived as the United Party’s integrating black people into city life and granting them urban rights. Black people could have rights in their own areas but not in the white urban areas. The National Party saw this gradualist integration, or what they called *gelykstelling*, as a threat to white people's future.

In September 1948, the South African Bureau of Racial Affairs (SABRA) was established at the University of Stellenbosch to think more clearly about how apartheid and separate development could be implemented.[77] SABRA criticised the United Party’s liberal policy of gradual integration. African people were not to be integrated into western society but allowed to develop their languages and cultures separately. Africans were different and inferior. Apartheid policies would be marked by attitudes that promoted differentiated exclusion. They argued for a complete separation between the races where African people would have separate development in the reserves and not in white areas. Apartheid provided an alternative vision of how whites could be at-home in their own economy in comparison to the gradual integrationist one.

The visionaries in SABRA argued that if total apartheid or separation was to succeed then whites would need to make 'large sacrifices.'[78] More land, investment and financial resources should be allocated to the reserves to make them economically viable. In this regard, apartheid was trusteeship as separate development. It promoted the idea of the development of races along separate but supposedly 'equal' lines. These territories should be on par with white South Africa. This total separation trusteeship approach was called 'total apartheid' but it never became mainstream in the political arena. The political implications of setting aside enormous amounts of financial resources for the development of the reserves was more than the National Party leadership could bear. Appointed in 1956, the Tomlinson Commission’s prediction that an amount of £104 million would be required over a ten-year period to make the reserves viable was rejected by the government. Even though the government was accepted separate development, it rejected the idea of total apartheid as it

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[77] See John Lazar, 'The role of the South African Bureau of Racial Affairs (SABRA) in the formulation of apartheid ideology, 1948-1961,' *Collected Seminar Papers, Institute of Commonwealth Studies*, 37, 96-109.
[78] Lazar, 'The role of SABRA,' 98.

was considered impractical and extremely costly.[79] So, in effect, they accepted that apartheid was a system to privilege whites and impoverish black people.

In the interests of the dominant white minority, interaction between the races was kept to a minimum. Black people were forced to live in their own tribally distinct homeland areas separate from whites in the cities. The only permissible interaction between these economies was that black people would be welcomed as 'guests' in the white areas, for as long as they were able to provide their labour power for the benefit of the white economy. This was a devious lie as black people were never made to feel welcome or offered any hospitality in white South Africa. They had to carry passbooks, known as the *dompas*, and had a curfew where they had to leave the white areas by a certain time each evening. Failure to comply would arrest and given a fine or even imprisonment.

Among the churches, it was the white DRC church which was the staunchest supporter of apartheid and separate development. In fact, it replicated the racial structure of apartheid in establishing separated racially-based churches.[80] The English-speaking churches and the Catholic Church maintained a united church without racial divides. However, they were equally affected by apartheid as congregations and parishes were divided racially due to living in segregated areas. Many of the whites in these churches supported apartheid.[81]

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, most of these church leaders were ambivalent in their response to apartheid.[82] They were willing to protest against some of the legislation passed by the apartheid government by writing statements condemning apartheid. However, bishops and clergy baulked at the idea of being actively involved in campaigns, like the Defiance Campaign, which involved direct conflict with the state when people marched and burnt the detested *dompas* at police stations and government offices.[83]

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[79] Lazar, 'The role of SABRA,' 101.
[80] Philippe Denis, 'The Christian response to apartheid in South Africa,' A talk given to the Brazilian Justice and Peace Commission, (Unpublished paper, 2014), 2.
[81] A key example was the protest of white Catholics against the ordination of Bishop Dlamini, the first black bishop in South Africa, on 26 April 1954. As bishop of Umzimkulu his diocese included the white towns of Margate, Port Shepstone and Harding. White Catholics were called upon to unite in protest to 'KEEP YOUR CHURCH *WHITE*.' See Abraham, *The Catholic Church and apartheid*, 86-87.
[82] Denis, 'The Christian response to apartheid,' 3.
[83] See Mark James, *The history and spirituality of the lay Dominicans in South Africa, 1948-1994*, (Unpublished Master's thesis, University of KwaZulu-Natal, 2008), 108.

4.3.5. Afrikaner nationalism

Hermann Gillomee, an Afrikaner sociologist and historian, presented a perspective of apartheid from the Afrikaner perspective. For him, apartheid was initially a rational 'attempt to reconcile the demands of white survival and justice.'[84] Afrikaners recognised that whites were a minority within South Africa, and so for them to survive, they needed to be separated from the black majority. Integration was going to lead to the demise of the white race. However, among Afrikaners there was also the awareness that justice had to be practiced towards black people. The idea developed that black people should be granted the same self-determination that Afrikaners demanded for themselves, but within their own areas. Afrikaners resisted assimilation into British culture and so believed that Africans and Black people should be free to practice their own cultural traditions without fear of assimilation.

> Like the Afrikaners, Africans would have their own schools, churches, residential areas, homelands and governments on which they could put their own cultural imprint.[85]

However, justice for black people was considered secondary to the interests of white survival. Survival as a *volk* was viewed as inseparable from maintaining 'racial exclusivity.'[86] Consequently, apartheid policies were developed like the Population Registration Act, the Group Areas Act, and the Immorality Act, among others, which conveyed the message:

> that black and colored people were socially inferior, morally inadequate, intellectually underdeveloped and sexually unfit for intimate relationships.[87]

The major interest was to perpetuate the survival of the Afrikaner *volk* and the white race. The development of apartheid policies along cultural lines was spearheaded by Afrikaner intellectuals operating often from the theories of social and cultural anthropology like Dr W.W.M. Eiselen.[88] He had been a professor of Ethnology and the University of Stellenbosch before drafting the Bantu Education Act of 1953. They saw themselves as giving rational and ‘scientific answers’ to the social problems in the country. Levinas pointed out how a

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[84] Hermann Giliomee, *The Afrikaners: A biography of a people*. (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2003), 461.
[85] Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, 468.
[86] Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, 470.
[87] Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, 470.
[88] See Johannes Seroto, ‘A Revisionist view of the contribution of Dr Eiselen to South African education: New perspectives,’ *Yesterday and Today*, 9 (July 12013), 91-108.

rationality that was devoid of morality or the ethical consideration for the Other was unjust and violent war.[89] These social engineers of apartheid took no cognisance of the attitudes, self-understanding and interests of Black and African people themselves. A prime example of this was National Party leader, Hendrik Verwoerd.

4.3.6. H.F. Verwoerd

H.F. Verwoerd believed implicitly in the value of rationality and its value in good governance. Verwoerd was convinced that it was possible to come up with a rational solution to the problems of South Africa. Verwoerd was convinced that acting according to self-interest was a rational approach to resolving the challenges that South Africa faced. This view of rationality, derived from the capitalist economic tradition, was transformed by Verwoerd and was applied as a political concept for white and Afrikaner nationalist self-interest.[90]

> The language and style of formulation is almost that of Kant – the suppression of the lower aspects of organic conscious life (emotions and passions), in order to allow reason to dominate.[91]

What was good for whites, and initially the Afrikaner, was good for all. So, for him, the preservation of white people would, ultimately be to the benefit of all South Africans, white and black. Verwoerd was convinced that in apartheid, or separate development, he had found the solution to the country's ills. He wanted a white republic that would develop separate black 'states' under white guardianship.[92]

However, as Venter pointed out, this understanding of rationality, when promoted by the powerful over the disempowered, is an argument for the maintenance of privilege of the dominant over the subordinate.[93] Levinas' insight is particularly pertinent in this regard:

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[89] 'The art of foreseeing war and winning it by every means – politics – is henceforth enjoined as the very exercise of reason. Politics is opposed to morality, as philosophy to naiveté.' Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 21.
[90] J.J. Venter, 'H.F. Verwoerd: Foundational aspects of his thought,' *Koers*, 64, 4, (1999), 419.
[91] Venter, 'H.F. Verwoerd,' 418.
[92] See Venter, 'H.F. Verwoerd,' 420, 422: Already in 1948, the National Party 'stood for the "Christian guardianship" of the European race over the non-white races. This guardianship intended to grant them the opportunities to develop within their own context according to their own natural ability and capability.'
[93] Venter, 'H.F. Verwoerd,' 419.

> The invisible is the offense that inevitably results from the judgement of visible history, even if history unfolds rationally. The virile judgment of history, the virile judgement of "pure reason" is cruel.[94]

Thus, for Levinas, a rationality that understood the Other through self-interest, even though it allowed for difference, operated from an internal monologue conception of reason.[95]

> Every experience of the world, of the elements and objects, lends itself to the dialectic of the soul conversing with itself, enters into it, belongs to it. The things will be ideas, and will be conquered, dominated, possessed in the course of an economic and political history in which this thought will be unfolded.[96]

Reason as a monologue is power exercised over the Other without their consent, it denied their alterity, and was therefore inherently violent. It is also persisting-in-being and not being open to the transcendent Other. Verwoerd was single-minded. When the Catholic bishops met with Verwoerd, as Minister of Native Affairs, on 2 September 1954 to discuss the new Bantu Education Act of 1953,[97] Verwoerd was uncompromising. He justified government decisions and made it quite clear that there would be no concessions given to or exceptions made for the Catholic Church whatsoever.[98] The bishops had come to request that the school subsidies not be reduced. Verwoerd was reported to have said:

> In reducing State-aid to mission schools the State was not infringing on any right. It was merely withdrawing a privilege. Missions, if they wished, could continue as private institutions.[99]

It was not only the Catholic bishops who experienced this. Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi, the leader of the KwaZulu homeland, addressed the South African Institute for Race Relations and expressed this quite starkly:

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[94] Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 243.
[95] Levinas, *Collected Philosophical Papers*, 49.
[96] Ibid.
[97] This will be discussed more fully later in this chapter.
[98] 'Bantu Schools: Letter from Archbishop Hurley to all Catholic bishops,' 3 September 1954 in Archbishop Hurley Papers, Box: Bantu Education Act 1954, file: Interview of SACBC delegation with Dr Verwoerd 2 Sept 1954. Saint Joseph Theological Institute Archive (SJTI), BIO 11C.
[99] 'Notes on interview of Administrative Board with Dr. Verwoerd,' Archbishop Hurley's Papers, Box: Bantu Education Act 1954, file: Interview of SACBC delegation with Dr Verwoerd 2 Sept 1954, SJTI, BIO 11C.

> What I am saying will be clearer if I remind you that these concepts ruling us from the day of our conquest have always been conceived by Whites only, from their all-White perspectives. Not even when we co-operate in the implementation of the White man's political dreams for us, are we given the privilege of making any concrete contribution or even suggesting improvements. Any suggestion by us is suspect […] Not a single African homelands leader is involved in the actual suggestions on where the boundaries should be. It is all worked out by Pretoria on its own.[100]

Levinas recognised that much of history is a narrative of the totalisation of the Other and is violent towards the alterity and dignity of the Other as persons.

4.4. Totality as violence towards the Other

One of Levinas' primary concerns was dealing not with 'the tension of unresolved differences, but the violence of identities that are inattentive to difference.'[101] The Afrikaner nationalist identity and the identity of white people was developed in opposition and in conflict with black people. For whites, like Verwoerd, these identities were mutually exclusive and unreconcilable. They had to be kept apart. As we saw above, this was a decision made by whites without regard for the opinion of black people. This violent disregard for the alterity of black people was cruel and harsh especially since it resulted in a system of exclusion of black people from power in the country of their birth.

While the Catholic and Protestant divide in South Africa was not as polarised as it was in Ireland or Scotland, nevertheless Catholics were labelled as the *Roomse gevaar* felt themselves to be less appreciated as citizens than Protestants or Calvinists. This inattentiveness to the Other was to raise its sectarian head in the schools for the deaf as we will investigate in the following chapters. In this section, it is important to clarify how Levinas saw violence.

From Levinas' writings, Burggraeve extrapolated four levels of violence or evil which revealed the use, consumption and misuse of the Other.[102] The first two of these forms of evil reveal

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[100] Chief M. Gatsha Buthelezi, *White and black nationalism, ethnicity and the future of the homelands*, (Johannesburg: The South African Institute for Race Relations, 1974), 7.
[101] Stephen Minister, *De-facing the other*, 117.
[102] Roger Burggraeve, 'Violence and the vulnerable face of the Other: The vision of Emmanuel Levinas on moral evil and our responsibility,' *Journal of social philosophy*, 30, 1, (Spring 1999), 29-45.

the narcissistic refusal to question one's own existence as unjust and to treat the other violently in an assimilatory way whereas the next two are violent in an exclusionary way.

4.4.1. Economic relation to the Other

The narcissism of putting my needs ahead of those of the Other, Levinas saw reflected in one's economy or project, that is, the practical and theoretical way in which one found one's sense of place and being-at-home in the world.[103] It was the way in which the self mastered the world. This way of being in the world could be either self-serving and self-justifying or it could take responsibility for others. When it is self-serving, the other is excluded from benefitting from the self’s economy or is only included to the extent that it is beneficial to the self. The Other is used or instrumentalised for the self’s own purposes and to serve its economy and interests.[104] Consequently, the Other is assimilated into the self’s economy by stripping them of their alterity and difference. In a white world, black people are instrumentalised to provide labour for the benefit of the white economy. Any contribution outside of this is not considered valuable and in fact, denigrated. It was not necessary to provide a good education to people who will be unskilled labourers all their lives. The irreducible uniqueness of the other is denied and considered unimportant.

More startlingly, this paradigm of all the I's or egoisms in pursuit of their autonomy, their own economy and their ‘place in the sun’ became a power struggle of 'each against all.'[105] It was a state of war and not peace. This was the violence of the self in competition and at war with other selves.

For Levinas, being is self-interest and self-preservation. This was what he meant when he wrote: '*esse* is *interesse*/essence is interest.'[106] For peace to reign, the self had to move to a position *otherwise than being*, away from ontology and self-interest, to an ethical relation with the Other.[107]

[103] Emmanuel Levinas, 'Philosophy and the idea of infinity,' 49.
[104] Burggraeve, 'Violence and the vulnerable face,' 36.
[105] Emmanuel Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 4.
[106] Ibid.
[107] Ibid.

4.4.2. Tyranny and enslavement

A second form of reduction of the Other to the same was what Levinas called tyranny. This is where a person sought to subjugate the Other by forcing them to give up their freedom. Tyranny was a form of coercion but without killing. The tyrant sought to accomplish this by means of persuasion, rhetoric, propaganda, seduction, trickery, diplomacy, demagoguery, (threats of) torture or physical violence, brainwashing, plagiarism, intimidation, or bribery. The tyrant coerced free subjects to abandon their freedom in exchange for the satisfaction of their needs.[108]

This tyranny, as coerced assimilation, made the Other a slave or an enslaved spirit. The Other was forced to abandon their own freedom and to conform to the will of the tyrant. It was the task of the slave to obey the orders of the master without question. The Other's individual will and the ability to think and act independently was abandoned out of fear.

4.4.3. Murder and hatred

The third form of violence was to deny the face which commands one not to kill. There was a desire to kill the other totally. Killing was more radical than just trying to assimilate or coerce the Other. There was no longer any desire to comprehend or even dominate the other. Rather the Other was seen as being in the way of the self's desire to realise its economy and so the Other had to be eradicated. The Other had to be driven from existence and eliminated altogether. This was an exclusionary violence.

For Levinas, hatred was related to murder. It denied the Other’s existence and only sought to humiliate and crush them but without destroying them altogether. Hatred wanted to keep the Other alive so that they could continue to suffer, by knowing that they are excluded, rejected and denied.

4.4.4. Racism

For Levinas, racism was a denial of the alterity of the Other. Racists believed that their group were morally, culturally or intellectually superior to another group. Often this was incorrectly attributed to genetical factors that supposedly favoured one race or group over another. The

[108] Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 42, 205.

Other was discriminated against or rejected because of the colour of their skin, or because of other physical features, or even their origins. For Levinas, 'racism calcifies identities.'[109] In this respect, audism calcified relations between hearing and deaf. There is no alternative than for deaf people to fit into the framework worked out for them by hearing people. Deaf people were diminished.

People were discriminated against because they belonged to a different culture, language group or religion. The racist refused to recognise the irreducible alterity or singularity of those who did not fall within their group. They valued only the same, 'one's own' and therefore excluded those considered to be different and foreign.[110] Those who were foreign were the enemy and the scapegoat who could be blamed for any ills within society.

Anti-Semitism was a form of racism that Levinas himself experienced first-hand. The Jew was the enemy under Nazism and so they could be eliminated through genocide. For Levinas, this racism of the Nazis was not just an exceptional perversion of a psychologically disturbed group of people but rather 'the dynamic of our very being.'[111] Western philosophy itself, as thinking from totality, opened the gate to totalitarianism and what Levinas referred to as Hitlerism.[112]

4.5. The bureaucratic exclusion of black people

As I have shown in the previous section, white people organised society to their own benefit, from the interests of their own economy and being at-home with themselves. This way of structuring society in Levinas' understanding was violent to the Other. This is also referred to as structural injustice or 'structures of sin.'[113] It was the apartheid state that implemented the laws to institutionalise racism and to exclude black people's full participation within society.

For a deepening of Levinas' understanding of the role of the state under apartheid, I will supplement it with the thinking of sociologist Max Weber. Weber was concerned with the rationalisation of society where instrumental reason or 'scientific thinking' led to the

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[109] John Drabinski, 'Levinas, race and racism,' *Levinas Studies*, 7, (2012), viii.
[110] Burggraeve, 'Violence and the vulnerable face,' 40.
[111] Burggraeve, 'Violence and the vulnerable face,' 41.
[112] See Emmanuel Levinas, 'Reflections on the philosophy of Hilterism,' *Critical Inquiry*, 17, (Autumn 1990), 63-71.
[113] Albert Nolan, 'Structures of sin,' *Angelicum*, 84, (2007), 625-637.

disenchantment of society. Weber was concerned that everything in society was measured either by the capitalist relationships of profit, gain and expediency or by instrumental reason where 'individuals are treated not as ends in themselves but as the instrumental means to a particular end.'[114] This meant that the importance of ethics or values in society was reduced or totally ignored. The modern state became 'the institutional embodiment of instrumental reason'[115] basing its decisions, not on the traditional authority of concern for others, but instead, on dominating and controlling people through bureaucracy.

> Bureaucratic administration means fundamentally determination through knowledge. This is the feature of it which makes it specifically rational.[116]

Bureaucracy became a legal-rational way of dominating people through the means of objective and pragmatic thought. As with Verwoerd, it was reason that was impersonal and that eliminated emotional content. It was a dehumanising way of relating to others. The Nazi regime in Germany and the Nationalist government in South Africa were both bureaucratic states that sought to find the definitive 'scientific' solution to dealing with the Other.[117] Although, they did it in different ways.

In returning to our account of the history of apartheid, it is necessary to illustrate the violence of apartheid as institutionalised racism, as well as its attempts to marginalise and exclude black people from South African society. Bureaucracy became a primary means of achieving this end.

4.5.1. The Population Registration Act

The Population Registration Act of 1950 was the lynchpin of the apartheid regime.[118] By passing this into law, the apartheid government racially classified every South African. The major classifications were White, Coloured, Indian and African. Within these classifications, there were differences too. The question arose about how to classify Chinese people. There

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[114] Nicholas Gane, *Max Weber and postmodern theory: Rationalization versus re-enchantment*, (Basingstoke, Hampshire/ New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004), 23.
[115] Gane, *Max Weber and postmodern theory*,' 24.
[116] Max Weber, *Economy and society*, edited by G. Roth and C. Wittich, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 225.
[117] Levinas was equally critical of Stalinism in the USSR as another 'scientific' utopian project. See Emmanuel Levinas, 'Utopia and socialism,' in *Alterity and Transcendence*, (London: The Athlone Press, 1999), 111-117.
[118] David Welsh, *The Rise and fall of apartheid*, (Johannesburg/Cape Town: Jonathan Ball, 2009), 54.

were differences among the Coloured party: Malay or Cape Coloured. One’s racial classification was central to determining whether one was an insider or an outsider; whether one was a beneficiary of the system or whether one was to be marginalised or excluded from it; whether one would be a citizen or a foreigner; whether one was Other or the Same.

African people had to carry passes to permit them to work and reside in the cities. Those who were not employed had to return to the rural reserves from which they were thought to have originated. They were not permitted to remain in areas reserved for whites. The Group Areas Act no. 41 of 1950 governed the lives of those who remained in the urban areas. This law determined in which areas they were permitted to stay. All urban residential areas were segregated according to the different racial groups.

Segregation also touched all aspects of life starting from public facilities, restaurants, transport, and beaches. Park benches were designated as to who could or could not sit on them. There were shop entrances for whites and others for blacks. Mixed sport events were forbidden and even the dead were buried in separate cemeteries.

For Edward Said, orientalism, or the discourses through which European society had portrayed the Orient, was a projection of European colonial attitudes on the alterity of the East.[119] The European identity was established by contrasting itself against that of the Orient as a 'surrogate and even underground self.'[120] Europe was seen from a position of strength superiority and domination whereas the Orient was seen as weak. The binary opposites integral to European-Oriental relations were understood in relation to those of coloniser/colonised; civilised/uncivilised; rational/irrational; virtuous/depraved; mature/childlike; and normal/different.[121] This was both classifying people and placing them within a hierarchy at the same time. Europe was always seen as more advanced and superior to that of the Orient. Those who were different were 'othered' so as to justify the control that was exerted over them.

In a similar way, the Population Registration and the Groups Areas Acts were the apartheid regime’s way to 'other' African people and to define them by race and by culture. Difference

[119] Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 3-4.
[120] Said, *Orientalism*, 3.
[121] Said, *Orientalism*, 40.

and alterity were recognised but an alterity that was racist and hierarchical. This enabled the government to know who was to be privileged and who was to be marginalised and excluded from participation in South African society.

4.5.2. Influx control

The policies of apartheid arose as a response to white people's fears about what they perceived to be the growing threat of black urbanisation.[122] Contacts between white and black were increasing but so was competition for jobs resulting in the escalation of conflicts between white and black workers. Black workers were also becoming unionised like whites as was evident with the growth of Clements Kadalie's Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU) in the 1920s and 30s and the Non-European Workers' Union in the 1940s. Posel pointed out that the problem was of concern for rural farmers too.[123] Farmers were suffering from labour shortages. The United Party government had been unable to resolve this crisis for farmers.

In 1946, the Native Laws Commission chaired by Justice Fagan proposed that the irreversibility of black urbanisation had to be acknowledged. If the economic growth of the country was to be sustained and to grow, then industry needed an urban workforce. Fagan was adamant that this need not threaten white supremacy in government as black people could be given political rights to govern themselves in their own municipal areas. Secondly, he also recommended that the number of African people permitted to live in urban areas should be limited. In so doing, he showed that he was in favour of a form of influx control for black people in urban areas.

In 1947, the National Party appointed the Sauer Commission to refute the findings of the Fagan Commission. The Nationalists believed that Fagan's proposals were calling for integration of black and white in urban areas. In sharp contrast, when the Sauer Report appeared it set the ground rules for the emergence of a separation between white and black in social, residential, political and industrial spheres.

By the middle of the 1950s, legislation had been passed by the apartheid government to 'keep the resident urban African population as small as possible without scarring the urban

[122] Deborah Posel, *The Making of apartheid, 1948-1961: Conflict and compromise* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 61.
[123] Posel, *The Making of apartheid*, 61.

economy.'[124] Labour bureaux had been established to channel labour to the areas of industry in which it was required. This resulted in a massive bureaucracy of civil servants required for the issuing of pass books and permits for African people and to police the presence of African people within urban areas.[125]

The passbook became one of the most detested symbols of apartheid for African people. The Defiance Campaign was inaugurated in the 1950s for resisters to march against apartheid and burn the passbooks which were symbols of African oppression. The National Party enforced influx control not merely because they were racist, but because they wanted to secure the economic security of the Afrikaner and whites. The mining industry, the mainstay of the South African economy, also required a cheap labour force to make them profitable.

4.5.3. Economic exclusion and marginalisation

For South African Marxist theorists, all apartheid legislation and policies were aimed primarily at keeping the political economy of South Africa in white hands and for their own benefit. The Black Other was needed purely for cheap labour and wealth generation. Harold Wolpe wrote the foundational text of this economic analysis in 1972.[126] He described the homelands as reserves of cheap labour that fed the white capitalist industrial metropole with cheap migrant labour. The capitalist economy benefitted from this dual economy as its costs were subsidised by the traditional African rural economy. The capitalist economy could pay lower wages to miners because it did not have pay for the upkeep of the migrant workers' families. The worker's families' subsistence needs were met in the homelands by the traditional economy. Within this analysis, apartheid was an intensification of the policy of segregation which enabled a more effective exploitation of black workers and so that capitalists could reap greater profits.

This class-based analysis challenged the earlier liberal understandings of apartheid which emphasised the bigoted racial prejudices of Afrikaners which was seen to defy economic

[124] Posel, *The Making of apartheid*, 203.
[125] Posel, *The Making of apartheid*, 118-119.
[126] Harold Wolpe, 'Capitalism and cheap labour-power in South Africa: From segregation to apartheid', *Economy and Society*, 1, 4, (December 1972), 425-456. Reprinted in *Segregation and apartheid in twentieth century South Africa*, edited by William Beinart and Saul Dubow, (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), 60-90.

rationality and profitability. Wolpe's analysis opened the way to understand how both the Nationalist government and white capitalist industry collaborated and benefitted from the racial ideology of apartheid. Apartheid allowed for the more efficient and effective exploitation of black people by exploiting the traditional economies for the benefit of capitalist accumulation. Wolpe concluded that:

> Racial ideology in South Africa must be seen as an ideology which sustains and reproduces capitalist relations of production. This ideology and the political practice in which it is reflected is in a complex, reciprocal (although asymmetrical) relationship with changing social and economic conditions. The response of the dominant classes to the changing conditions, mediated by these ideologies, produces the two faces of domination – segregation and apartheid.[127]

South African Marxist analysis argued that apartheid was good for business. White capitalists were using the traditional African economy in the reserves to subsidise the capitalist economy and thereby ensuring the provision of cheap labour for themselves.

While this analysis is attractive it was also limited. Nattrass argued that the cheap labour hypothesis was a greater reflection of a structural theoretical assumption of Marxist class analysis than a conclusion derived from 'any inductive reasoning from empirical evidence.'[128] Nevertheless, while there may be disputes about how whites benefitted economically from apartheid there was no disputing that they did benefit economically.

4.5.4. Institutionalised violence in education

The exclusionary practices of the apartheid government were also experienced in the field of African education. In January 1949, the government appointed the Eiselen Commission to investigate education of African children in South Africa. The commission reported in 1951 and based on its findings, the Bantu Education Act, no. 47 of 1953 was passed by parliament.[129] The National Party sought to control the education of South African black

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[127] Wolpe, 'Capitalism and cheap labour-power', 87.

[128] Nicoli Nattrass, 'Controversies about capitalism and apartheid in South Africa: An economic perspective,' *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 17, 4, (December 1991), 670.

[129] See Frank Molteno, 'The historical foundations of the schooling of black South Africans,' in *Apartheid and education: The education of black South Africans*, edited by Peter Kallaway, (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1984), 88.

people by removing it from the influence of the churches.[130] The commission recommended that African education be removed from the amateurish efforts of the mission schools and placed under the direction of the professional educational expertise of state bureaucrats.[131]

> By defining the education [system][132] in terms of bureaucratic efficiency, the Commission was brokering a new means of legitimating educational policy, and thereby found a very powerful means to discredit missionary education.[133]

There were at least three reasons for this approach. Firstly, the commission was convinced that efficiency in the education system depended on better social planning. The same co-ordinated planning was needed in other social services like housing, health and recreation too.[134] Mission schools were inefficiently managed.

Secondly, it has been argued that the reason why the government wanted to close the mission schools was that they were on the verge of collapse and in debt.[135] Many of the mission schools were financially constrained and dependent on government subsidies to survive. However, the outright refusal by the National Party to even consider the idea that mission education and Bantu Education co-exist, also pointed to ideological differences. For the Nationalists, mission education was giving black people the confidence to make political demands. From their perspective, mission education provided by the English-speaking churches was partly responsible for this agitation. Education was perceived as the route by which the 'native' would be civilised and brought into society. The mission schools of the English-speaking churches and the Roman Catholic Church were promoting *gelykstelling* or ‘equality’ through education.[136]

This westernisation of African people went contrary to the National Party's vision of apartheid. African people needed an education that was adapted to the needs of their African

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[130] Lynn Maree, 'The hearts and minds of people,' in *Apartheid and education: The education of black South Africans*, edited by Peter Kallaway, (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1984), 148-149.
[131] Brahm Fleisch, 'State formation and the origins of Bantu education,' in *The History of education under apartheid 1948-1994: The doors of learning and culture shall be opened*, edited by Peter Kallaway, (Cape Town: Maskew, Miller and Longman, 2002), 39-52.
[132] This word is missing in the original text. See Fleisch, ‘State formation,’ 43.
[133] Fleisch, 'State formation,' 43.
[134] Fleisch, ‘State formation,’ 44.
[135] Jonathan Hyslop, *The Classroom Struggle: Policy and resistance in South Africa 1940-1990*, (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1999), 11-20.
[136] Elphick, *The Equality of believers*, 181.

cultures, traditions and languages. Apartheid envisioned African people fulfilling their political and economic aspirations in the reserves and not within western society. They were not to be encouraged to think of themselves as equal to whites. The Nationalists saw this approach to education as eventually leading the country and the white man to ruin. Consequently, the Bantu Education Act was developed to counter the gradual assimilation and inclusion of African people through mission education. The Nationalists insisted that black people 'must learn their tribal place in a white-dominated society'.[137] This was an education policy with a specific ideological intention to teach black people subservience and that they could not expect to progress above being 'drawers of water and hewers of wood'.[138]

Thirdly, the intention of the National Party in implementing Bantu Education was an attempt to control and train the urban African youth.[139] The Nationalist government wanted to provide mass education to African youth but, at the time, they attempted to channel black political aspirations towards the rural 'homelands'. However, they failed on this score too. In June 1976, black urban youth in Soweto rose up against Bantu Education and re-ignited widescale resistance to apartheid. This eventually led to CODESA and the negotiated settlement that inaugurated a new phase in South African history. Black people refused attempts to shape them into the docile recipients of white domination. They both challenged and resisted these unjust apartheid policies.

4.6. Breaching totality: Levinas, politics and resistance

For Emmanuel Levinas proximity to the Other, that is, the encounter with the face of the Other challenges the self. The encounter with the Other calls the self to give account, to become responsible. This is to realise that, in proximity to the Other, the self is called into question, the totality of self-interest is breached, and is already judged to be unjust.

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[137] Pam Christie and Colin Collins, 'Bantu education: Apartheid ideology and labour reproduction,' in *Apartheid and education: The education of Black South Africans*, edited by Peter Kallaway, (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1984), 162.
[138] HF Verwoerd when Minister of Bantu Education quoted Joshua 9:23 to refer to the status of black people as envisioned by apartheid. See Christie and Collins, 'Bantu education,' 161.
[139] Hyslop, *The Classroom Struggle*, 59-62.

> In every social encounter, whether violent or benign, the other person stands as other than the self, as a *no* to the I.[140]

As Levinas said, 'the face resists possession, resists my powers. In its epiphany, in expression, the sensible, still graspable, turns into total resistance to the grasp.'[141] The resistance of the face breaches totality, not as a force, but as an authority, a plea and a command that 'Thou shall not kill.' Ethical resistance is a call or a summons to the self to responsibility.

> The face of the other in its precariousness and defencelessness is for me for the temptation to kill and the call for peace, the "Thou shalt not kill."[142]

For Levinas, this resistance of the face is ethical rather than political. It existed at an an-archical level that is prior to or anterior to the political. It is necessary to briefly reflect on Levinas' idea of the relationship between the ethical and the political.

4.6.1. 'The Saying and the Said'

Reference is often made to the fact that Emmanuel Levinas' ethical philosophy does not translate well into political and social action.[143] This criticism was compounded by the limited interest Levinas himself displayed in developing the political and social ramifications of his thinking.[144] Levinas was more intent on developing an ethic of alterity because politics was too often the arena of violence and the totalising of the Other.

However, in his second major work, *Otherwise than Being* (1974), Levinas sought to clarify the relationship between the ethical relation and politics. Rather than refer to the encounter with the face as reflecting infinity and transcendence, Levinas described it as 'the Saying' in 'the Said.' For Levinas, language is not something I invented. Language precedes the self.

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[140] Morgan, *The Cambridge introduction to Emmanuel Levinas*, 69.
[141] Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 197.
[142] Emmanuel Levinas, *Alterity and Transcendence*, (London: The Athlone Press, 1999), 141.
[143] See Simon Critchley, 'Five problems in Levinas' view of politics and the sketch of a solution to them,' in *Radicalizing Levinas*, edited by Peter Atterton and Matthew Calarco, (Albany: SUNY Press, 2010), 41-53; Stephen Minister*, De-facing the Other*, 225 and Topolski, *Arendt, Levinas and a politics of relationality*, 145.
[144] See Emmanuel Levinas, *Ethics and Infinity: Conversations with Philippe Nemo*, (Pittsburgh: Dusquene University Press, 1990), 90: 'My task does not consist in constructing ethics; I only try to find its meaning […] One can without doubt construct an ethics in function of what I have just said, but this is not my theme.'

> I enter language, taking on language as my own, in the first person singular, not by inventing it but by response.[145]

For Levinas, language is the encounter with the face of the Other. 'The face speaks. The manifestation of the face is already discourse.'[146] For Levinas, the emphasis is not on the face but the speaking and discourse.[147] There is nothing in the face which is exceptional. Levinas' focus is on the speaking, on the conversation rather than on the interlocutors. In understanding Levinas, it is important to focus and reflect 'on the structure of conversation [and] on the transcendental conditions for its possibility.'[148]

The Same and Other become interlocutors engaging in speech, conversation and dialogue. This proximity, or the encounter of the self with the face of the Other, is the initiation of this conversation. For Levinas, the use of language for conversation and dialogue is the 'mark' of what it means to be human.[149] To be human is to engage in conversation, it is to speak.[150] But what is that conversation that breaches totality and that overflows history?

In giving our words to the Other, we are engaging in transcendence and the first ethical gesture. In conversing with them, we do not know how they will respond. They could respond in an infinite number of ways.[151] Discourse is an acknowledgement that there are an infinite number of possible ways in which a conversation can start and develop. Discourse is unpredictable. The self has no control over how the Other with respond. Engaging in discourse and conversation is a relinquishing of control and manipulation of the Other because we have no idea beforehand how the Other will respond. In this regard, the Other calls our words into question. Consequently, the relation in conversation overflows comprehension, it breaches totality and opens us to the infinity and the transcendent. For Levinas, it is the overflowing of

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[145] Alphonso Lingis, 'Translator's introduction' in Emmanuel Levinas, *Collected Philosophical Papers*, (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1993), xxii.
[146] Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 66.
[147] Martin Kavka, 'Humanizing philosophy of religion: On language in Levinas and Sellars,' *Journal for Cultural and Religious Theory*, 14, 2, (Springs 2015), 229.
[148] Kavka, 'Humanizing philosophy of religion,' 229.
[149] Kavka, 'Humanizing philosophy of religion,' 237-238.
[150] We note Levinas' phonocentrism which was raised in previous chapters. I prefer to use the words converse or conversation.
[151] Kavka, 'Humanizing philosophy of religion,' 230.

history and an opening up to the eschatological.[152] Eschatology is a transcending of war and an establishing of peace.

The face speaks also referred to the vulnerability of the Other. The Other's face is a commandment: 'You shall not kill.' The face is a sign and a command to respond to the Other in their vulnerability because life is precarious. In the conversation, 'to respond to the face, to understand its meaning, means to awake to what is precarious in another life or, rather, the precariousness of life itself.'[153] The self's response to the precariousness of the Other is a plea for a non-violent response, to stop the killing, to ensure that my good life is not the reason for the death of the Other. It is to respond with generosity and hospitality in giving the food destined for my own to the Other. This is the ethical response to the encounter with the face of the Other. This is how the Other speaks and initiates discourse.[154] Will the self's response be to heed the command not to kill? Will the self respond non-violently and offer the bread needed for its own survival? Will the self take up the challenge for an ethical response towards the Other or will the self turn away in violence?

4.6.2. The third party and the advent of society

While the ethical relationship with the Other was at the heart of Levinas' philosophy, it was 'not the end of his philosophy.'[155] The face-to-face encounter with the Other, the conversation between interlocutors, could fall into an infatuation and into an embrace of lovers. For Levinas, this infatuation was interrupted by the appearance of the third person, all the other Others. A conversation assumes a social world and a world with many others and so through Levinas' idea of the third, society and plurality are made manifest. To live in society is to be engaged in conversations with many others.

In social and political interaction - in plurality with many others in society - which other took precedence? In this context, there may be a need to moderate the privilege of the Other. It

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[152] Kavka warned that Levinas' rhetoric and way of expressing himself 'contains a mix of empirical language ("perceiving") and transcendental language ("the condition of").' The words are used in a transcendental way, not to speak of God, but of the Other and the ethical relation. See Kavka, 'Humanizing the philosophy of religion,' 230.

[153] Judith Butler, 'Precarious life,' in *Radicalizing Levinas*, edited by Peter Atterton and Matthew Calarco, (Albany: SUNY Press), 7.

[154] Levinas, *Ethics and Infinity*, 87.

[155] Simmons, 'The Third,' 92.

may be necessary to discern who in this context is truly the neighbour.[156] At the level of the political, the relationship between the self and others was reciprocal.[157] This meant that there was a level of equality for the self too as one became another for the others.[158] Just as in the ethical relation 'the other is a person among people, I too am a person among people, invested with the meaning set forth by the ethical relation.'[159] This meant 'that there is also justice for me.'[160] My infinite responsibility for the other 'does not condemn me to passively going along with another's attempts to exploit me.'[161]

However, political decisions needed to be considered within the broader context of taking seriously the ethical relation. All political actions needed to be checked to discern whether or not the self was acting for-the-other rather than for-itself. For Levinas, critique was necessary, not to protect the self from being inauthentic but ‘to protect others from the potential violence of my economy'.[162] ‘The Said’ modified the way that ‘the Saying’ was lived out and this pointed to the importance of law and justice.[163]

Seeing society too as conversations meant that reason and language opened the way up for communication and dialogue with other people, that they may listen to one another, and together find a way to live more justly with one another.[164] In the conversations, the Other may challenge the self to accept greater responsibility and accountability. This allowed for the development of better laws and the ongoing critique and desire to make society better for all.

> Reason leaves questions open and inquiries ongoing because there are always more voices to listen to, more perspectives to bring in. The failure of philosophy ensures the need for ongoing critical and creative dialogue . . . The goal of reason should not be to overcome the pluralism that inspires it, but to respond to the responsibility attendant to this pluralism.[165]

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[156] Levinas, *Ethics and Infinity*, 90.
[157] Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 158.
[158] Levinas, *Otherwise than Being,* 158.
[159] Minister, *De-facing the Other*, 123.
[160] Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 159.
[161] Minister, *De-facing the Other*, 123.
[162] Minister, *De-facing the Other*, 177.
[163] Simmons, ‘The Third,’ 93.
[164] Minister, *De-facing the Other*, 120.
[165] Minister, *De-facing the Other*, 178-179.

For this reason, rather than speaking about Levinas' political philosophy or theory, it would be better to talk about his 'political thinking.'[166] For Levinas, political thinking always started in responding to the contextual and historical moment in which subjects found themselves in relationship to concrete others. Levinas' inductive form of political thinking was 'thoughtful reflection out of concern for others on contemporary circumstances from one's own perspective.'[167] However, such thinking was addressed to others in an ongoing discussion and dialogue and was never presented as the 'right' answer and as decreed as authority from above. Therefore, Levinas concluded that 'politics must be able in fact always to be checked and criticized from the ethical.'[168]

> Levinas's account of the ethical and the political can thus be read as an attempt to yield insights into the ways in which we in good conscience sanction violence both actively, through oppressing others and, more commonly, passively, through the widespread neglect of suffering others.[169]

The Third both extended and limited the responsibility for the Other. One was responsible for all of humanity and had to work for peace but, at the same time, this responsibility was limited when it became a concern for the practicalities of exercising justice. Both ethics and politics were needed and neither of them could be taken to an extreme. They kept each other in check. His understanding of the Third person or 'the Third' was a theoretical move to enable Levinas to shift in a 'never-ending oscillation between ethics and politics.'[170]

This formulation of ‘the Saying and the Said’ helped to clarify Levinas’ understanding of the relation between ethics and politics in his thinking. The ethical relation to the Other was ‘the Saying’ while the political implications of this relation was an expression of ‘the Said.’ Both were important and interrelated. This was Levinas' double vision of an ethical politics.[171]

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[166] Minister, *De-facing the Other*, 229.
[167] Minister, *De-facing the Other*, 228.
[168] Levinas, *Ethics and Infinity*, 80.
[169] Minister, *De-facing the Other*, 171.
[170] Simmons, ‘The Third,’ 84.
[171] Robert Eaglestone, 'Postcolonial thought and Levinas' double vision,' in *Radicalizing Levinas*, edited by Peter Atterton and Matthew Calarco, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2010), 57-68.

> Ethics, which is a manifestation of the saying, has been subordinated by politics, a manifestation of the said. Ethics must be resuscitated to check the political. However, the political should not be abandoned, because it is needed by the ethical.[172]

The challenge was to develop a politics that maintained the ethical relationship with the Other and limited the violence of reducing the Other to the Same and to self-interest. The alterity of the Other needed to be constantly safeguarded from the imperial and colonising interests of the self. The face offered absolute resistance to possession and the temptation to murder.

> To see a face is already to hear "You shall not kill", and to hear "You shall not kill" is to hear "Social justice".[173]

The ethical relation needed to inform daily living, to be concretised within history, that is, within the political decisions of individuals but also governments through the pursuit of justice. For Levinas, 'there is no politics for accomplishing the moral, but there are certainly some politics which are further from it or closer to it.'[174] Being concerned for one's neighbour in the turmoil of this world was to live an ethical, moral and spiritual life. This meant to move away from the violent preoccupation with self and one's own economy. Instead, it was an invitation to engage in conversation and a face-to-face relationship with the Other.[175] This dialogical relationship was the way to justice and peace.

Levinas' attempt to relate the ethical and the political as an 'ethical politics' has come under criticism from post-colonial thinkers.

4.6.3. The post-colonial critique of Levinas' theory

Post-colonial writers have criticised Levinas for being too Eurocentric and not sensitive enough to the reality and understanding of third world countries. Many of his writings were reflections on the European or Middle Eastern situation and he was generally quite dismissive of Third World realities.[176] Even though Levinas understood the totalising role of the state or

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[172] Simmons, 'The Third,' 90.

[173] Levinas, *Difficult Freedom*, 8-9.

[174] Tamara Wright, Peter Hughes, Alison Ainley, 'The paradox of morality: an interview with Emmanuel Levinas,' in *The Provocation of Levinas: Rethinking the Other*, edited by Robert Bernasconi and David Wood, (London, New York: Routledge, 1988), 177.

[175] Levinas, *Difficult Freedom*, 8.

[176] See Eaglestone, 'Postcolonial thought and Levinas,' 57.

individuals in possessing, grasping, comprehending and even colonising the Other, he never really focused on the European role in colonialising the Third World. This was considered a major oversight that postcolonial writers believed limited the political usefulness of Levinas' thinking in Third World contexts.[177] Levinas' double vision maintained a relationship between the ethical and the political, 'the Saying and the Said,' infinity and totality.[178] However, the problem is that Levinas' double vision highlighted the importance of the ethical to the detriment of the political. The political did not inform the ethical enough.

Drabinski proposed that a decolonised Levinas is required. Levinas' political thinking could be enhanced when it is understood as incarnate historiography.[179]

> If history and pain inform the event of the ethical, deepening (rather than distracting from) our sense of the obligation, then history is written into the body itself. Perhaps, even, I am vulnerable and exposed *on the basis of this* history and its incarnation.[180]

Drabinski argued that the body needed to be appreciated as both being and otherwise than being, that is a vulnerability that is present within totality and history, within human experience and not just as infinity. For Drabinski, Levinas neglected the vulnerable and suffering body within history and human experience. This needed to be reclaimed in order that Levinas' political thinking could be more pertinent and more useful in post-colonial contexts. As he argued:

> The Other comes to me, not just as a singular face who signifies without context, but as an embodied being whose appearance to me is irreducibly saturated with historical meaning ... when we notice the color of the Other, so to speak, our responsibility takes on particular, specific characteristics that, without that worldliness, might have remained simply empty - even if profound - sense of ethical obligation.[181]

Drabinski argued that 'incarnate historiography, or the erasure of it in the emphasis on singularity alone, showed that the insistence on the context-neutral life of the face-to-face

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[177] See John E. Drabinski, *Levinas and the Postcolonial: Race, nation other*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), 4-13; Robert Eaglestone, 'Postcolonial thought and Levinas,' 57-68.
[178] Robert Eaglestone, 'Postcolonial thought and Levinas,' 61.
[179] Drabinski, *Levinas and the Postcolonial*, 17-49.
[180] Drabinski, *Levinas and the Postcolonial*, 41.
[181] Ibid, 42-43.

was an expression of a certain privilege of thinking in the European context alone.'[182] Decolonisation meant taking historical experience seriously and allowing it to interrupt and disturb the economy of Western assumptions, traditions, perspectives, language, understandings of justice, political thinking and morality.[183]

For Drabinski, incarnate historiography made the subject more sensitive to the embodied other. Incarnate historiography decentred and destabilised the subjective reading of history even further[184] and brought about even greater appreciation for polysemic readings which took seriously the embodied and historical experience of the Black Other. In promoting the idea of an incarnate historiographical reading of Levinas, Drabinski is taking issue with Levinas' idea of the non-phenomenological character of the face. He does not see how post-colonialism can leave aside identity politics.

4.6.4. In defence of Levinas

Levinas argued that to recognise the face of the Other is not to even see the colour of their eyes.[185] The reducing of the Other to an identity, for Levinas, is problematic because it reduces the Other to being an object, a what rather than a who. Perpich pointed out that for Levinas, 'the face of the other signals the other's refusal to be contained in an image or a description. "I am this" the face says, "but not only this."'[186] The face refuses to be controlled and grasped by the self. In fact, the face calls into question the self's attempts to represent the Other and produce its own world.

Levinas' reluctance to succumb to identity politics does not mean that he did not allow for the possibility for a resistance politics. In discussing the violence of the face, Levinas wrote:

> I said earlier that the origin of the meaningful in the face of the other, confronted with the actual plurality of human beings – calls for justice and knowledge; the exercise of justice demands courts of law and political institutions, and even, paradoxically, a certain violence that is implied in all justice. Violence is originally justified as the

[182] Ibid, 43-44.
[183] Ibid, 44.
[184] Drabinski, *Levinas and the Postcolonial*, 43.
[185] Levinas, *Ethics and Infinity*, 85.
[186] Perpich, 'Levinas, feminism and identity politics,' 33.

> defense of the other, of the neighbour (be he a relation of mine, or my people!) but is violence for someone.[187]

When confronted by evil, Levinas unhesitatingly agreed that:

> Unquestionably, violent action against Evil is necessary. And we shall soon see that this violence takes on all appearances of political action. But it is no less evident that this action must seek the nature and cause of Evil.[188]

In the same article Levinas argued that: 'Evil is non-communication. It is being completely enclosed within oneself.'[189] In this respect, evil was being so caught up in one's own economy that one had no desire to respond to the suffering face of the Other. One remained tied to one's own vision of the world without regard for the others with whom one shared life.

For Levinas, 'it is only by ethically responding to the evil inflicted on my fellow human beings that I *become* fully human.'[190] A human being had to break away from the concern for self-preservation and respond to the suffering Other. For Levinas, there was something more important than my life and that was the life of the Other.[191]

For Levinas, there was no question that evil needed to be challenged and resisted by political action. However, he remained sceptical about utopianism, idealism and heroic actions which brought about justice once and for all. For Levinas, 'justice is always a justice which desires a better justice.'[192] Political action, therefore, required patience. It meant working within the present historical moment with the limitations that this entailed.[193] Justice was always to be improved upon, it was a constant journey and an ongoing work in progress. One never arrived.

Overcoming the inherent violence in the self's relation to the Other means to be responsible. It means to work for better justice for the sake of the Other. However, in a racist state like South Africa under apartheid or in a situation of tyranny, this desire to seek a better justice

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[187] Levinas, *Alterity and Transcendence*, 172.
[188] Emmanuel Levinas, *Nine Talmudic Readings*, (Bloomington, Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), 109.
[189] Levinas, *Nine Talmudic Readings*, 108.
[190] Bernstein, 'Evil and the temptation to theodicy,' 263.
[191] Tamara Wright, Peter Hughes, Alison Ainley, 'The Paradox of morality: an interview with Emmanuel Levinas,' in *The Provocation of Levinas: Rethinking the other*, edited by Robert Bernasconi and David Wood, (London/New York: Routledge, 1988), 172.
[192] Wright, 'The Paradox of morality,' 177.
[193] Minister, *De-facing the Other*, 227.

for the good of the whole society does not happen without a struggle, without resistance to injustice.

Despite this, I will take up his challenge to do, at least partially, a Levinasian reading of a history of resistance, the Other challenging the self to greater responsibility.

4.6.5. Black people's resistance politics

Levinas was ambivalent about history. He saw history as primarily the history of the victor, the conqueror's account over that of the vanquished. History was the triumph of the living over the dead.

> Historiography recounts the way the survivors appropriate the works of dead wills to themselves; it rests on the usurpation carried out by the conquerors, that is, by the survivors; it recounts enslavement, forgetting the life that struggles against slavery.[194]

History was also truth and was ethical when it revealed the self's responsibility for the Other or revealed the underside of history. This ethical resistance is what revealed transcendence and infinity. But this truth in history was not just about returning to the evidence.

> But the manifestation of the invisible cannot mean the passage of the invisible to the status of the visible; it does not lead back to evidence.[195]

History of the Other was primarily a truth about the Other. It was the truth of memory. The narrative where the Other speaks for themselves. For Levinas, memory revealed 'a world that is not ours.'[196] History had to be open to the appearance of truth as revelation, as 'existential ethical truth,'[197] rather than only evidence or truth as correspondence to reality. This was history that resulted from acknowledging the ethical resistance of the Other to totality. Infinity breaching totality.

Throughout the colonial period and during the time of apartheid, black people resisted the policies and the structural violence of the colonial and apartheid governments. The history of resistance of the ANC, and later the breakaway Pan-African Congress (PAC), show how they

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[194] Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 228.
[195] Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 243.
[196] Eaglestone, *The Holocaust and the postmodern*, 158.
[197] Ibid, 159.

began as protest movements, and then developed into organisations engaged in active non-violent defiance of unjust apartheid laws by burning passbooks and breaking the laws of petty apartheid. The bishops and clergy of most of the churches were reluctant, except for notable exceptions like Fr Trevor Huddleston from the Anglican Church,[198] to show challenge the apartheid government's authority so openly. However, after the Sharpeville Massacre on 21 March 1960 and the subsequent banning of both organisations they organised themselves as underground organisations of resistance and took up an armed struggle against the apartheid state.

Initially, the Catholic Church was reluctant to challenge the apartheid government's authority as they were dependent on state funding for their mission schools. They made statements calling on the government or the white electorate to respect the dignity of black people but essentially these calls went unheeded.[199] The church was as racially divided as the country. It was truly 'a racist church mirroring a racist society.'[200] Although parish churches were not segregated, nevertheless, white went to churches in white areas and black people in black areas. The seminaries were segregated and the leadership of the church was white and the majority of believers were black.[201] However, when the government eventually tried to force the Catholic Church to hand over its mission schools to the government that was resisted. A campaign was launched to fundraise and keep the mission schools Catholic.[202] This was the first time that the Catholic Church openly challenged the apartheid government's policies.[203] Besides this action, the Church's responses to apartheid were only expressed through written statements of protest published in the media.

In the late 1960s, Black Consciousness under Steve Biko emerged as a resistance movement. It called all black people to undergo a psychological liberation and to restore their human dignity.[204] Black people, which included African, Coloured and Indian people, were to be the agents of their own history. They refused to allow themselves to be determined by the

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[198] Denis, 'The Christian response to apartheid,' 3.
[199] Stuart Bate, 'The Church under apartheid,' in *The Catholic Church in contemporary Southern Africa*, edited by Joy Brain and Philippe Denis, (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 1999), 156-157.
[200] Bate, 'The Church under apartheid,' 151.
[201] Denis, 'The Christian response to apartheid,' 2.
[202] Stuart Bate, 'One mission, two churches,' in in *The Catholic Church in contemporary Southern Africa*, edited by Joy Brain and Philippe Denis, (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 1999), 19-20.
[203] Bate, 'The Church under apartheid,' 166-167.
[204] Dubow, *Apartheid*, 159.

totalising thinking and the racist attitudes of white people.[205] This new awareness among African youth and labour unions was the mobilising power that manifested itself during the Soweto Uprising in 1976 and continued to fuel the resistance against apartheid during the 1980s.[206] This period also revolutionised church resistance to apartheid too through Black theology.[207] Black theologians challenged church leaders to be more outspoken against the injustices taking place against black people in South Africa. Black theologians called for more black bishops and priests to take on responsible positions in the church.[208] The white leadership was too conciliatory towards the government and did not respond adequately to the suffering of the black majority.

In the 1980s, as the South African economy faced sanctions and the white sense of well-being was gradually eroded away by black resistance, the Nationalist government, under PW Botha, sought to deal with this crisis of legitimacy by reforming apartheid and trying to win over Coloureds and Indians by including them into the tri-cameral parliament.[209] When this attempt to reform apartheid failed and the crisis of legitimacy deepened, the Nationalist government, now under FW de Klerk, was forced to admit that a future peace only lay in dialogue and a negotiated settlement. Already in 1985, groups of white businessmen, politicians and students began discussions and talks with the ANC in exile, first in Zambia, followed by talks in Dakar, Senegal.[210] In 1990, FW de Klerk unbanned the political organisations and the negotiations are known as the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) took place within the country.

Within the Catholic Church, the 1980s was a period of much more outspoken and active campaigning against apartheid. Student movements like the Young Christian Workers (YCW), the Young Christian Students (YCS), the Catholic Association of South Africa for black students (CASA) and the National Catholic Federation of Students (NCFS) were organising campaigns to resist the apartheid government.[211] Often members of these organisations were arrested,

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[205] Brown, *The Road to Soweto*, 47.
[206] Dubow, *Apartheid*, 226-235.
[207] See De Gruchy, *The Church struggle in South Africa*, 153-169.
[208] See George Mukuka, *The Other side of the story: The silent experience of the Black clergy in the Catholic Church in South Africa, 1898-1976*, (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 2008), 173-196.
[209] Dubow called this attempt at reform 'neo-apartheid.' See Dubow, *Apartheid*, 203-205.
[210] Dubow, *Apartheid*, 237-238.
[211] Denis, 'The Christian response to apartheid,' 7.

detained or imprisoned. All dioceses within the country also established Justice and Peace Commissions which raised awareness in the parishes throughout the country and also embarked on protest actions by taking to the streets.

In 1985, a number of theologians, including Catholics like Frs Albert Nolan, Smangaliso Mkhatshwa and Chris Langefeld worked on the *Kairos Document* which was a prophetic church document which criticised church and state.[212] State theology called upon citizens to obey the state and church theology called for reconciliation among oppressor and and oppressed. Prophetic theology called for justice and a fully democratic country. This document highlighted that the churches' relation to the State was often one of ambivalence. They criticised the government for denying black people their human rights but they were afraid to openly confront the state because they were reliant of state funds for their church projects like schools and hospitals. In the next chapter on Catholic deaf education, we will see a similar dynamic taking place.

For Levinas, language and conversation emerge when the self acknowledges responsibility for the Other, often against its will. The National Party and white South Africa were initially hostile to negotiations, but eventually, they succumbed. They came to the negotiating table as reluctant participants. Initially, the Nationalists thought that they would be able to dictate the terms of a negotiated settlement, but the ANC negotiators outmanoeuvred them. A better justice than apartheid emerged from the negotiations and the establishment of the first fully democratic government of South Africa after the elections in 1994.[213]

4.7. Reading apartheid from the perspective of the ethical relation

In 2000, Thiven Reddy wrote a history of colonialism and apartheid from the perspective of the black other.[214] The colonial encounter between white and black people in South Africa was from the earliest times between one of 'othering.' Reddy described his use of the 'other' as expressing 'a relationship of "difference" between people formulated in discourse.'[215]

[212] Philippe Denis, 'The authorship and composition circumstances of the Kairos Document,' *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa*, 158, (July 2017), 4-19.
[213] Dubow, *Apartheid*, 272-274.
[214] See Thiven Reddy, *Hegemony and resistance: Contesting identities in South Africa*, (Aldershot/Burlington: Ashgate, 2000).
[215] Reddy, *Hegemony and resistance*, 5.

Accordingly, the defining characteristics of 'the other' was that the differences were constructed, that they involved unequal power relations, that the dominant group established the criteria for both groups but privileged itself, and finally, that the differences were naturalised in the discourse.

Tracing 'the Other' from the earliest contact between the first Dutch settlers in the Cape and the indigenous people, through slavery in the Cape, to the encounter on the frontiers and then in the industrial workplace, Reddy identified three ways that the Other has been constructed. Firstly, as the 'savage Other', then as the 'tribal or ethnic Other' and finally, as the 'labouring or class Other.'[216] The understanding of the Black Other was in sharp contrast to the dominant or hegemonic white colonial discourse which saw itself as 'civilised', ' a single nation' and as a 'ruling class.'[217] These discourses functioned to justify white supremacy and white minority rule. So long before apartheid, this construction of black otherness and white hegemony had become a 'deeply entrenched tradition of the country.'[218]

Reddy criticised the liberal historians who saw in the emergence of apartheid a discontinuity with other previous forms of white domination. He argued that this is not the case.

> Since the notion of "the Other" was shared by all the white political organizations we need not make too much of the strategic differences between the Nationalist and United political parties.[219]

For Reddy, the relationship to the Other shows the continuity not the discontinuity between policies of segregation and apartheid. Reddy thought this difference to be irrelevant because it was just another way to justify white domination and privilege. Apartheid was just a new face given to a pre-existing hegemonic racism. Apartheid was 'a new determination to accomplish the same goals that segregation set out to achieve.'[220] Instead of segregation, it is now called self-determination or separate development. 'The transition from the

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[216] Reddy, *Hegemony and resistance*, 8. David Chidester writing on comparative religion in Southern Africa periodises the colonial history of South Africa into three *epistemes* too, namely: the frontier period (1600-1850), the imperial period (1850-1948) and the apartheid (1948-1994). See David Chidester, *Savage systems: Colonialism and comparative religion in Southern Africa*, (Charlottesville/London: University Press of Virginia, 1996), 2-4.
[217] Reddy, *Hegemony and resistance*, 1.
[218] Ibid, 56.
[219] ibid, 114.
[220] Ibid, 65.

"segregationist" rule of the United Party to the "Apartheid programme" of the National Party did not constitute a profound or even fundamental rupture with the past.'[221] Both these parties were concerned with the best way to maintain white domination in politics and the economy. Apartheid was established 'to prevent the blurring of the lines between "white" and its "Other"'.[222] In fact, the poor white problem was a concern for the Nationalists because it threatened the 'entire structure of "Otherness" as it historically evolved in South Africa'[223] because it showed that whites were not superior to blacks.

There is much to commend in Reddy's argument about the continuity of apartheid with the history of 'othering' throughout colonial South African historiography. There are several of convergent points with a Levinasian reading that apartheid was essentially an exclusionary discourse seeking to protect white interests.

Apartheid was a declaration of war on Black people in South Africa. It was an exclusionary policy to ensure the self-interestedness of whites and prevent the gradual inclusion of black people into the white economy. The apartheid monologue divided people into racial and ethnic groups so that whites could more effectively and efficiently control and grasp black people for their own self-interest. As a monologue of white self-interest, apartheid was a persisting-in-being and a refusal to acknowledge the face of the Black Other. It was a refusal to engage in conversation and dialogue as an acknowledgement of the self's responsibility to the Other.

In this respect, the violence of apartheid as racism and economic exploitation was a rejection of the face that speaks and commands: 'You shall not kill!!' The hatred of whites for black people meant they persisted in their desire to humiliate and deny Black people the rights which were their due. The refusal to heed the command 'You shall not kill!' meant that black people bled in the factories, the fields, the gold mines, the townships, the mine compounds, on the farms and in the rural areas. Many died working in the mines and on the farms due to unsafe work conditions and brutalisation. Many were killed and murdered as they expressed their opposition to exploitation and resisted the injustices foisted upon them.

[221] Reddy, *Hegemony and resistance*, 116.
[222] Ibid, 118.
[223] Ibid, 119.

It was this resistance, this resounding 'NO!' and refusal to accept the violence of the self-interest of white people that ultimately led to apartheid's demise. Black people in South Africa breached the totality of white self-interest and overflowed the history of oppression and exploitation to which they had been subjected by white self-interest. They insisted that the future of the country depended on overcoming the totalising monologue of white self-interest and forced white South Africa to conversation and dialogue around the negotiating table. It was this conversation, acrimonious at times, that led to the establishment of a fully democratic state under an ANC government in 1994.

In this overflow of history a new horizon, an eschatology, opened up for all South Africans after 342 years of colonialisation and apartheid. For many people, this was the ushering in of a new dawn but one which involved the responsibility to 'repair the world.'[224] This involved the setting up of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to acknowledge the wounds inflicted on people by apartheid. There was the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) to reconstruct the economy to benefit the black majority and not just white self-interest.

After the ANC victory in 1994, most South Africans had high expectations of what the new government would achieve. It was as if people expected that there would be a definitive solution to South Africa's problems. However, after 25 years of democracy it has become apparent that there are no utopias. Levinas' political thinking is a constant reminder that our society remains unjust and in constant need of reform and renewal. Justice is always a work in progress.

Justice is an ongoing task and the conversation is never over. In post-apartheid South Africa, the conversation continues with new interlocutors. Post-apartheid life in South Africa is still riddled with continued racism of white people's attitudes towards black people but also the 'hatred of the Other' seen in xenophobic South African attacks on fellow Africans illustrate. The 'hatred of the Other' is also at the heart of the resurgence of right-wing politics in Europe and North America too. A Levinasian analysis assists in understanding that there is an interconnectedness between all these hatreds rooted in totalising self-interest.

[224] Topolski, *Arendt, Levinas and a politics of relationality*, 191.

4.8. Conclusion

Apartheid was a totality. Totality is a violent relation because it is an expression of unjust power and is demeaning of the other. Totality dominates and seeks to 'control' the other. However, totalities are not all the same. They manifest in different ways. It can be 'benevolent' or racist. It can be brutally murderous and tyrannical. Levinas' categories do not limit the way in which totality can be understood. Connor pointed out that the falsity of apartheid was thinking that there could not be any social bond between people of different races and different ethnic groups.[225]Levinas' understanding of the ethical relation as an-archical encounter, that is, prior or anterior to any communication,[226] challenges this idea. One is in relation already even when one is denying the relationship and rejecting the face of the Other.

When 'the face speaks' it is already in relation to the self even before a word is said. It commands the self: 'You shall not kill!' Human history is littered with examples of where this command went unheeded. Apartheid is just one example of inhumanity. The face of the Other is a constant challenge to our economies of complacency and exclusion. Even our care of others may not be free from violence.

Consequently, we need to recognise that our lives and actions are always constantly under review and subject to criticism. 'Every attempt at justice is a "fine risk," albeit a risk that is well worth running.'[227] If we are to respond practically to others and act politically, we must commit ourselves to structures, institutions, ideas and ideals. However, we do so with the awareness that these societal structures and institutions, our ideas and ideals are invariably limited and oftentimes inadequate. Self-interest influences all political agendas and, often, disregard the needs and questions of the poor, the marginalised and the abandoned. It is not only in politics, economics or in social work that this ethical relation is required. It is needed too within the church and its ministry and praxis.

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[225] Bernard F. Connor, *The Difficult traverse: From amnesty to reconciliation*, (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 1998), 62.
[226] Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 10-11.
[227] See Minister, *De-facing the Other*, 180. He used Levinas' references to 'fine risk' in *Otherwise than being*, 167, 170.

Levinas' thought continues to challenge historians and theologians to uncover the narratives of the nameless, the forgotten, the abandoned, the marginalised. Edith Wyschogrod has called this the task of the heterological historian.[228] Levinas' understanding of truth as revelation of the Other is crucial for uncovering these narratives as will be attempted here in relation to the Deaf.

In the next chapter, I will be taking up the reflection on the Catholic Church's contribution to deaf ministry in the South African context.

[228] Wyschogrod, *An Ethics of remembering*, 3.

Chapter 5 Catholic ministry to the deaf in good conscience (1948-1968)

5.0. Introduction

Catholic pastoral ministry to the Deaf in South Africa can be identified as having had two aspects. The first aspect was the provision of schools for the deaf for the education of the deaf children. This was done by the Cabra and Kingwilliamstown Dominican Sisters in South Africa. The second aspect was the provision of pastoral care to the Deaf Catholics through the pastoral and liturgical ministry to deaf adults conducted by chaplains for the deaf.

This ministry took place during the time of apartheid and deaf ministry could not avoid being influenced by the socio-political and economic context in which the Dominican Sisters and the Catholic priests ministered. The establishment of schools for the deaf was directly influenced by apartheid policies especially when it came to Black schools. The ambivalence of the Church to apartheid will be demonstrated. Even within the Church racial prejudice existed.

It was during the twenty years under study that the oral method of deaf education held sway in the schools for the deaf. The role of sign language had been virtually eliminated from Catholic deaf education. Despite this, sign language usage persisted in chaplaincy work with deaf adults.

This chapter is structured in the following way: Firstly, I have outlined the early history of deaf education in South Africa with the establishment of both the Catholic and the Dutch Reformed Church schools for the Deaf prior to 1948. This period was characterised by church rivalry and tension between Catholics and Protestants. Secondly, I will discuss the lives of some of the prominent priests and lay people who served the deaf community in Cape Town and Johannesburg prior to 1948. Thirdly, I will focus on the first three Catholic schools for the deaf namely, Dominican-Grimley, St Vincent and the Dominican School for the Deaf in Wittebome. Fourthly, I will focus on the establishment of the St Thomas School for the Deaf in Woodlands and the Dominican School for the Deaf in Hammanskraal. These two schools were established to comply with the demands of the apartheid government that there should be separate schools for each of the different ethnic groups in the African community.

5.1. Deaf education in South Africa prior to 1948

By 1948, there were three Catholic schools for the deaf in South Africa. There was also the three started by the Dutch Reformed Church. The Cabra Dominican Sisters started the first school for the deaf in the country in Cape Town in 1874. Initially, known as the Dominican Institute for the Deaf and Dumb,[1] then St Joseph's School for the Deaf and then later it became known as Dominican-Grimley School for the Deaf.[2] Shortly after this, the first Dutch Reformed School for the Deaf was established in Worcester in 1881. The Kingwilliamstown Dominican Sisters started the second Catholic school for the deaf in Kingwilliamstown in 1884. The Dutch Reformed Mission Church established the first school for Coloured deaf children in 1933. Later in 1937, the Cabra Sisters started a similar school in Wittebome, Cape Town. This was the first Catholic school for Coloured and African deaf pupils. Prior to this, the black pupils would be taught in a class separate from the white pupils at the Grimley School. In 1945, the Kutlwanong School for African deaf children was established in the Roodepoort/Krugersdorp area.[3]

5.1.1. The first Deaf school in Cape Town

The first Catholic school for hearing children was established in Cape Town by Bishop Raymond Griffith in 1860. It was originally a school run by lay people. Griffith wanted to get a community of religious sisters to come to take over the school. However, he was unsuccessful.[4] It was only during the time of Griffiths' successor, Bishop Grimley, and the arrival of the Cabra Dominican Sisters in Cape Town in 1863,[5] that the Sisters took up the administration of the school.

By 1873, Mother Dymphna Kinsella OP became aware of the need to start a school for the Deaf. She was herself a trained Deaf teacher from the first Catholic Deaf School started in

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[1] Boner, *The Irish Dominicans and education in the Western Cape*, 156.

[2] Bishop Grimley, the second bishop of Cape Town, had invited the Cabra Dominican Sisters to work in Cape Town.

[3] 'Our Deaf and Our Blind: A brief record of work in South Africa' in *The Visit of Helen Keller: Souvenir programme*, Box 152: Johannesburg St Vincent Convent and School for the Deaf, File 1104: Brochures, Programmes, Magazines (1934-2009), 12 (152/1104 12). KDSA, Johannesburg.

[4] Boner said that the delay in getting Dominican Sisters to come from Cabra may have been the result of a conflict of jurisdiction that had existed between the Dominican men and women that had started in the 1830s. See Boner, *Dominican women: A time to speak*, 32.

[5] Fr William Leeson, 'Pioneer work for the Deaf: Nuns first in the Cape to care for mutes,' *The Southern Cross*, 25 March 1931, 12/260.

Ireland, namely St Mary's School for the Deaf in Dublin.[6] As we saw in Chapter 3, the teachers of this school for the Deaf were trained by Abbé Jamet in Caen which used the methodology developed by the of the Paris Institute, started by Abbé de l'Épée and the later Abbé Sicard. They developed a system of education that did not use natural sign language *per se* but rather a system of methodical signs, adapted to help Deaf people understand spoken French and to analyse the written word, and dactylology (finger-spelling).

Kinsella could not manage the task of running a school for Deaf children on top of her other responsibilities[7] and so employed a young 24-year old Irish Deaf teacher, Bridget Lyne,[8] to teach in the Deaf school. Lyne had been one of Kinsella's top pupils at the Deaf school in Dublin before she came out to South Africa. Shortly after Lyne's arrival in Cape Town in March 1874, the school was opened in Cape Town.[9] Lyne worked as the only teacher for thirteen years until her untimely death in 1887.

One of the Dominican Sisters was appointed to run the school after Lyne's death. This manual method remained the official medium of instruction in this school for 45 years and the school continued to employ Deaf teachers.

5.1.2. First Catholic deaf chaplain: Fr Frederick Charles Kolbe

The first deaf chaplain was Fr Frederick Charles Kolbe, born in George, in 1854. He was a convert and the son of a nonconformist[10] missionary who came to work in South Africa with the London Missionary Society. Frederick Kolbe was ordained in 1882 and started his ministry in South Africa. However, in 1884, just two years after his ordination both his hearing and his eyesight deteriorated.[11] His deafness and bad eyesight proved to be a great hindrance to doing parish ministry and so he devoted himself more fully to the work of teaching and

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[6] Boner, *The Irish Dominicans and education in the Western Cape*, 156.
[7] Mother Dymphna Kinsella is the foundress of the Cabra Dominican Sisters in the Western Cape.
[8] See Kathleen Boner, *Dominican women,* 137 and 'Pioneer work for the Deaf', *The Southern Cross*, 12/260. Some publications spell her surname as Lynne.
[9] Kathleen Boner, *Dr FC Kolbe*, 257.
[10] The nonconformist churches where those that dissented and did not conform to doctrines of the established church in England, the Anglican Church. Among these churches are the Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, Congregationalist churches and the Quakers.
[11] Kathleen Boner, *Dr FC Kolbe*, 226.

lecturing. He became a renowned educationist and commentator on South African political life.

After ordination, his residence was next door to St Mary's school, as well as the school for the deaf in Cape Town. Consequently, Kolbe became increasingly aware of the needs of the deaf children. At the time, many parents of deaf children were reluctant to have their children attend school because deafness was perceived to be 'a stigma on the family name or a sign of mental deficiency.'[12] In 1883, Kolbe gave a lecture in Cape Town to raise awareness regarding the plight as well as the potential of deaf children. Due to ignorance, he believed,[13] many deaf children were denied the advantage of an education at either the Joseph's School or the School for the Deaf in Worcester. He held up the example of Bridget Lyne and her work at the St Joseph School, as a case in point. She was a wonderful example of the valuable contribution deaf people could make to society.

> The teacher of our school here, Miss Lyne, displays very high abilities indeed: besides English, she knows French very well, and some time ago, learning that the parents of two of her pupils could only speak Dutch, and that therefore the lads' education was more or less useless at home, she set to work and taught herself Dutch that she might teach them.[14]

Kolbe began to learn sign language from Bridget Lyne. He became so proficient in sign language that he was able to teach the deaf children their catechism and assist in the school, whenever required.[15] He continued to have a lifelong devotion and concern for deaf children until his death in 1936.[16]

5.1.3. The second school for the deaf in South Africa

The De la Bat School for the Deaf for white Afrikaans-speaking deaf children was the second school to be established in South Africa. In 1881, William Murray, a minister of the Dutch Reformed Church in Worcester, discovered a deaf boy in his congregation by the name of Piet de la Bat. Rather than send him to the Cabra Sisters' school in Cape Town, 112 miles away, he

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[12] Ibid, 258.
[13] Ibid, 259.
[14] Quoted in Boner, *Dr FC Kolbe*, 259.
[15] Boner, *Dr FC Kolbe*, 260.
[16] Mary Singleton, 'Monsignor Kolbe,' *The Southern Cross,* 7 January 1948, 6.

decided to start his own school for the deaf.[17] It was suspected that there were also fears among the Dutch Reformed clergy their deaf congregants would be won over to the Catholic faith if they were permitted to attend the Cabra Dominican school for the deaf in Cape Town.[18] He attached it to a school for the blind that had already been established by the Dutch Reformed Church in 1847.

The young boy's brother, Jan de la Bat, was a teacher. The Church Synod agreed to send Jan to the Guyot School for the Deaf in Groningen, Holland for training.[19] Jan de la Bat retired from being principal in December 1926, after 45 years of service to the school for the deaf.

Jan de la Bat was succeeded by his son, G. de la Bat. The younger man had initially planned to do his theological training at Princeton in the USA. However, he changed his plans and went to the Clarke School for the Deaf in Northampton, Massachusetts instead.[20] On his return he continued to build up the school, no longer as a manual school, but now as an oral one.

5.1.4. The Kingwilliamstown Dominican School for the Deaf

In 1884, a young deaf boy, called Tom Moore, was brought to the sisters in Kingwilliamstown in the hope that he could be educated. Sister Stephana Hanshuber was appointed to take on this responsibility. She had arrived in South Africa two years previously. She had trained at the Institute for the Deaf and Dumb in Dillingen, Bavaria in Germany. This institute was dedicated to training teachers in the oral method of deaf education. A few others joined the school so that by 1888, the Kingwilliamstown Convent School for the Education of the Deaf

[17] In the souvenir programme prepared for the visit of Helen Keller to South Africa in 1951, the following explanation is given for the establishment of the deaf school in Worcester. 'Naturally a minister of the Dutch Reformed Church in the country would be concerned to have a deaf member of his congregation educated in his own home language, so when the Rev. William Murray of Worcester found a deaf boy, Piet de la Bat by name, he did not arrange to send him to the school 112 miles away but convinced the Church Synod that they must have their own school.' 'Our Deaf and our Blind: A brief record of work in South Africa,' AW Blaxall, *The visit of Helen Keller to South Africa*, Souvenir programme, 152/1104 12, KDSA, Johannesburg.

[18] See Kathleen Boner, *The Irish Dominicans and education in the Western Cape*, 158.

[19] There appears to have been some collaboration with the Dominican Sisters in his training. In 1962, Desmond Hatton wrote: 'It is interesting to recall that Dr. J. B. G. de la Bat first learned sign language from Mother Dympna and later, after studying further, became the first principal of the Worcester School for the Deaf. This school was opened by the Dutch Reformed Church.' 'The deaf to hear …' *The Southern Cross*, 21 November 1962, 5/557.

[20] 'Our Deaf and Our Blind: a brief record of work in South Africa,' *The visit of Helen Keller: Souvenir programme*, 13-14.

was formally established.[21] This school adopted the oral method of Deaf education from the outset, using the so-called German method, developed by Samuel Heinecke.[22]

When Sr Stephana died on 9 October 1897,[23] Sr Gisella Greissl,[24] who had also trained at Dillingen and Gmund in Germany, was already the school's new principal. She had taken over after her profession on 9 July 1895. In 1897, the school had ten deaf children.[25] Greissl taught art and commercial subjects. Among her pupils was the famous William Bevington, who won a bursary to study art at Rhodes University after he painted 'an outstanding portrait likeness of Cecil Rhodes.'[26] From there, he went to study art at the Royal College of Arts in London before returning to Cape Town and becoming a professor of Fine Arts at the University of Cape Town. He lectured there until his death in 1953.

It was during Sr Greissl's tenure as principal that the school, in 1917, was recognised by the Cape Department of Education. It was given a partial government grant. Prior to this, it had been a private Catholic school that did not receive any state aid. After receiving the government grant, the school was obliged to follow the Cape Department of Education's curriculum for schools for the deaf. Greissl remained in charge of the school until her retirement in 1924.

5.1.5. Development of the Catholic schools for the deaf

5.1.5.1. St Joseph's School

In 1896, another Deaf teacher Anne Marsh was brought from Ireland to help teach in the Deaf school. The school was still small and in financial difficulties. Marsh had originally come out

[21] See 'Beginning and development of the School,' 152/1104 43, KDSA. Also see Mariette Gouws, *All for God's people*, 207.
[22]Gouws, *All for God's people*, 35.
[23] Sr M. Eleonora OSD, 'Sister Mary Stephana Hanshuber OSD,' 6-8., Box 1: Annals 1897-1903; 1905-1906 Book 18, 6-8. KWT Motherhouse, KDSA.
[23] 'Sister Greissl,' 1.
[24] Sister Gisella Griessl was born on 13 December 1865 in Pentenacker, Bavaria. At the age of 14, she started a teacher's diploma course in Kaufbeuren. In 1885, she passed her examination and went to work as principal of an oral deaf school in Ursberg. In July 1892, she entered the convent of St Ursula as a candidate. She arrived at the motherhouse in Kingwilliamstown in 1893. She died on 11 July 1957. See 'Sister M. Gisella Greissl OP,' 1. Box 19 Necrology, File 349 (19/349), KDSA. Also see 'Obituary: Sr Gisella Greissl,' *The Silver Star*, 1957, 130.
[25] Sr M. Eleonora OSD, 'Sister Mary Stephana Hanshuber OSD,' 6-8.
[26] 'Sister Greissl,' 1.

to be an assistant teacher. However, she discovered on arrival that she was the school's only teacher of approximately 40 children. She worked in the school for close to ten years.

During this time, Marsh trained a young South African woman as a teacher too. Mrs F.E. Hugo came to the school as a pupil in 1890 at the age of four. She stayed until 1897, when at the age of 12, she went to the Exeter School for the Deaf in England to continue her education for a further three years. On her return to Cape Town, and at the tender age of fifteen, she began to teach at the school. She received coaching from Marsh. She taught handiwork subjects like fret-work, chip-carving and basket work.[27] Hugo worked at the school until her retirement 35 years later in December 1936.[28]

Fr Kolbe continued his work with the school, also assisting Marsh where needed.[29] This co-operation and collaboration between a school for the deaf and a Catholic chaplain laid the foundation and model for future Catholic Deaf ministry in South Africa. The school provided education while the chaplain was responsible for the pastoral and catechetical needs of the deaf children and the deaf adults. This collaboration between school and chaplain was reinforced with Sr Techilde Kolbe, Fr Kolbe's sister, [30] became principal of the school.

The school for the deaf continued to expand so that by 1906, another Deaf teacher Hannah Farrell came out from Ireland to teach.[31] She taught in sign language and was the third Deaf teacher to have joined the school staff. In 1908, Farrell came into conflict with the principal Sr Techilde Kolbe. Farrell claimed that the principal was ineffective as a teacher because she had no grasp of sign language. Farrell was not going to just keep quiet when she saw an injustice at play. She had the interests of the deaf children at heart and wanted them to receive the best education that could be offered. Sr Techilde Kolbe was affronted by Farrell's outspokenness. Sr Techilde demanded that Farrell be summarily dismissed and sent back to Ireland. This all blew over and Farrell continued to teach at the school until her untimely death, in 1919, from tuberculosis.

[27] '35 years' work for deaf: retirement of Mrs. F. E. Hugo,' *The Southern Cross*, 13 January 1937, 2/18.
[28] Mrs Hugo was the last Deaf teacher to be employed at a Catholic Deaf school until the 1970s.
[29] Boner, *Dominican Women*, 147.
[30] Boner, *Dominican women*, 147.
[31] Boner, *Dominican women*, 146.

A major shift was taking place within the school for the deaf run by the Cabra Dominican Sisters. Boner pointed out that although the school for the deaf in Cape Town was getting good results, nevertheless, the Cabra school still lagged behind the other schools for the deaf in South Africa.[32] When Sister Berchmans Cotter became the provincial in 1922, she decided to send Sr Alacoque Broderick to the Dominican School for the Deaf in Kingwilliamstown to learn the oral method of educating the deaf.[33] This was seen as the new modern and innovative method using the German or Heinecke's method of lip-reading and the teaching of a spoken language. After her time in Kingwilliamstown, Sr Alacoque became a convert to the oral method. Gradually, the Cabra Dominican Sisters changed their approach to deaf education for all their South African schools for the deaf.[34]

This internal shift among the Cabra Sisters was reinforced in 1925, when the Union government's Department of Education took over administration of all the schools for the deaf. The government was also in favour of the oral approach to deaf education. The oral method was understood to be the scientific and modern approach to deaf education. A devastating implication of this shift, from manual to oral schools, meant that many Deaf teachers lost their jobs or were excluded from the education field. In 1928, parliament in Cape Town passed the Vocational Training and Special Schools Act, no 29. This Act ensured that all special schools fell directly under the Union Education Department.

5.1.5.2. Kingwilliamstown School for the Deaf

The Kingwilliamstown School was similarly affected. Sisters Cyrilla Hötzl[35] and Sr Verena Huber[36] took over the reins in January 1925. They were both trained at the Yale School for the Deaf, also known as the Clarke School, in Northampton, Massachusetts in the United

[32] Boner, *Dominican Women*, 149.
[33] 'Pioneer work for the Deaf,' *The Southern Cross*, 25 March 1931, 16/260.
[34] See Boner, *Dominican Women*, 138-149 and 'Jubilarian taught deaf for 44 years,' *The Southern Cross*, 19 September 1962, 9/453. A similar process happened in St Mary's School for the Deaf in Cabra, Ireland. Dominican Sisters, like Sr Nicholas Griffey OP, became exponents of the oral method of education.
[35] Sister Cyrilla Hötzl was born on 5 December 1883 at Dengling. After leaving school she worked at an orphanage in Kaufbeuren until she entered the Kingwilliamstown Congregation in Schlehdorf in 1905. She was professed in the Kingwilliamstown convent chapel on 17 October 1908. She started work at the deaf school in 1925. She died on 27 September 1959. 'Sister M Cyrilla Hötzl died 27th September 1959,' 1. 20/376, KDSA.
[36] Sr Verena Huber was born on 14 November 1889, the first born of 12 children. She grew up in Mazing near Osterhofen, Bavaria. She entered the convent at Schlehdorf in 1912 and arrived in South Africa in March 1914. She was professed on 10 October 1915. She started teaching at the Kingwilliamstown deaf school in 1925. She continued teaching at St Vincent School in 1934 until 1948. She continued teaching in hearing schools until her retirement in 1972. She died on 6 June 1978. 'Sr Verena Huber OP (Katarina),' 1. 26/606, KDSA.

States.[37] When these two Sisters took over the school, there were 16 girls and 10 boys.[38] Despite the small number of pupils, the school had a good reputation in the country.

The school continued in Kingwilliamstown until the end of 1933. Most of the pupils came from the Reef area and so a move to Johannesburg was a logical step forward.

5.1.5.3. N.G. Sending Kerk's Deaf school, Worcester

In 1928, the tenth Synod of the N.G. Sending Kerk decided to take up a special Synodal Collection with the view to starting a Deaf school for coloured children. On 1 February 1933, the school was opened in Parker Street, Worcester with its first teacher Izak Februarie.[39] The school had very humble beginnings, but when it was recognised by the State and received a state loan, it was able to purchase land and build more adequate facilities. The pupils and staff moved over to the new school on 20 August 1936. Mrs M.S. Taljaard was the first principal until her retirement in 1942, and then Mr D. du Toit took over. In 1948, he managed to obtain more land and enlarged the school and hostel. The school employed the oral method of education.[40]

5.1.5.4. St Vincent School for the Deaf

The deaf school in Kingwilliamstown was in existence for 50 years. In 1934, it was transferred to the suburb of Melrose in Johannesburg, its present location. It amalgamated with another small deaf school that had been started by the Johannesburg Deaf and Dumb Association. According to the chairman of the Johannesburg Deaf and Dumb Association, Colonel M.C. Rowland, the school had been battling for several years without government assistance. Due to the lack of funds, it had to limit its training until Standard 2.[41]

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[37] 'Beginnings and development of the School,' 2. 152/1104 43, KDSA.

[38] My maternal grandfather Joseph Hirst, and his two brothers – Edward Hirst and Barney Hirst – attended the Kingwilliamstown school in the 1920s.

[39] Veronica Da Rocha OP, 'A short history of the schools for Coloured Deaf children in South Africa,' Unpublished paper, 1981, 13. Box Education: Deaf education – Wittebome Miscellaneous papers, File: Story of Dominican Schools for the Deaf Cape Town, CDSA, Cape Town.

[40] Da Rocha, 'A short history,' 16.

[41] 'New school for the deaf,' *TSC*, 31 January 1934, 1/65, 16/80.

The amalgamation of the two schools was not well-received in all quarters. While amalgamation was being mooted, parents of the deaf school run by Jessie Davis[42] objected strenuously. The *Rand Daily Mail* ran an article on 17 October 1933, outlining the parents' complaints.[43] Firstly, the parents pointed out that the new school was to be a public school, and so, they objected to the fact that it was going to be 'controlled by a religious institution.' Secondly, they were concerned that the staff of the existing school were going to be dispensed with and lose their jobs. Thirdly, they objected to the fact that the new teachers coming from Kingwilliamstown were from Belgium[44] and they were convinced that they would be unsuitable for teaching South African children. Fourthly, not one of the children to be educated in this new school had parents who were Roman Catholics.

The parents had set up a committee which intended to take their protest to the Minister for Education, Mr J.H. Hofmeyr. They wanted to raise their objections but also insist that if the amalgamation went through, then there had to be a separate hostel for the Protestant children.[45]

Not all the parents were of the same mind. One parent of a deaf child from Springs, T.A. Chittenden, wrote a letter to the editor of *The Star* on 26 October 1933.[46] She expressed her sincere gratitude and appreciation to the Kingwilliamstown Sisters for the wonderful tuition given to her son. The Sisters had encouraged her son to attend the Wesleyan Church in Kingwilliamstown and never tried to force him 'to embrace the Catholic faith, if he did not wish to do so.' Chittenden asked everyone involved to look first to the interests of the deaf children and not to bring religious differences into the matter at all.

On Monday 23 October 1933, a number of Protestant ministers attended the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Johannesburg Association of the Deaf and Dumb, which was chaired by B.C. Vickers, the Mayor of Johannesburg.[47] The ministers expressed their outrage at the

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[42] 'New school for the deaf,' *TSC*, 1/65, 16/80. Also see Arthur W. Blaxall, 'Historical Review,' *The Silent Messenger (TSM)*, April 1952, 2.

[43] 'Parents to Protest: Deaf and Dumb School transferred to R.C. sisterhood,' *Rand Daily Mail*, 17 October 1933. 153/1112 59, KDSA.

[44] This was incorrect as the sisters were of German origin.

[45] 'Parents to Protest,' 153/1112 59, KDSA.

[46] 'To the Editor of *The Star*,' 26 October 1933. 153/1112 59, KDSA.

[47] See 'Deaf and Dumb School, a lively meeting, transfer to R.C. sisterhood,' *Rand Daily Mail*, 24 October 193, 153/1112 60, KDSA and 'School for deaf and dumb, sectarian issue raised, strong criticism of committee,' *The Star*, 24 October 1933, 153/1112 64, KDSA.

decision taken by the committee to hand over the school to the Kingwilliamstown Dominican Sisters. The committee was accused of 'hoodwinking the public' by agreeing to the amalgamation. Negotiations were conducted without the knowledge of the general public or even the parents of the school. Some complained that they only received the news through the press. Some of the speakers threatened to withdraw their children from the school.

Colonel Rowland, the chairperson of the Association, responded to the accusations levelled at the committee. He started by pointing out that he regretted that sectarianism had been brought into the whole matter. He said that when the committee made its decision it did so looking to the best interests of the deaf children. Colonel Rowland said that the committee that made the decision consisted of eight Protestants and two Catholics. The group that was deputed to negotiate with the Sisters included no Catholics. He denied that the negotiations had been done in secret without public knowledge. Rowland reiterated that the decision to amalgamate the schools would serve the best interests of the children.

Rowland's response did not satisfy some of the ministers of religion at the meeting and they walked out in protest. Then Dr L. van Schalkwyk, a representative from the Department of Education, explained to the assembly why the Department had agreed to the amalgamation. He stated that 'if any of the parents objected to their children residing in hostels conducted by the Sisters, other religious denominations could provide their own hostels if they wished to do so.'[48] He went onto explain that the schools for the deaf in Worcester and Kingwilliamstown were conducted by religious denominations but for educational purposes they were to be non-denominational. Van Schalkwyk also pointed out 'that for 70 years the English-speaking community has availed itself of the educational facilities provided by the Roman Catholics schools.'[49]

In a letter from Sr Mary Joseph to the Mother General, Sr Joseph claimed that Miss Davis and a parent at the school, Mr Fletcher,[50] organised the protest. In her report, she mentioned comments from Colonel Rowland that the Sisters 'must not have anything to do with Miss

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[48] 'Deaf and Dumb School: A lively meeting,' *Rand Daily Mail*, 24 October 1933, 12.

[49] 'School for deaf and dumb, sectarian issue raised, strong criticism of committee,' *The Star*, 24 October 1933. 153/1112 64, KDSA.

[50] Mr J.F. Fletcher was a member of the Plymouth Brethren. See Letter, unknown sister to Mother General, n.d. 153/1112 7, KDSA.

Davies. She is out to harm us if she can[51] and is not acting above board.'[52] She also reported that Mr Walsh, a non-Catholic who supported the amalgamation plans, suggested not to employ Davis as 'she is out against you and, aided by Fletcher, will do all the harm she can in an underhand way.'[53] According to Sr Joseph, the protest began when the Association's committee was asked 'how they could dare to hand over their school to the R.C.s…'[54] She also reported that an irate caller phoned her saying: 'You damned Roman Catholics, we are not going to have our children made damned R.Cs also.'[55]

As the Union Education Department, the Johannesburg Association for the Deaf and Dumb and the Dominican Sisters had already agreed to the decision, the protest faltered and the plans that the Sisters take over the amalgamated school went ahead. The newly amalgamated school was called St Vincent School for the Deaf. It was named after the Spanish Dominican preacher St Vincent Ferrer, who was purported to have healed a deaf child.[56] It was officially opened and blessed by Bishop O'Leary OMI on 23 January 1934.[57]

When the school opened its doors, there were 38 pupils and 5 teachers.[58] Sr Cyrilla Hötzl (1934-43) continued as principal as she had been previously in the Kingwilliamstown School.[59] Jessie Davis was retained as a staff member even though she had been involved in organising the protest. A post was also offered to Miss Holland, Davis' colleague in the previous school. However, Holland declined the offer as she was moving to Ceylon. St Vincent was a government subsidised school meaning that the Department of Education paid the teachers and consequently had a say in the running of the school.

Eight months after the school opened, it received a visit from J.H. Hofmeyr, the Minister for the Interior, Education and Public Health on Saturday afternoon 11 August 1934. He

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[51] Colonel Rowland was himself a prominent Catholic in Johannesburg. More on this contribution to the ministry to the deaf follows later in this chapter.
[52] Letter, unknown sister to the Mother General, 3.
[53] Letter, unknown sister to the Mother General, 3.
[54] Letter, unknown sister to the Mother General, 4.
[55] Ibid, 2.
[56] St Vincent Ferrer OP healed Guillaume de Villiers, a deaf boy. Quoted in the previous chapter.
[57] 'New school for the deaf,' *The Southern Cross*, 31 January 1934, 1/65, 16/80.
[58] 'History/Development of St Vincent School,' *St Vincent School Magazine*, 1999, 5-6. Box EDU29, St Vincent School for the Deaf: School magazines, KDSA.
[59] Sr Cyrilla was known as an excellent organiser, leader and administrator. She is credited with laying the foundation for St Vincent's remarkable expansion. She retired from teaching in 1941. For more information on the life of Sr Cyrilla, see 'Sister M. Cyrilla, deaf school pioneer,' *The Southern Cross*, 21 October 1959, 12/508.

expressed his pleasure that this school for the deaf had been established in Johannesburg because 'until recently there was hardly anything being done in the interior of the Union.'[60] He expressed his hope that the school would have a prosperous future. He emphasised that while the school was getting support from the government presently, it could not depend on that alone. The people of Johannesburg needed to give financial assistance to the school too.

The controversy regarding the establishment of St Vincent School for the Deaf in Johannesburg did not die down immediately. On 13 November 1935, the editor of the Dutch Reformed Church's magazine, *Die Kerkbode*, referred to a letter sent to the magazine from Dominee G. de la Bat, the principal of the School for the Deaf in Worcester.[61] De la Bat complained that pupils that should have been registered at the Worcester School were being encouraged to attend St Vincent School. This was being done in an honest way as the Roman Catholic School was advertising extensively for pupils. Many pupils who should have come to Worcester were going to the Johannesburg school. He said that the Dutch Reformed Church was putting lots of money into extending and developing facilities at the school in Worcester for Afrikaans-speaking deaf children. He said that it was the duty of the Church to make parents aware of this situation especially since the education of the deaf in Roman Catholic schools for the deaf was being done in English and not Afrikaans.

In his comments, the editor supported Dominee de la Bat that it was important to warn all members of the church against sending their children to Roman Catholic schools, be they deaf or hearing schools. He went on to say that 'one needs to ask yourself what the Roman Catholic Church's intention is with regards their establishing big and expensive schools in situations where these needs are already catered for and not really needed.'[62] He concluded that the Roman Catholic Church's objective is to get Protestant children under their influence. In doing so, they get lifelong support from these children as well as ensuring the growth of Catholicism in Protestant countries. He questioned why the Roman Church did not use its resources to improve conditions in their own countries and leave the Protestants to themselves?

Despite the rivalry and competition between Catholics and Protestants, there were areas of support and collaboration too. Just previously in December 1934, Bishop Hennemann of Cape

[60] 'Official visit by minister: Mr J.H. Hofmeyr at deaf school,' *The Southern Cross*, 15 August 1934, 3/515.
[61] 'Dowe kinders van ons Kerk,' *Die Kerkbode*, 13 November 1935, 938. 153/1106 2, KDSA.
[62] 'Dowe kinders van ons Kerk,' 938.

Town complimented Dominee de la Bat and his wife for travelling all the way from Worcester to attend the Dominican-Grimley school concert in St Mary's School hall in Tuin Plein.[63]

> His Lordship told the people that the Principal of the Worcester School for the Deaf had travelled from Worcester and intended returning that night. His sole purpose in coming to Cape Town was to be present at the concert that evening. (Applause.)[64]

There was an ongoing collaboration between all the churches in the SANCD that had been established by Rev Arthur Blaxall in Bloemfontein in 1929.[65] Delegates from all churches were involved in deaf education in the SANCD throughout its history.[66] This is a wonderful tribute to the way in which having a common project can bring people together, even when they might have strong sectarian views, to work together and to support each other in a shared mission.

Sr Cyrilla continued to run the school until her retirement in 1943. Sr Verena Huber (1943-1947) succeeded her. Sr Verena was in her turn replaced by Sr Thomasia Knoepfle (1947-1969) as principal. Thomasia would be principal for 22 years and put her mark on the school.[67]

5.1.5.5. Dominican School for the Deaf, Wittebome

The Grimley School for the Deaf in Cape Town had, from its earliest years, admitted Coloured children to the school.[68] However, during the 1920s, the numbers of Coloured children

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[63] 'Concert by deaf pupils, fine work by the Dominicans,' *The Southern Cross*, 5 December 1934, 17/801.
[64] 'Concert by deaf pupils, fine work by the Dominicans,' *The Southern Cross*, 5 December 1934, 17/801.
[65] The decision to start the SANCD was taken at a meeting in Bloemfontein from 25-26 June 1928 of those involved with work among the deaf in South Africa. Present at this meeting were Anglicans Rev A.W. Blaxall and Mr D.H. Heron -Wright, Rev G. de la Bat from the Institute for the Deaf in Worcester, a Dutch Reformed school for the deaf, a Christian Brother F.C. McManus representing the Grimley Institute in Cape Town, Mother Mary Alacoque Broderick and Sr Verena Huber representing the Kingwilliamstown School, as well as a Miss T.A. Davis from the Johannesburg Deaf School. Two government officials were also present, namely, Dr L. van Schalkwyk from the Department of Education and Dr O.F. Black from the Department of the Interior. There were a further 8 delegates from other deaf-related organisations around the country which included two visitors from Glasgow and London. See *Report of the First Conference of workers amongst the Deaf, and the Deaf and Dumb, of South Africa* held in the Jubileum Hall, Bloemfontein, 25-26 June 1928. 153/1112 102, KDSA.
[66] A comprehensive history of the SANCD still needs to be written.
[67] 'Beginning and Development of the school,' 13. 152/1104 43, KDSA. For more information on her life, see 'Sr Thomasia (Luzia) Knoepfle OP: 1904-04-20 --1995-10-14,' Necrology Box 37, File 886 (37/886), KDSA.
[68] Arthur Blaxall, 'Historical review,' *The Silent Messenger,* April 1952, 2.

seeking admission to the school continued to grow.[69] Segregation won the day. In 1931, a new school building was built for the white deaf children and it was decided to build a new school for the Coloured children in Wynberg.[70] In 1937, the Dominican School for the Deaf, Wittebome was established as the first Catholic deaf school for African, Coloured and Indian[71] children in South Africa. Wittebome was a Coloured area approximately 20 kilometres from the Grimley school in the city centre of Cape Town.

When the new school opened its doors, there were 60 children on the roll.[72] The school provided for both academic and vocational training. A hostel was built for those children who travelled from other provinces in the country. It could accommodate 150 boarders.[73] In recognising that the school had previously been one, the Union Education Department allowed the Grimley school in Cape Town and the Wittebome school to continue as two departments of the same school. The schools had only one principal in Sister Germaine Lawrence.[74]

5.2. Catholic Deaf chaplaincies

Chaplains to the deaf were appointed to minister pastorally to the deaf often working in conjunction with the Dominican Sisters. The chaplains said Masses for the deaf, taught them catechism, gave retreats to the deaf and offered them the sacramental ministry of the church. In giving spiritual nourishment to deaf adults, the chaplains ensured that the deaf people were given access to the life of the church.

Not all dioceses provided chaplains for the deaf. In fact, initially only two dioceses appointed chaplains to minister to the deaf. These were the dioceses of Cape Town and Johannesburg.

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[69] See 'Supplement: New Dominican School for the Deaf, *The Southern Cross*, 21 July 1937, i-iv.
[70] 'Supplement: New Dominican School for the Deaf,' *TSC*, 21 July 1937, iv.
[71] No separate Catholic Deaf schools were opened for Indian children. Those that went to Catholic Deaf schools like Suzanne Lombard (neé Barrett), went to the Wittebome School.
[72] Da Rocha, 'A short history,' 9.
[73] 'Fine new block of buildings at Wittebome, Dominican Sisters' splendid work for the Deaf,' *The Southern Cross*, 21 July 1937.
[74] Da Rocha, 'A short history,' 9.

5.2.1. Deaf chaplains in Cape Town

5.2.1.1. Father T. Gill

After the death of Monsignor Kolbe in 1934, Fr Gill was appointed the deaf chaplain in Cape Town. He accepted this ministry with great enthusiasm and dedication until ill-health forced him to return to England in 1942. During his period as chaplain, he conducted many retreats and parish missions for the deaf Catholics in Cape Town. He learnt sign language and would teach catechism to the deaf Catholics each month and conducted Masses in sign.[75] When he conducted a retreat at the Cathedral in March 1934, approximately 80 deaf Catholics from all over the Western Cape attended. One young man was so eager to attend the retreat that he walked 24 miles from Belville and back daily.

> Many of them could converse by the modern method of lip-reading, so that Fr Gill both spoke the words and translated them by signs.[76]

The retreat included a visit from Bishop Hennemann who was surprised to see that there were so many Catholic Deaf people on the Peninsula. He concluded the retreat with a solemn pontifical benediction.

Three years later, Fr Gill led a three-day mission for the deaf at St Mary's parish. Prior to the start of the mission, he travelled all over the Peninsula 'wandering even on foot through the sands of the Cape Flats in search of his best friends, the deaf and dumb, both Coloured and European.'[77]

5.2.1.2. Father Ernest Green

After Fr Gill's return to England, the mantle of deaf chaplain was passed onto the newly ordained Father Ernest Green. He was ordained in Rome after completing his studies there.[78] Although born in Johannesburg on 11 May 1915,[79] his family moved to Cape Town in 1918. Green went to school at St Agnes Convent in Woodstock and Marist Brothers in

[75] 'Cathedral mission for the deaf: Sermons in sign language,' *TSC*, 28 March 1934, 2/194. Also see 'Concert by deaf pupils: Fine work by the Dominicans,' *TSC*, 5 December 1934, 17/801.
[76] 'Cathedral mission for the deaf,' *TSC*, 2/194.
[77] 'Mission for the Deaf: Fr T Gill's splendid work,' *TSC*, 24 March 1937, 2/214.
[78] 'Another SA-born bishop: Fr Ernest Green succeeds Bishop Boyle,' *TSC*, 4 May 1955, 1/205.
[79] 'Bishop Green's life in brief,' *TSC*, 2 March 1966, 2/98.

Rondebosch.[80] After school, he worked for a liquor firm for five years before beginning his studies for the priesthood at Mungret College, Limerick in Ireland. Two years later he continued his studies at Propaganda Fide College in Rome, where he was ordained on 24 February 1941.[81]

His first assignment was to the Wittebome parish in Wynberg. Thus, began his interest in the deaf. Just like Kolbe before him, he took an interest in the deaf children and learnt sign language and was the school chaplain in 1943.[82] He did not restrict himself to working in the school but, in 1947, established the Hostel for the for 'non-European deaf boys'[83] in Heathfield, Cape Town. The hostel was dedicated to both Bishop Hennemann and Blessed Martin de Porres.[84] The vision behind the hostel was to provide accommodation for deaf men working in Cape Town.

> The hostel has proved a boon, for, after leaving school, the deaf are often easily led astray, because of bad housing conditions and the danger of bad company. Since the establishment of the Hostel juvenile delinquency amongst the deaf has decreased considerably.[85]

The first seven residents moved in only in 1948 on the feast of Corpus Christi.[86] Their ages ranged from 17-25 and they had various jobs from tailors, shoemakers, gardeners and labourers. It is interesting to note that the only employment on offer for these deaf men were jobs which confirmed that they were to be 'hewers of wood and drawers of water' as envisaged by the apartheid state.[87]

5.2.2. Prominent Catholic laity and Deaf chaplains in Johannesburg

5.2.2.1. Colonel M.C. Rowland

Colonel M.C. Rowland, born in 1862, was a prominent Catholic layperson in Johannesburg. He was a soldier in the British Imperial Army rising to the rank of Major in 1906. He served in the

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[80] 'Another SA-born bishop,' *TSC*, 4 May 1955, 1/205 and 11/215.
[81] 'Bishop Green's life,' *TSC*, 2 March 1966, 2/98.
[82] 'Bishop Green's life in brief,' *TSC*, 2 March 1966, 2/98.
[83] 'Another SA-born bishop,' *TSC*, 11/215.
[84] 'Another SA-born bishop,' *TSC*, 1/205.
[85] 'South African boys town,' *TSC*, 1 August 1951, 10/368.
[86] 'South African boys town,' *TSC*, 10/368.
[87] See the preceding chapter 4 above.

Union Defence Force until his retirement from the military in 1919. Thereafter, he committed himself to charitable works for the St Vincent de Paul society and involvement with the Catholic Federation of the Transvaal.[88]

In 1926, Rowland also gave himself to serving the deaf community by the chairperson of the Johannesburg Deaf and Dumb Association. He was a founding member of the South African National Council for the Deaf when it was established in 1929. He served as chairperson of this body from 1937-1947. As we have already discussed, he was 'largely instrumental in arranging the transfer of St Vincent's School for the Deaf from Kingwilliamstown to Melrose.'[89] He became chairperson of the school board too. Due to his long-serving commitment to the deaf, when the Johannesburg Deaf Association opened its first old age home for the Deaf in Bedfordview they called it the Colonel Rowland Home for the Aged Deaf.[90]

He died in April 1947 at the Frere Hospital in East London and was buried from the pro-Cathedral in Kerk Street, Johannesburg on 11 April 1947. Fr Philip Erasmé OMI presided at the Requiem Mass. Bishop O'Leary OMI was in attendance and seated in the sanctuary. [91]

5.2.2.2. Fr Michael Ramsay OSM[92]

Fr Michael Ramsay was born in London in 1882. In 1905, Ramsay joined the Anglican Order of the Society of the Sacred Mission. In 1914, he was sent out to work in Modderfontein in the Orange Free State as an Anglican missionary until 1921. He then returned to England and was received into the Catholic Church. Subsequently, he joined the Servite Order and studied for the Catholic priesthood from 1921 until his ordination in the Servite London church in December 1927 at the mature age of 45.

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[88] The Catholic Federation was set up by Bishop O'Leary in 1926. The Federation was an umbrella body comprising all Catholic lay societies and sodalities. Its objective was to promote the welfare of Catholics and the church in the Transvaal vicariate. See Joy B. Brain, *The Catholic Church in the Transvaal* (Johannesburg: Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, 1991), 209.

[89] 'Death of Colonel Rowland', *TSC*, 23 April 1947, 1/159.

[90] 'Death of Colonel Rowland', *TSC*, 23 April 1947, 1/159.

[91] Ibid.

[92] See Desmond Hatton, 'Man of serenity,' *TSC*, 31 December 1969, 5.

In 1927, he came out to work in Swaziland[93] and established the St Mary's parish in Lobamba in 1929.[94] He worked in Swaziland until his appointment as a parish priest in Nigel, South Africa in 1938. During his tenure, he built the parish church in this mining town. In 1948, at the age of 66, he was appointed as chaplain to St Vincent School for the Deaf in Melrose, Johannesburg. He continued in this role until his death in 1969 at the age of 87.

After this brief outline on Catholic chaplaincy to the deaf, it is necessary to give an account of the history of the schools for the deaf after 1948.

5.3. The development of the Catholic schools for the deaf, 1948-1968

By 1948, there were only three Catholic schools for the deaf in the country. Two schools catered for white children and the Wittebome school provided education for black[95] deaf children. With the onset of apartheid and the Nationalist Party's policy of separate development and mother language education this was to change.

5.3.1. Dominican-Grimley

When, on 16 March 1951, Helen Keller and Polly Thompson, her assistant and interpreter, visited the Dominican-Grimley school, it was technically still twinned with the Wittebome School. However, for all intents and purposes, it had become a white deaf school committed to the oral method of education. Helen Keller reaffirmed the value of this educational process when in speaking to the children saying:

> Well do I understand that things like speech are harder for you because you cannot hear but, believe me, I never was sorry that I learned to speak and your teachers have faith in your ability to acquire speech. I want you to work hard on your articulation, and justify your teacher's belief in your powers. If you do, it will be one of your proudest triumphs; and you will leave a banner for the deaf who follow you.[96]

[93] Clement Langa, *Relations between the first Catholic missionaries and the people of Swaziland (1914-1955)*, (Unpublished Doctorate, University of South Africa, 2001), 46.
[94] Langa, *Relations between the first Catholic missionaries*, 54.
[95] Black will refer to people who are African, Coloured and Indian. At the time, the term Non-European was used but it is offensive.
[96] 'Helen Keller visits Dominican School for Deaf,' *TSC,* 21 March 1951, 1/133 and 12/144.

In delivering the welcome to Helen Keller, *The Southern Cross* reported, one of the senior pupils described as having no hearing at all, said, 'in a clear voice which was heard and understood by all present',[97] that they had learnt so much about Helen Keller and now they had the pleasure to see and talk with her. She expressed the hope that Keller would make South Africa her home.[98]

In 1953, the Dominican-Grimley and the Wittebome schools were formally separated as two different schools. The Dominican-Grimley School remained committed to education using the oral method as it continues to do so to the present day. At the school's regular biennial general meetings, invited dignitaries, as well as many parents, were given displays on the benefits of the oral method. For example, in 1957, a report in *The Southern Cross*, a Catholic weekly, recounted that 'before the speeches, deaf children of various ages showed on stage the progress they had made in lip-reading and speaking, by a series of games, tests, exercises and a little play.'[99]

> The seniors took part in an unrehearsed quiz, grasping the normally spoken questions entirely by lip-reading and answering questions just as difficult as those asked on Springbok radio much more promptly and accurately than their unhandicapped elders on the air. Even the loud and clear "I do not know" from one of them was loudly applauded, for it was the measure of triumph over a handicap.[100]

Deaf children were called handicapped, deviants from the hearing norm. The solution to the problem was seen as teaching Deaf children using the most modern methods of training, so that they can overcome their handicap and thereby 'take part in ordinary life.'[101]

In October 1958, Sisters Basil and Michael, former principal and vice-principal of the Dominican-Grimley School, returned from an International Congress on the Modern Educational Treatment of Deafness at Manchester University in England. They had been impressed by a special method of training in 'sound perception' through music. It had been

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[97] 'Helen Keller visits,' *TSC*, 12/144.

[98] 'Helen Keller visits,' *TSC*, 12/144. Keller had an extensive visit throughout South Africa, visiting not just all the Catholic deaf schools but others too. For her full itinerary, see 'The Visit of Helen Keller to South Africa, 15 March to 22 May 1951, Souvenir programme, 16-17. 152/1104 12, KDSA.

[99] 'Work for Deaf children,' *TSC*, 29 May 1957, 12/268.

[100] 'Work for Deaf children,' *TSC*, 12/268

[101] 'Nuns are up-to-date in training the deaf to earn a living,' *TSC*, 24 June 1959, 12/300.

demonstrated at the conference by the pupils of Sint-Michielsgested School for the deaf in Holland. They planned to introduce this method to their own schools in South Africa.[102]

In 1959, at the Dominican-Grimley's biennial general meeting, the pupils of the school put on entertainment for parents and friends. In attendance were also Archbishop Owen McCann, Major P. van der Byl, a member of Parliament and Dr E.D. Cooper from the City Health Department.

> Demonstrations, on the school stage before a large audience, included first lessons in lip-reading for three-year-olds (the age from which children are admitted to the school); use of up-to-date instruments for training; and displays of rhythmic movements to music, which the children can feel but cannot hear. Resounding applause greeted such simple actions as a small boy brushing his hair, a little girl skipping, at the unheard, lip-read instructions of their teacher. A youngster playing a small tune on a miniature "blow organ" received an ovation worthy of an organist giving a recital.[103]

The reason for the applause was explained as the audience appreciating these demonstrations as 'proof that children cut off from the world by lack of hearing, and thus of speech, were finding a point of contact which would, in time, enable them to take an active part in everyday life.'[104]

The equipping of children for active participation in everyday life was vital for the employment of deaf people. Major van der Byl, in proposing the adoption of the school's biennial report, quoted the situation of two of the school's past pupils who were employed by Cape Town City Council as typists. They were earning the same salaries as 'unhandicapped girls'.[105] In seconding the report, Dr Cooper said he was interested to see 'that commerce was now able to employ some deaf persons and thought the time might have come for legislation to foster the employment of the deaf.'[106]

[102] 'Cape Town nuns plan to start new training for the deaf,' *TSC*, 29 October 1958, 12/528.
[103] 'Nuns are up-to-date,' *TSC*, 12/300.
[104] 'Nuns are up-to-date,' *TSC*, 12/300.
[105] Ibid, 12/300.
[106] Ibid, 12/300.

Through their work and efforts, the Dominican Sisters were often commended by visitors like Helen Keller[107], the Archbishop of Cape Town,[108] mayors and mayoresses,[109] and government officials for their patient and selfless service. On 13 May 1963, Dr J.J.P. Op't Hof, secretary to the Department of Education, Arts and Science, commended the work of the Sisters in starting the first deaf school, on the occasion of the centennial celebrations for the presence of the Irish Dominican Sisters in South Africa, and said:

> This deed of faith has opened up new horizons for those handicapped, and the school has helped them to lead normal lives . . . The teaching of deaf children was the most difficult form of teaching and required the highest degree of professional training. It was impossible to over-estimate its value and the help it gave the deaf in adult life, when they would otherwise be isolated by their handicap.[110]

This resonated with the aim of the school, reflected in the school's commemorative booklet especially produced for the occasion, as to equip 'the deaf child morally and intellectually to take his place in the hearing world as a well-adjusted and useful citizen.'[111] The well-adjusted and useful citizen was also to be shaped by the apartheid mentality of separating people into racial categories.

Also speaking at the centenary celebrations Archbishop Owen McCann of Cape Town said: 'I am proud of this institution because it was the first of its kind in South Africa and from it others have sprung.'[112] However, under National Party rule, the Cabra Dominican Sisters had

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[107] 'My heart warmed as you spoke of the noble work which the Sisters are doing in this school, to enable these children to participate in a rightful share of the joy of normal living and I call down a blessing on your labours' Helen Keller. See 'Helen Keller visits Dominican School for Deaf,' *TSC*, 21 March 1951, 1/133.

[108] 'Archbishop McCann praised the love and devotion shown by the staff in the great work of helping these children to take their place as useful and wanted members of society. Employers were becoming increasingly ready to take on the handicapped who had been properly trained,' quoted in 'Work for Deaf Children,' *TSC*, 29 May 1957, 12/268. 'He [McCann] paid tribute to the patience and devotion of these Sisters teaching in "the oldest school for the deaf in South Africa,"' quoted in 'Nuns are up-to-date in training the deaf to earn a living,' *TSC*, 24 June 1959, 12/300.

[109] 'The Mayoress, Mrs. Honikman, said that one could not talk of the Dominican Grimley School without expressing love and gratitude, and that she welcomes the opportunity to pay tribute to "the miracles accomplished here in this materialistic world [...] She said that the "demonstration of patience, faith, perseverance and love set by the school is important not only for the children but also for everyone who is sensitive to the problems of our country', quoted in 'Dominican School for Deaf commemorates centenary,' *TSC*, 22 May 1963, 1/241 and 2/242.

[110] 'Dominican school for Deaf,' *TSC*, 1/241 and 2/242.

[111] 'Its origin and its aim,' *TSC*, 22 May 1963, 1/241.

[112] By this date the Cabra Dominican Sisters had established the Dominican-Grimley school for whites, the Wittebome school for coloured children and the Dominican School for the Deaf for Africans in Hammanskraal.

moved from one school with two departments to three different schools each divided to accord with the racial policies of Apartheid. Through providing financial support to the cash-strapped schools for the deaf, the government was able to ensure that the church schools complied with the government's racial policies.

Archbishop McCann seemed unaware of how the Church was being forced to play by the government's rules. He complimented the Dominican-Grimley School for its contribution to the well-being of Cape Town. It was an example of 'civic co-operation and social endeavour, working to the welfare of the country and the people.'[113]

> There is a happy state of co-operation between school and city, and school and the government, and we are grateful for the substantial support accorded to the school by the Department of Education, Arts and Science.[114]

In response to the Archbishop's talk, the secretary of the Department of Education, Arts and Science – Dr Op't Hof, also present at the celebrations, said: 'I trust this partnership between State and voluntary bodies will continue.'[115]

5.3.2. St Vincent School for the Deaf

St Vincent School for the Deaf was a school for white deaf children from its inception. It was not a private school but was state assisted. 'This meant that the Department of Education had a say in the use of teaching methods used at the school. The oral method was officially promoted.'[116] While it had been government policy, it had been the Kingwilliamstown Dominican Sisters' policy too since the school's inception.[117] In 1952, Sr Thomasia Knoepfle OP – the school's principal from 1947 to 1968[118] – wrote:

> The European Schools in South Africa adhere strictly to the oral method, whereas the schools for Non-Europeans use also the manual alphabet and conventional signs. There

[113] 'Dominican school for Deaf', *TSC*, 1/241 and 2/242.
[114] 'Dominican school for Deaf', *TSC*, 1/241 and 2/242.
[115] 'Dominican school for Deaf', *TSC*, 1/241.
[116] 'History/Development of St Vincent School,' *St Vincent School Magazine*, 1999, 5. Box EDU29, St Vincent School for the Deaf: School magazines, KDSA.
[117] 'The finger alphabet is not used at all at St Vincent's. The children are taught lip-reading, and in this way, they are able to hold a conversation with almost any one' from 'Radio teaches the deaf,' *Sunday Express*, 18 July 1937.
[118] 'Taught the deaf for 37 years,' *TSC*, 22 December 1971, 3.

> is good reason for this. The Coloured and Native have not the cultural background of the European, and for economic reasons their education is frequently cut short.[119]

This quotation highlights two important aspects to deaf education under apartheid. Firstly, the use of the oral method of education differed between white and black schools. Secondly, there were various cultural and racial undertones that informed the reasons why this discrepancy existed. There were the cultural and paternalistic expressions and then there were the attitudes of white superiority that underlay this.

As we saw in the previous chapter, Emmanuel Levinas' understanding of racism and prejudice is that it is a violent denial of the alterity of the face.[120] The Other is reduced to being an object,[121] reduced to a biological attribute, their race or lack of hearing. The Other's uniqueness and singularity, the face, is not recognised. 'They are beings without a face.'[122] The Other is rejected and suffers violence. 'Violence is applied to the thing, it seizes and disposes of the thing.'[123] The racist is caught up in self-interest, in an internal monologue of reason which assumes his way of seeing world is the only justifiable one. A racist is disobedient to the command 'Thy shall not kill.' Being a racist is to stand accused. 'One has not looked the Other in the face.'[124] This is the way of unredeemed reason, reason which is egocentric.[125] It is a 'philosophy of the Same.'[126] This is what Levinas referred to as 'not thinking.'[127] To think is to act reasonably, it is to recognise the face of the Other that calls the self to responsibility and to act justly.

5.3.2.1. Racial and cultural prejudices

Central to the colonising project of the imperialist European powers, who divided the continent of Africa among themselves, was the idea that Europe had the moral duty to conquer and rule Africa because it was racially and culturally more superior to the local black

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[119] Thomasia Knoepfle, 'Education for the deaf,' *The Silent Messenger*, April 1952, 3.
[120] See Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 199 and Levinas, *Entre Nous*, 104.
[121] Levinas, *Difficult Freedom*, 8.
[122] Levinas, *Difficult Freedom*, 8.
[123] Levinas, *Difficult Freedom*, 8.
[124] Levinas, *Difficult Freedom*, 10.
[125] Minister, *De-facing the Other*, 70.
[126] Levinas, *Of God who comes to mind*, 31.
[127] Levinas, *Collected Philosophical Papers*, 25.

inhabitants. It was the white man's burden and duty to civilise the 'native' through education[128] and industriousness.[129]

Sr Thomasia's comments above, explaining why white schools for the deaf maintained a strict oral method compared to black schools in which the manual alphabet and signing was allowed, reveal the same prejudices. In thinking that it was the cultural differences between black and white and not economic considerations, government policy and racism that accounted for the different approaches to deaf education between black and white schools for the deaf, she revealed herself as being part of the settler church.

> The settler community looked to the metropole for its identity, values and justification. In the South African settler church the metropoles were: England – as the colonising power; Ireland since a large number of the settler Catholics and clergy came from there and Germany the home of the country for the bishops, clergy and religious of many of the mission dioceses.[130]

In giving voice to the racial and cultural prejudices of her time, Sr Thomasia revealed that, up until this time, she had never been exposed to the mission church. She had always taught in a white school and never with black children. As a German-born missionary, she had also imbibed the racial and cultural prejudices of white South Africa. There is no indication that Sr Thomasia ever questioned her racist assumptions. The racial prejudice held by some of the white teachers in the schools for the deaf affected the lives of the black children who were there, as we will see in chapter 7.

Secondly, Sr Thomasia also showed her prejudice against the use of sign language and of finger-spelling in the classroom. The manual approach to deaf education was thought to be an inferior method when compared with the oral method of education. This revealed her racist assumption that it was permissible to use this sign language approach for black schools but not white schools. This showed an apartheid mentality where it appeared obvious that whites should be educated through the 'perceived' more superior form of oral education and

[128] Stuart Bate, 'One Mission, two churches,' 9-10.
[129] Denis, 'A Case of pastoral myopia?' 457-458.
[130] Bate, 'One Mission, two churches,' 10.

that black people should be grateful for the inferior version. Linked to this is also the audist assumption that sign language was inferior to the oral method of education.

Thirdly, the idea that whites were culturally more advanced that black people justified in Sr Thomasia's eyes that whites needed to study for the matriculation certificate but not to grant this same privilege to black children. In the 1950s and 1960s, very few white deaf children at Dominican-Grimley and St Vincent graduated with a matriculation certificate. The first deaf person to graduate at St Vincent's school was Robert Simmons in 1955. For whites, there was a least the possibility of accomplishing a matric pass if they were able but for black children with a similar aptitude, this was not possible.

Education for the deaf at the Wittebome and Hammanskraal schools for the deaf only went as far as Standard 7. This injustice was perpetuated through the Catholic deaf education system right up until the 1990s.

5.3.3. Dominican School for the Deaf, Wittebome

There was only one deaf Catholic school that was drastically affected by apartheid legislation, such as the Bantu Education Act and the Group Areas Act. This was the Dominican Deaf School in Wittebome.

> The biggest impact of government legislation on our Catholic deaf schools was the separation of pupils along racial lines. First, in our Cape Town school, the whites were separated from non-whites, to use Apartheid terminology. Then we were forced to split the coloureds from the Africans. Eventually, Indians were not permitted to attend our Wittebome school as schools for Indians were established in Durban and Johannesburg. We had to conform to government policies as we were totally dependent on state funding.[131]

Since its establishment and separation from the white Dominican-Grimley school in 1937, the school provided tuition for both Coloured and African pupils. The Eiselen Report,[132] however, recommended that African education fall under the Native Affairs Department and Coloured

[131] Sr Macrina Donoghue, interview conducted by Mark James, 12 July 2016, Springfield, Cape Town, 448.

[132] The Eiselen Report emerged from the government commission set up in 1949 under the chair of WMM Eiselen, a lecturer in Anthropology at the University of Stellenbosch. The Commission made recommendations to the Nationalist government on how to revise black education in South Africa. These recommendations were enacted as the Bantu Education Act No. 47 of 1953 and implemented in 1954.

education under Coloured Affairs. This made many in the school uncertain about the school's future prospects. In 1953, Archbishop Owen McCann, at the biennial meeting of the Dominican Schools for the Deaf, confirmed that it meant that 'there will have to be a separation of Africans and Coloureds'[133] at the Wittebome school.

Just prior to this, the Wittebome school had been administratively separated from the white school in Cape Town. Until 1953, the Cape Town and Wittebome schools were considered by the Department of Education to be two branches of the same school.[134] The principal of the joint school had been Sister Germaine Lawrence. At the beginning of 1953, the Grimley and Wittebome schools were officially separated with the appointment of separate principals for each school. It was also in the same year that the first two coloured teachers joined the previously all-white staff at the school. The school continued to recruit another five Coloured teachers the following year.

Three years later, there was still uncertainty about the future of the Wittebome school due to the Group Areas Act. There was the strong possibility that the suburb of Wittebome was going to be re-zoned as a white area. This would create serious complications for the school. However, Archbishop McCann was optimistic, saying at the school's AGM in May 1953: 'I heard today "from a little bird" that the area would remain Coloured'.[135] He also confirmed that 'the problem of the African children would seem to be solved by the projected opening of a similar school for deaf African children in the Transvaal'.[136]

5.4. Catholic resistance to the Bantu Education Act

At the time of the passing of the Bantu Education Act in 1953, the Catholic Church had 688 state-aided schools and 130 private schools at which 11 361 black students attended. This was about 15% of the black school-going population at that time.[137] The Act meant that all

[133] 'Concern over Schools for Deaf,' *TSC*, 10 June 1953, 2/268.
[134] Veronica da Rocha, 'A short history of the Schools for Coloured Deaf children in South Africa,' Unpublished paper, 1981, 9. Box Education: Deaf education – Wittebome, Miscellaneous papers, File: Story of Dominican Schools for the Deaf Cape Town: Grimley and general, CDSA, Cape Town.
[135] 'Mayor's tribute to Sisters,' *TSC*, 16 May 1956, 12/239.
[136] This refers to the establishment of a School for the Deaf in Hammanskraal for the African Deaf. 'Mayor's tribute to Sisters,' *TSC*, 16 May 1956, 12/239.
[137] Helen Chamberlain, Mercedes Pavlicevic and Brigid Rose Tiernan, 'Catholic Education,' in The Catholic Church in contemporary Southern Africa, edited by Joy Brain and Philippe Denis, (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 1999), 191.

Catholic teacher training colleges for Africans, situated in white areas, were forced to close. Primary and secondary schools were given three options: (i) becoming private schools without government aid; (ii) keeping control of the schools but have the government subsidy to pay for teachers' salaries slashed by 75%; or (iii) to close the schools and rent out or sell the school buildings.

The Catholic Church refused to hand over its African schools to the government and from 1954 sought to run them without government support. This meant that teachers were forced to accept a 25% drop in their salaries so that the schools could continue. Lay teachers with families were the hardest hit. In 1955, the Bishops initiated the Missions Schools Fund, a fundraising drive to keep the African schools financially viable. It was an extensive national campaign in which Catholics were asked to raise funds to support Catholic mission schools.

The *Southern Cross*, the Catholic weekly newspaper, played an instrumental role in keeping the campaign alive with numerous articles. All Catholics were encouraged to contribute financially and to pray for the success of the campaign. Even the schools for the deaf were roped into the Campaign. In one article, Fr Desmond Hatton, a diocesan priest from Pretoria and regular columnist, tells of how Deaf pupils started collecting money for the Fund at the Grimley-Deaf School in Cape Town:

> One of the boys, Henry de Meillon, was so impressed by the appeal of the Catholic Bishops' Campaign that he brought a Royal Baking Powder money box to the play-room, and without asking anyone for a contribution, pushed his own pennies through the slit - others saw the actions of this practical little man, and the following day it was noticed that no Pepsi-Colas or sweets were purchased in the school's tuck shop, but one by one the boys and girls placed their pennies in the money box ... when the box was full the school presented it to the Sister for the Campaign.[138]

Initially, the enthusiasm engendered by the Campaign provoked a sense of solidarity among Catholics across racial boundaries. However, it did not have much lasting effect. The financial constraints on African Catholic schools actually meant that the education standards fell increasingly behind those of the wealthier white Catholic schools.[139] Unfortunately, the

[138] 'Deaf children give their pennies' *The Southern Cross*, 5 October 1955, 9/479 & 11/493.
[139] Chamberlain et al, 'Catholic education,' 194.

Catholic schools were not able to act as a counter-witness to apartheid but, in fact, became indistinguishable from government schools where large discrepancies existed because of white and black educational standards.

The education crisis of 1954 proved that the Catholic Church was dependent on the financial support from the Nationalist government if its schools were to continue. Church leaders sought to cooperate with government departments and implement their policies in exchange for funding to keep the schools going. In this regard, its policy continued as a 'conciliatory approach.'[140] However, the Church began to be more critical especially under the leadership of Archbishop Denis Hurley OMI. In 1960, Archbishop Denis Hurley, made a cautious but radical call that it was time to establish racial integration in South Africa's Catholic schools.

> Has the time come to make a gesture, even if in many places it can only be a gesture, and state the principle that Catholic schools are prepared to accept any child regardless of race provided the law permits and the fees paid? . . . An answer must soon be given to this question if the Church is to be the leader and not the led in its own field of Christian love and justice.[141]

No one dared to consider such a move as yet. However, the situation was very different in 1976.

5.5. Complying with apartheid: New black schools for the deaf

Archbishop McCann's public comments, regarding the Wittebome school, raised no voices of protest against the Nationalist government policies. The readiness of the Church to separate the schools into White, Coloured and African, in fact, shows the extent to which Catholic Church leaders uncritically accepted the government's apartheid policy. The Catholic bishops' response to apartheid policies, like that of Archbishop McCann in Cape Town, highlighted that:

[140] Garth Abraham, *The Catholic Church and* Apartheid: The response of the Catholic Church in South Africa to the first decade of National Party rule 1948-1957, (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1989), 86.
[141] Denis Hurley, 'School integration,' *The Southern Cross,* 22 June 1960, 5/295.

> the English-speaking churches had failed to be more than moderate. Given to verbal protest, they failed to resist. Trapped within their own history they were predisposed to cautious compromise.[142]

The Catholic Church, like many of the other English-speaking churches, had an ambiguous and ambivalent response to apartheid. The church denounced apartheid was for its anti-Christian character and its adverse effects it had on the daily lives of black people, but it was also trapped by its dependency and loyalty to the state.[143] The bishops and church leaders were dependent on state funding for their schools and so were compelled to cooperate with the apartheid policies of the Nationalist government. Consequently, they bowed to government pressure and set up separate schools for the deaf for the different African communities.

5.5.1. Dominican School for the Deaf, Hammanskraal

On 1 April 1962, the Cabra Dominican Sisters and pupils moved into the new Deaf school in Hammanskraal[144] near the recently established African seminary called St Peter's. It was the result of 12 years of envisaging, planning and fundraising for this new project. Boner pointed out that in line with apartheid policy 'the new school served Sotho and Tswana boys and girls and instruction was in the mother tongue'.[145] *The Southern Cross* reported:

> This school for the deaf will cater specially for Sotho pupils but may admit Catholics from other tribes on the Rand, the Free State and Natal. (Xhosa deaf pupils will be admitted to another similar school being opened by Bishop Green in King William's Town, also in April).[146]

The school Apostolic Delegate, Archbishop J. McGeough, solemnly opened the school on Sunday 10 June 1962. He was assisted by the Archbishop of Pretoria, Archbishop Garner. In his welcome, Archbishop Garner said:

> It was fitting that the Sisters should celebrate the centenary of their arrival in the Cape, and the silver jubilee of their school in Wittebome, by setting up yet another school.[147]

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[142] Charles Villa-Vincencio, *Trapped in Apartheid*, (New York: Orbis Press, 1988), 102.
[143] Denis, 'The Catholic Church and apartheid,' A talk given to the Brazilian Justice and Peace Commission. (Unpublished paper, 2014), 3.
[144] 'Daughter-foundation of CT Dominican School for Deaf', *TSC*, 24 January 1962, 12/48.
[145] Kathleen Boner, *Dominican women speak*, 154.
[146] 'Daughter-foundation', *TSC*, 12/48.
[147] 'First Catholic school for African deaf in Transvaal,' *TSC*, 13 June 1952, 1/277 and 11/287.

Garner thanked the Department of Education and Training on behalf of the Dominican Sisters for the financial aid given for this new enterprise. He pointed out that:

> The institutions of the Catholic Church had no difficulty in accepting the normal supervision of the state wherever in the world they might be.[148]

In response, W.W. Bouwer, the inspector of special schools of the Department of Bantu Education, congratulated the Sisters and said that the Bantu community was fortunate to have the establishment of such a school. He said that the Department accepted that children would be admitted to the school irrespective of their church denomination. He was confident that the school 'would render great service and that relations with the Department would always be cordial.'[149]

In fact, the government provided a 50% subsidy for the school expenses approved by the Department, after such expenses had been paid in full.[150] The remainder of the funds the Sisters themselves had to fundraise. It was not easy as the Sisters did not have many benefactors in the Transvaal region as both of their schools for the deaf were in Cape Town.

5.5.2. St Thomas School for the Deaf

In 1958, Bishop Ernest Green of Port Elizabeth addressed the local Rotary Club appealing for support so that a Catholic school for Xhosa-speaking deaf children could be opened in South Africa.[151] There was a need for another deaf school, especially in the Eastern Cape, as the existing schools were packed to the limit:

> Beds are arranged in double tiers to make the most use of available space, [and] capacity has more than been reached.[152]

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[148] 'First Catholic school,' *TSC*, 11/287.
[149] 'First Catholic school,' *TSC*, 11/287.
[150] See 'These deaf children do not even know they have names' *TSC*, 31 October 1962, 11/527.
[151] The other three were Wittebome, Worcester and Kutlwanong in Krugersdorp. See 'Permit to open school for deaf African children still awaited' *TSC*, 12 February 1958, 1/73. In fact, it became the sixth school for the black Deaf because Hammanskraal and another school in Mthatha opened ahead of St Thomas school for the Deaf.
[152] 'Permit to open school,' *TSC*, 12 February 1958, 1/73. The other school in the Eastern Cape being referred to is probably the Effata School for the Deaf run by the NG Kerk in Umtata.

It would take another four years before St Thomas School for Deaf Bantu Children opened its doors for the first time on 24 July 1962.[153] Bishop Green had been instrumental in getting funding and government support for the new school. Sr Conrad Förg, who previously had worked at St Vincent School for the Deaf in Johannesburg, was appointed the principal.[154] Sr Guzmana Gfröreis from the Kingwilliamstown congregation as well as Sr Agatha Manne OP from the St Martin de Porres congregation[155] were appointed to assist her. It was envisaged that the Dominican Sisters of Blessed Martin de Porres would eventually take over the running of the school. The Sisters of St Martin de Porres were to also run the school hostel.[156] In 1963, Sr Cecilia Ntlyziwana OP was employed as an additional teacher[157] and Sr Canisia Mangena OP was employed as a school clerk.[158]

The Board of Management of the school consisted of eight members, the Bishop of Port Elizabeth, the parish priest of Woodlands parish, a representative of the Kingwilliamstown Dominican Sisters, a representative of the St Martin de Porres Dominican Sisters, a lawyer and three representatives of the Department of Bantu Education.[159]

The establishment of this new school was proudly proclaimed as a joint church-state effort. At the opening of the school on 1 October 1962, Mr W. Maree, the Minister of Bantu Education, announced that 'the fact that the Government gives a subsidy to the church is proof of the Government's confidence in the Church to carry out its responsibilities towards the children who will be enrolled in this school'.[160] Church initiatives were dependent on the cultivation of a good, also an uncritical, relationship with government because the Church was incapable of financing these schools without state aid.

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[153] See 'New school for Bantu deaf,' *TSC*, 14 March 1962, 12/132 and 'New school for African deaf is joint Church-State effort,' 17 October 1962, 1/493 and 11/503.
[154] 'New school for Bantu deaf,' 12/132.
[155] The Dominican Sisters of Blessed Martin de Porres were the African and Coloured Sisters of the Kingwilliamstown Congregation who were formed into a separate congregation. The effects of apartheid policies affected the internal workings of religious orders and congregations. For further information, see Margaret Mary Schäffler, *The integration of black and coloured sisters in the Congregation of the King William's Town Dominican Sisters of St Catharine of Siena – The past, the present and the future*, Unpublished Master of Theology thesis, University of South Africa, Pretoria, 2002.
[156] 'St Thomas School for Deaf Bantu Children: Annual Report 1962/63,' 2. 124/374 54, KDSA.
[157] 'The Annals of St Thomas School for Deaf Bantu Children 1962-1968,' 4. 124/374 55, KDSA.
[158] 'St Thomas School for Deaf Bantu Children: Report for the year 1963/64,' 1. 123/373 31, KDSA.
[159] 'The Annals of St Thomas School for Deaf Bantu Children 1962-1968,' 7-8. 124/374 55, KDSA.
[160] 'New school for African deaf,' *TSC*, 17 October 1952, 1/493.

Consequently, the government could ensure that the Church carry out its education policies in relation to African schools. Education in the mother tongue, a key apartheid language policy, was enforced. At the school's opening, Maree alluded to the fact that the Deaf children at St Thomas' School would be taught reading and writing in their mother tongue.

> For communication purposes they would be taught finger-spelling and gestures. In cases "where it can be profitably undertaken", a little speech training may also be given.[161]

The syllabus was also to include simple and practical arithmetic, hygiene, religious instruction, physical education as well as instruction in good social and moral habits. Practical subjects would include gardening, agriculture, woodwork, building, needlework, cane work and homecraft.

In 1965, the first male teacher, Mr Mvandaba, was taken on to the staff and Sr Frieda joined the school as vice-principal.[162] She had also previously taught at St Vincent School. In 1967, Sr Agatha left for ministry in the Transvaal and she was replaced by Sr Salesia Nzimande OP.[163] By 1968, the number of staff had increased[164] as the number of children grew from a mere 43 in 1962 to 145 in 1968.[165]

Technological innovations were also made with the introduction of the Loop induction system that was introduced for the senior class in 1965.[166]

5.5.3. Apartheid and sign language policy

Under apartheid, education in schools for the deaf for Africans, Coloureds and Indians differed substantially from those of white schools for the deaf. The use of sign language and the manual alphabet were considered suitable for African and Coloured schools but as an

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[161] 'New school for African deaf', *TSC*, 11/503.
[162] 'Report on the affairs of St Thomas School for Deaf Bantu Children for the year 1965/66,' 1. 124/374 67, KDSA.
[163] 'The Annals of St Thomas School for Deaf Bantu Children, 1962-1968,' 18-19. 124/374 55, KDSA.
[164] In the Chairman's report for 1966/67 it was reported that besides the principal and vice-principal, there were 10 teachers and 5 house mothers. See 'Chairman's Annual Report on the affairs of St Thomas School for Deaf Bantu Children for the year 1966-1967,' 1. 124/374 68, KDSA.
[165] 'The Chairman's Annual Report on the affairs of St Thomas School for Deaf Bantu Children for the year 1968/69,' 1. 124/374 71, KDSA.
[166] 'Report on the affairs of St Thomas School for Deaf Bantu Children for the year 1965/66,' 1. 124/374 67, KDSA.

inferior form of education for white schools for the deaf. The apartheid government was also reluctant to spend the requisite financial resources to equip black schools for the deaf as oral schools on a par with their white counterparts.

Promoting the oral method of education in African schools was not a priority and the acceptance of signing in these schools was permitted. Aarons and Akach[167] have pointed out that in general:

> [S]chools for the white Deaf insisted on oralism, whereas schools for the other races allowed some measure of manualism (in most cases, not a natural signed language, but a mixture of speech and some signs).[168] It is clear that speaking was perceived by the [government] authorities as the prestigious form of language, hence the insistence of oralism in schools for the white Deaf, whereas, based on pigmentation, manualism was permitted increasingly in of other racial groups.[169]

In explaining why Dominican-Grimley School, but not Hammanskraal even though both were Cabra Dominican schools, was able to adhere to an oral approach to education, Sr Macrina Donoghue explained:

> In the Western Cape, it is only Tygerberg and the Dominican-Grimley school which use the 'auditory-verbal' approach. This is different from the school in Hammanskraal which was forced by the Department of Bantu Education to use sign language and to teach in the medium of Tswana or Sotho.[170]

In many of the white schools for the deaf, the Dominican Sisters, who ran the schools, maintained a cordial relation with the government officials and political representatives. They ensured that for important school events, Department of Education officials, mayors and mayoresses, and other prominent figures were invited. All this was important for public relations and fundraising for the schools. The schools were expensive to run and depended on state funding and generous benefactors.

[167] Aarons and Akach, 'South African Sign Language,' 1-28.
[168] The system most commonly used in African schools was known as the Paget-Norman approach.
[169] Aarons and Akach, 'South African Sign Language,' 6.
[170] Sr Macrina Donoghue, interview conducted by Mark James, 15 July 2016, Cape Town, 445-446.

5.6. Levinas, totality and money

For Levinas, being hospitable is a reality that is already happening in our world. We already practice hospitality by being polite and courteous, evident in our everyday actions when we say ‘After you, sir!’[171] Thus Levinas can say that ‘hospitality, the welcome of the other, cannot be commanded since it is already a fact, *fait accompli*, and indeed the fact of subjectivity.’[172] Going further, we can recognise that this courtesy, this politeness, these actions of a pious soul, [173] this acting from a good conscience can make us think we are fulfilling the command to love our neighbour but, in fact, they can hide an ignorance of the Other and sometimes even violence.[174]

Providing education for deaf children is an act of hospitality. It is a recognising of the face of the Other and extending a generous hand in hospitality. Central to being hospitable is to have something to give the Other. For this money is required. Money creates sociality where people recognise their interconnectedness.[175] For Levinas, there is an ethical use of money. Money used for the sake of the Other rather than to satisfy one’s own greed and hunger is a sign of the ethical relation. It is to breach totality and reach out a generously to the Other.

However, the Dominican Sisters in providing education for deaf children were dependent on the apartheid state to provide subsidies to pay the teachers. Levinas argued that money can also include people ‘in the totality, since in commerce and transactions man himself is bought and sold; money is always to some extent wages.’[176] There was a price to pay for the subsidies and that was to implement the apartheid policies even though they were unjust.

When the apartheid government insisted that African children could no longer attend the Wittebome school, the Dominican Sisters decided to start a new school for deaf children from the seTswana-speaking community in Hammanskraal. In a similar way, Bishop Green opened a school for deaf children from the isiXhosa-speaking community in the Eastern Cape. The education that the church offered to the deaf children was one which had bought its silence

[171] Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 117.
[172] Stephen Minister, *Defacing the Other*, 193.
[173] Levinas, *Collected Philosophical Papers,*
[174] Stephen Minister, *Defacing the Other*, 193.
[175] ‘To recognize the Other is therefore to come to him across the world of possessed things, but at the same time to establish by gift, community and universality.’ See Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 76.
[176] Levinas, *Collected Philosophical Papers*, 45.

and its complicity in the violence of apartheid's self-interestedness. It was a compromise. The church was 'subdued' and made 'subservient' to the agenda of the apartheid state 'without evoking the impression of brutal tyranny or slavery.'[177] The church had tried to resist the apartheid state in 1954 and refused to hand over its black hearing schools to the apartheid government. However, this gesture was not financially sustainable.

The colonial and racial attitudes of some of the teachers in the schools for the deaf showed that they had internalised the apartheid mentality. They truly thought in 'good conscience,'[178] that it was only natural that white deaf children should receive a better education than black deaf children. They maintained a discriminatory practice in the schools where black schools never offered Matric until the early 1990s.

While the teachers in the schools for the deaf were subservient to the totality of the apartheid state and its agenda, they had their own audist agenda. In the intersecting totalities the promotion of the oral method of deaf education like the money received from the state enabled the Sisters to be generous to the deaf children by providing them with an education but one which denied them access to their own language and culture. It was an assimilation into the totality of a hearing world.

5.7. Conclusion

When it came to education for the deaf in South Africa from 1948 to 1968, the relationship between the Catholic Church and the apartheid government was a dependent one. The schools for the deaf were expensive to run and maintain. The Church was dependent on government grants and subsidies to keep them going. The government had leverage and so there was very little criticism expressed from the schools for the deaf against government policies. The Catholic Church adhered to the Nationalist government policies of separating out white from black deaf children and establishing separate schools for the different race and ethnic groups. There was never any attempt to go it alone as had been tried in 1954 when

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[177] Roger Burggraeve, 'The Ethical meaning of money in the thought of Emmanuel Levinas,' *Ethical Perspectives*, 2, 1, (1995), 13.

[178] 'The offense done to others by the "good conscience" of being is already an offense to the stranger, the widow, and the orphan, who, from the faces of others, look at/regard the *I*.' See Levinas, *Entre Nous*, 168.

the Catholic Church protested against the government's insistence that they give over the government the administration of Catholic schools for African children.

White schools for the deaf like Dominican-Grimley and St Vincent used the oral method for deaf education most ardently. The Wittebome school was also oral but sign language was allowed in the two African schools, St Thomas School for the Deaf in Woodlands in the Eastern Cape and the Dominican School for the Deaf in Hammanskraal. There were clear discrepancies in the facilities available for white and black schools for the deaf as well as educational levels. The white schools went up to Matric but in the black schools the level was much lower Standard 8. This had serious implications for employment opportunities for the already disadvantaged black deaf people.

In this chapter, it has been possible to only give a cursory understanding of the oral method of deaf education. In the next chapter, I will give a detailed explanation of this method of education.

Chapter 6

The Oral Method of deaf education in Catholic schools for the deaf (1948-1969)

'The Oral Method is the name given to the system of educating the deaf now all but universal.' Arthur W. Blaxall[1]

6.0. Introduction

The oral method of Deaf education was seen, especially after the Milan Conference in 1880, as the modern and scientific answer to the problem of deafness and primarily means for the acquisition of language for deaf people. It was essentially a hearing discourse on how to help the deaf to learn a spoken language by employing the most modern and scientific technologies in assisting in the learning of a spoken language. Having learnt a spoken language gave the deaf children the basic tools they needed to be educated and be able to be integrated into a hearing world by finding employment and thereby becoming independent and financially self-supporting. The advocates of this method also actively discouraged and disparaged the use of sign language and manual methods of deaf education.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the implementation and implications of the oral method had differing impacts on white and black deaf children and adults both at school and in the work place. In this chapter, I intend to show the way in which the oral method was practiced in Catholic schools for the deaf in South Africa from 1948 to 1969.

[1] Arthur W. Blaxall was born in London in 1891. After school he worked in an insurance office where he had his first contact with the deaf and blind in 1910. After the First World War, he studied at Keble College in Oxford and was ordained a priest in 1921. His first assignment was to work as assistant chaplain to the Deaf in Birmingham. He came to South Africa in 1923 and took up duties as a missioner to the deaf in the diocese of Cape Town. He soon recognised that services for the deaf and blind in South Africa were wholly inadequate. He founded the South African National Council for the Deaf in 1928, becoming its first chairperson. In 1934, he was superintendent of the Athlone School for the Blind, Faure, Cape Province. In 1946, he founded the Kutlwanong Deaf and Dumb school in Roodepoort and was on the governing board until 1954. He was proficient in signed English. He did extensive work for the blind too. In 1963, he was arrested for channelling international funding to the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) and African National Congress (ANC). After being released he returned to England where he died in 1970. See 'A well-deserved honour,' *The Silent Messenger*, July 1956, 4. This above quote is from his book entitled *Handicapped: Being three short essays on 1) the deaf; 2) the blind; 3) the doubly-handicapped*, (Pretoria: The Carnegie Corporation Visitors' Grants Committee, 1934).

6.1. What is deafness?

Deafness was understood as the medical condition of suffering from a lack of hearing. It was perceived to be a physical handicap that isolated a person from other human beings and imprisoned them in a solitary world of silence.

It was often seen as diminishing the person's ability to function adequately in society and in relationships with other. Mr H.S. Jooste, a hearing social worker, in speaking to ear, nose and throat specialists at a medical conference in Pretoria in 1955 described the experience of the deafness for a deaf person as 'a cause of utter isolation from his fellowmen (sic) and from Society. It means an inability to live a full life as a human being and a basic inability to grasp and understand the Society in which he moves and of which he is a part.'[2]

In 1959, Mr V.H. Vaughan, from the Union Education Department, speaking at the blessing of the new extension at St Vincent School in Johannesburg, said that deafness was a three-fold handicap. Apart from the absence of hearing and the consequent inability to speak, 'the third is to my mind the most important, namely, the lack of mental stimulation which is the result of normal conversation between one person and another. This the deaf person misses.'[3] The handicap was understood as the lack of hearing but which resulted in a greater problem, the inability to develop speech. Vaughan's inclusion of the lack of intellectual stimulation arising from deafness, as part of his three-fold handicap understanding of deafness, illustrated that it was a prevalent perception at this time, and not just a coincidence, that deaf people who were not able to speak, were also referred to as dumb.[4] It was earnestly believed that the deaf were imprisoned and 'locked into a world of silence.'[5]

Deafness is understood as a physical lack of being able to hear. This has been referred to as the medical understanding of deafness where hearing is the norm and those who are unable to hear are deviating from the norm.

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[2] H.S. Jooste, 'The rehabilitation of the Deaf,' *The Silent Messenger (TSM)*, December 1955, 8.
[3] 'Deaf school extension provided by pupil's parents,' *The Southern Cross (TSC)*, 30 September 1959, 12/472.
[4] 'Deaf school extension provided by pupil's parents,' *TSC*, 30 September 1959, 12/472.
[5] Monsignor Desmond Hatton, 'The deaf to hear,' *TSC*, 21 November 1962, 5/557.

6.1.1. 'Hearing deviates'

Hearing was taken to be normal and anyone who deviated from this norm was considered deviant or deviate. In a talk a renowned professor of speech therapy at the University of the Witwatersrand, P de V. Pienaar, referred to the deaf person as a 'hearing deviate.'[6]

The American sociologist Howard Becker identified four types of deviance in social groups. The first is statistical which defines 'as deviant anything that varies too widely from the average.'[7] As redheads are statistically a minority in the USA in comparison to the majority of brunettes, redheads constitute a deviant group. The second common view of deviance is when behaviour is perceived to be pathological or diseased. This medical analogy is employed to imply that the deviance is the product of either a physical or mental illness. When looking at society, deviance can be used in a third sense to distinguish between functional and dysfunctional processes taking place within the society. Fourthly, deviance is used, particularly by Becker, to speak about people who purposely break society's rules.

Paul Higgins developed Becker's idea of deviance as it related to Deaf people. He argued that Deaf people were outsiders in a hearing world.[8] Therefore, when speaking of deaf people deviance is understood primarily in the first two senses. Deaf people are a small minority within the overall hearing population and, secondly, they are perceived to suffer from a physical lack of hearing which is understood to constitute a handicap from which they need to be rescued. They are not considered normal in terms of what is normal along the bell curve in relation to an overall population. This was understood as having a negative impact on deaf children.

> In a crowd of hearing children a minority of deaf children disappear or at least take the last place. They have no hope of ever taking a leading part or being counted as important. Their deviation from the normal pattern is constantly brought home to them, and they feel inferior and humbled. Continual dependence on the goodwill and favour of others is draining their self-confidence.[9]

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[6] P de V. Pienaar, 'Modern development in the field of audiology,' *TSM*, 29, 1, March 1963, 13-20.
[7] Howard S. Becker, *Outsiders: Studies in the sociology of deviance*, (New York: The Free Press, 1963), 5-8.
[8] See Paul C. Higgins, *Outsiders in a hearing world: A sociology of deafness*, (London: Sage Publications, 1980).
[9] 'Schools of thought at variance,' *Saint Vincent Quarterly (SVQ)*, 9, 3, 1964, 3.

Hearing was considered the normal human state while deafness was regarded as an aberrant deviation from the hearing norm, and therefore a handicap. It was understood as diminishing the deaf person. This view was so prevalent that the SANCD, established by Rev Arthur W. Blaxall in 1929, would later use the image of a harp with a broken cord as the emblem for its publication '*The Silent Messenger*.' As a musical instrument the harp was defective as a musical instrument. It needed to be fixed and the broken cord replaced. Similarly, deaf people were perceived by the hearing to have a defect that needed fixing.[10]

> The analogy implied here is that of the human being, with special emphasis on the human anatomy and the psychical.[11]

The school and technology would provide the means to repair the damage and restore the suffering and defective person to wholeness and full humanity. The school became the primary place where the defect was repaired and with oralism functioned more as both a clinic and an educational centre.[12]

Deaf children had a defect because they had difficulty hearing and acquiring a spoken language like a 'normal' hearing child. The deaf were handicapped and this needed to be remedied. Remedying the situation was conceived to be impossible without special intervention.

6.1.2. Rehabilitation required

As the deviance was perceived in medical terms – a physical or mental defect – the remedy was seen to be working for the rehabilitation of the deaf child or adult and thereby making them functional in normal society, namely the hearing world. Rehabilitation happened through the early detection of deafness so that the child could be sent to a deaf school to be trained in language acquisition thereby learning to speak and speech-read. This was to be accomplished by exploiting, as far as possible, the residual hearing that deaf children had through the provision of hearing aids.

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[10] In fact, the same line of thinking was central to all 'handicapped' people. The theology of disability was developed to contradict this way of thinking about disability. The disabled person was perceived to be a victim of their handicap and needed to be rescued from it by the able-bodied and medical profession.

[11] 'Editorial: Our Emblem,' *TSM*, 33, 4, December 1969, 3.

[12] On the clinical gaze in education, education as therapy and the school as clinic, see Branson and Miller, *Damned for their difference*, 113-118, 130-132; 200-202; and 205-206 respectively.

It was understood that the school could remedy this defect only by providing careful training and special education. Through the means of this special education, deaf people could be empowered to overcome their handicap. They would thereafter be able to 'learn something of the wondrous melodies of Nature . . . the sounds of the flowing stream, the roar of the turbulent sea, the rustle of the leaves in the wind, the crash of the thunder, the music of the human voice.'[13] This was the objective of the oral method of deaf education.

6.2. The oral method of education: The remedy for deafness

The key principle of the oral method was to exploit the child's residual hearing. It was believed that very few deaf children were without any hearing at all. Many had some degree of residual hearing. Through the early detection of deafness, the children were fitted with the appropriate technology, like hearing aids, to enhance their residual hearing. In the classroom too, technology like amplifiers and the induction loop were used to boost the children's residual hearing so that they could hear a little more and thereby learn a spoken language just like any other hearing child.

In communication with the child, teachers and parents were encouraged to use ordinary and meaningful conversational exchanges. The child was taught and encouraged to speech-read, also known as lip-reading, to assist in comprehending what was being said to them. The children were coached for many hours in how to use their voices for sound production and pronunciation. They were taught the spoken language's grammatical rules and structures.

The use of the natural sign language of the Deaf was strictly forbidden in the classroom and the playground. If, at school, any deaf children were caught using signs or 'gestures', as it was referred to, these children were punished. The teachers wanted to inculcate in the deaf children a greater dependence on the use of their auditory skills rather than their visual skills.

Central to the whole concept of the oral method of education was to prepare the children for life in a predominantly hearing world where they would not receive any preferential treatment in the work place. Education was primarily geared towards vocational training to

[13] Monsignor Desmond Hatton, 'The deaf to hear,' *TSC*, 21 November 1962, 5/557.

equip the deaf child for employment. They had to be equipped to find their place in this world and the starting place was to first acquire the knowledge of a spoken language.

6.2.1. Language acquisition

Deaf people were seen to be imprisoned into a solitary and an oppressively silent world, one from which they need to be liberated. Learning a language was the way to liberate deaf people from their affliction.

> Language is the basic key to education of the deaf child and any means to impart to him this knowledge materially assists him on his long and difficult journey into the land of the hearing. Speech is, of course, but the spoken form of language and together with writing, reading and other visual forms of communication is but a secondary manifestation of language.[14]

Language was the vehicle for thought and knowledge and was primarily acquired by attending a special school for the deaf. The measure of language acquisition was speech. Consequently, deaf children had to learn how to speak correctly so that they could study and learn and find employment in life.

6.2.2. Speech: a manifestation of language

As we have already discussed in chapter four, the connection between deafness and speech goes back to Aristotle who wrote that the deaf child is ignorant because he is unable to communicate through speech. Speech was understood as indicating intelligence. Those who could not speak had the intelligence of animals rather than human beings. However, in the same way as Aristotle saw women as a 'defective males' and this view has had a long history of prejudicial understandings of women in church and society; so too the deaf have suffered a similar fate in being considered as 'defective hearing people.' This outlook has contributed enormously to the devaluing of sign language and explains why educators of the oral method, over the centuries, have placed so much emphasis on teaching deaf children to speak a spoken language.

[14] E.S. Greenway, 'Language the basic key,' *TSM*, June 1958, 17.

The inability to hear sound was therefore correlated to the inability to learn to speak a language, where language meant a spoken language. Without this language, the deaf were understood to be without any means of communication.[15] It was vital to gain knowledge of this language for human growth. However, it was delayed in the deaf, as Sr Thomasia explained:

> Language growth is bound up closely with mental development. This is slow in the deaf. They rarely get a grip of the language until they are 13 years old.[16]

In all this discussion, it is obvious that the hearing and speaking child was determined to be normative, whereas the corollary, being deaf and dumb, was to have a handicap.

Speaking to parents about speech for the deaf, Sr Hermina, a teacher at St Vincent School, said that when parents bring their children to school for the first time, they often ask "Will my child learn to speak?"[17] In other words, will my child be normal? Central to the oral method of education was to make the deaf child as 'normal as possible' in order that the child could function adequately in the hearing world. Speech was considered the mark of normalisation.

6.2.3. Communicating in a spoken language

The children were thought to be handicapped and thus dependent on the hearing, especially their teachers and parents, to teach them how to communicate in a spoken language so that they could function satisfactorily in a hearing world. Without a spoken language, deaf children were understood not to have a language at all and thus unable to learn and gain knowledge.

> We are convinced [...] that our deaf children need to be taught speech while they are at school, and that on leaving school their speech should be such that it can be understood, not only within their own family, but also by others [...] We claim that deaf pupils have left schools for the deaf, with what may be called satisfactory speech. We have also observed that when the speech elements are mastered well while at school, their speech has actually improved through contact with hearing people.[18]

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[15] See C. Alan Cook, 'Breaking the other sound barrier,' *Outspan*, 25 November 1955, 106.
[16] Cook, 'Breaking the other sound barrier,' 106.
[17] Sr Hermina, 'Speech for the deaf – A method in the making,' *SVQ*, 9, 2, 1964, 3.
[18] Sr Hermina, 'Speech for the deaf,' 3-15.

The learning of a language had to begin from as young an age as possible. There was to be no delay in enabling a young child to learn a language.

6.2.4. Being taught to speak from as young as possible

Learning to speak was a duty that was encouraged from as early an age as possible. Language acquisition is a major challenge for all children in the first three years of life. So, it was for deaf children too. St Vincent School sought to collaborate with parents even before the child was admitted to school. One of the important challenges was that the parents be 'taught to accept their child with all his limitations and residual abilities.'[19]

Instruction in language knowledge needed to start in the home way before the child even attended school.

> Once severe deafness has been diagnosed no time should be lost in inquiring what should be done at home until the time when the child can get the help of a school for the deaf. The mother will be instructed to use every opportunity for stimulating any slight amount of residual hearing that may be present. We have heard of infants below one year of age being fitted with a hearing aid. The mother will be taught above all to speak close to the child's ears and in such a way that he can see her face and observe, unconsciously of course, the speech movements on her face.[20]

From the age of three or four, some Deaf children were accepted into schools for the deaf like St Vincent, Dominican-Grimley and Wittebome. Parents were encouraged to send their child to a deaf school by the age of three years old. 'The consensus of opinion today, is that a child who starts at an early age, gains greater advantages which stand it in good stead in future years.'[21] In a talk to about 150 members of the Catholic Women's League in Cape Town on 11 December 1965, Fr Reginald Cawcutt, the chaplain to the deaf in the Archdiocese, explained that:

> The most important factor was to get a deaf child to school as early as possible, three years being the best . . . [and that there] be the rule to test for deafness in

[19] 'St Vincent's School cracks isolation of the deaf child,' *TSC*, 27 April 1966, 4/196.
[20] Sr Hermina, 'Speech for the deaf – A method in the making,' *SVQ*, 9, 2, 1964, 3-15.
[21] L.J. Paolo, 'The role of the parent of the deaf child,' *SVQ*, 10, 1, 1965, 4.

early infancy. With early training and normal intelligence it was possible for a deaf child to matriculate and take up a profession.[22]

At other schools for the deaf it was no different. Sr Thomasia, the principal of St Vincent school, explained that: 'children are admitted into the nursery classes from the age of three years and learn to adjust to a completely new environment.'[23] The practice was the same at the Wittebome school, as well as the later established Hammanskraal school and St Thomas school in Kingwilliamstown. However, these schools for the deaf for black children only went up to Standard 7 or Standard 8 and never as far as Matric. This discrepancy was to be the cause of consternation for black deaf people.[24]

6.2.5. The role of parents in teaching their children to speak

Even when the child was at school, the collaboration between teacher and parent did not end. Parents could not just hand over their responsibilities of educating their deaf child to the school. They had to become proficient in communicating with their own child and thus had to play their part in coaching their children to communicate in a spoken language.

It was accepted that the deaf child was not able to learn to speak on their own like a hearing child. The deaf child needed special assistance from both teacher and parent.

> Your child is deaf and will never be able to appreciate sound as you and I can. As he grows older the sound barrier will assume gigantic proportions, unless someone counteracts the effects of deafness. The child left to himself, is helpless. You and I must come to his rescue with all the resources available. Teacher and parents should work together as a team.[25]

The teacher and parents collaborated to ensure that the child can become more like normal hearing children. This demanded that parents, after school hours, also assume the role of teacher at home.

> First you must be firmly convinced that you can do a great deal for your child. There are many things which only you can do, nobody else. Having the indispensable faith

[22] 'Chaplain speaks on work for deaf at C.W.L. meeting,' *TSC*, 29 December 1965, 4/616.
[23] 'St Vincent's School cracks isolation of the deaf child,' *TSC*, 27 April 1966, 4/196.
[24] We will address this point later in chapter 8.
[25] The Interested Teacher, 'A Talk to Parents,' *SVQ*, 2,1, March 1955, 3.

> leave no stone unturned to help your child to be more like other children . . . The school is trying to do for your child what an ordinary school does, plus a great deal of what ordinarily he would pick up for himself, at home and outside in the world . . . If you wish your child ever to compare favourably with hearing children you must be part-time teachers. You must cheerfully, and in a spirit of adventure, assume this extra role.[26]

The collaboration extended to coaching their children into speaking and helping them to improve their vocabulary. The hearing child provided the standard of measure from which many conclusions in deaf education were drawn in relation to the progress of language acquisition of the deaf child.

> Talk to your child in a natural and simple way everywhere and at all times . . . Try to give him a basic vocabulary to establish contact with yourself and others. Follow the natural method. Take note of the language used by hearing children of the same age, and adapt it to your child's needs. Do not treat him as a one-year old child is (sic)[27] he is two or three years of age. At five or six he is no more a baby, so do not restrict your talk to baby language . . . At times deaf children surprise one with words and expressions they have picked up in the manner hearing children pick them up.[28]

They were not to treat their children differently from their own hearing children. Thus, they were encouraged to have conversations with their children. This it was believed that this practice would increase the deaf children's vocabulary and language skills and give them practice in expressing their own ideas.

Training in the home went beyond just teaching them vocabulary and language skills. Parents were responsible for instilling discipline in their deaf children and teaching them courteous behaviour and good manners.

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[26] Interested Teacher, 'A Talk to Parents,' 3.
[27] Typing error in the original document. It is meant to read 'if' and not 'is'.
[28] Interested Teacher, 'A Talk to parents', 5-6.

Parents have a responsibility for their deaf child's general training. You must see that he fits into your family picture, just as the teacher helps him to adjust himself to his school environment. One of the things he must learn is self-control.[29]

They were not to feel sorry for the deaf child and treat him or her any differently to their hearing children. However, there was a warning that the deaf child may not fully understand, and until he or she is sufficiently well educated to grasp abstract ideas, the child may interpret an insistence upon discipline, as cruelty or a lack of love; and may thereby lose the all-important feeling of security, of belonging, of being part of the home.'[30] This was just a phase.

It was more important to realise that the deaf child learnt primarily in a visual rather than in an auditory manner. Therefore, the behaviour that parents modelled was the behaviour that the deaf children copied.

As your child depends on his (sic) eyes for much of his learning, your own social behaviour sets the example. He patterns his conduct on what he sees in the adults around him.[31]

However, this visual means of learning meant that children learnt language by developing their skills reading the lips of parents, teachers and other hearing people.

6.2.6. Developing speech-reading

The primary way in which parents were encouraged to teach their children language was to instil in them 'the habit of watching lips.'[32]

Speechreading, popularly known as lipreading, is the visible comprehension of what is said by the speaker. Speechreading describes the process more accurately than lipreading. The lipreader needs clues apart from those he can gather from the lips. Adults, who depend on lipreading, will tell you that the facial expression assists a great

[29] See Sr Hermina, 'Home responsibilities in the Education of Deaf Children,' *SQV*, 3, 4, October-December 1957, 13.
[30] L.J. Paolo, 'The role of the parent of the deaf child,' *SVQ*, 10, 1, 1965, 6.
[31] Sr Hermina, 'Home responsibilities in the Education of Deaf Children,' *SQV*, 3, 4, October-December 1957, 13.
[32] Interested Teacher, 'Talk to parents,' 7.

> deal in the interpretation of the lipmovements [...] Deaf persons are expert in deriving meaning from the emotions expressed on the face.[33]

These techniques reinforced those which were employed in the classroom.

> The more language the deaf child has the sooner he will begin to speak . . . To attract and hold his attention, be it only a passing moment, get him to look at some brightly coloured toy or other interesting object. Slowly move it in various directions to and from your mouth, and also towards him. His eyes will involuntarily follow the movements of your mouth. Or let him feel your breath by blowing on his cheeks, hair or hands. Later you can blow coloured balloons or strips of coloured paper towards him for his amusement. In all these exercises your face must be in the light and your child's face away from strong light.[34]

The purpose of speech-reading was to ensure that the deaf child became independent and self-reliant. 'It is learnt more by practice than by set lessons. It takes the place of the listening of the hearing child and is considered the best substitute.'[35]

6.2.7. Speech training

However, speech-reading was not enough. It needed to be linked with speech training and voice production.

> Sense training is an excellent preparation for speech training, when the children has to observe and imitate the minutest details of shapes and movements of the speaker . . . Most deaf children, even the severely deaf, can laugh aloud, can cry and shout even louder, but to produce voice voluntarily and to shape it into definite speech sounds and words is quite a different matter.[36]

Lip-reading and speech development were not seen as merely the work done in the school classroom. The lack of adequate stimulation and practice at home was viewed askance by teachers at St Vincent School because it engendered 'in the deaf child the wrong attitude towards oral communication.'[37] The advice to parents was to 'arouse in your child a desire to

[33] Sr Thomasia, 'Speechreading,' *SVQ*, 11, 2, 1966, 3-5.
[34] Sr Hermina, 'Home responsibilities in the Education of Deaf Children,' *SQV*, 7.
[35] Sr Thomasia, 'Speechreading,' *SVQ*, 4-5.
[36] Sr Hermina, 'Speech for the deaf - A method in the making,' *SVQ*, 9, 2, 1964, 7.
[37] See Sr Hermina, 'Home responsibilities,' 10.

speak.'[38] They needed to realise and be made to understand that speech was a way of getting what they want. The children's success in developing speech depended on their ability to lip-read or speech-read.

To become proficient in communicating in a hearing world, it was not only important for deaf children to understand what others were saying but also to know how to speak to hearing people. For this purpose, the deaf child needed good voice production.

> As in all things the nursery teacher will attend to the first needs first; develop in the child a clear forward voice, open throat and some degree of tongue control until the first simple word emerges after many trials and errors.[39]

This was one of the important contributions that the school made and to ensure good speech it employed the use of modern technology.

6.3. Deaf education and technology

After the Enlightenment, with its emphasis on reason and progress, pastoral practice accepted and promoted the new medical knowledge and scientific innovations of the day as integral to the Church's missionary efforts to remedy the ills of the world and as a tool of evangelisation.[40] In ministry to the deaf, the schools relied heavily on modern technological advances to overcome the silent world into which they saw the deaf condemned. The Catholic weekly, *The Southern Cross*, reported in 1948 on a visit from Mrs van Zyl, the wife of the Governor-General, to the Dominican school in Wittebome. The headline read: 'Visit to two Catholic Homes: Mrs van Zyl sees modern Deaf and Dumb methods.' She was accompanied by Bishop Hennemann, the Archbishop of Cape Town, and the parish priest of Wittebome, Mgr J. O'Rourke.

> The programme of welcome included an orchestral item and a most impressive display of the methods of speech-training, showing the highly scientific approach to the problem. This was exemplified further when Her Excellency was shown round the

[38] Ibid, 12.
[39] Sr Hermina, 'Speech for the deaf,' 7-8.
[40] David Bosch, *Transforming mission: Paradigm shifts in theology of mission*, (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1991), 337.

> institution, and saw the most up-to-date electric apparatus for testing and aiding hearing.[41]

This belief that the oral approach was both modern and scientific was central to the thinking of the educators, teachers and administrators. At St Vincent's school in Johannesburg, there was a similar understanding. In 1960, Mr V.H. Vaughan, from the Union Education Department, gave a speech to parents and teachers of St Vincent's on the importance of using scientific apparatus in the advancement of education for the deaf.[42]

It was considered vital in the oral method of education that residual hearing is stimulated and developed when the child started school. This led to the introduction of various technological innovations to assist deaf children make the most use of their residual hearing through amplification or to train them in regulating the sound of their own voices.

The most spoken about innovation was the Coyne Voice Pitch Indicator that was developed in Cape Town.

6.3.1. The Coyne Voice Pitch Indicator

In 1937, Mr A.E. Coyne, a lecturer in Engineering at the Cape Technical College, invented and developed the Coyne Voice Pitch Indicator. His wife taught at the Dominican-Grimley School for the Deaf in Cape Town.[43] The instrument was devised to help profoundly deaf children to recognise the pitch of their voices and learn how to regulate it. The pitch of the voice was captured by tuning forks which then lit up a series of coloured lights. The lights rose and fell in relation to the sound emitted indicating the pitch of the voice.

> A little girl who has a naturally high pitched voice is now able to control it and bring it down to the normal range, and another whose voice for years has been very low has for the first time realised what physical sensation is required in order to raise the pitch, and after three days was able to produce notes four and five tones above her original pitch.[44]

[41] 'Visit to two Catholic homes,' *TSC*, 15 September 1948, 6/377.
[42] 'Deaf school extension provided by pupil's parents,' *TSC*, 30 September 1959, 12/472.
[43] 'The Coyne Voice Pitch Indicator,' *TSM*, December 1937, 6.
[44] 'The Coyne Voice Pitch Indicator,' 7. Also see 'Teaching the deaf to hear,' *The Star*, 23 August 1946.

The Coyne Voice Pitch Indicator was not the only technological innovation that was used to assist teachers in the education of deaf children.

6.3.2. Amplifiers, hearing aids and the induction loop system

In the classroom, the hearing aid and amplified sound were integral to teaching in a deaf school. Already back in November 1937, St Vincent School sought to supplement the oral method with what was referred to as the acoustic method. Making use of modern technology, the school installed the first group radio hearing aid to be used in South Africa.

> The apparatus consists principally of a microphone for the sister in charge to speak into, and a pair of headphones for each child. The phones are plugged into a transformer and the children can regulate the volume of their phones to suit themselves.[45]

Thus, the acoustic method meant that the classroom was fitted out with various technological aids to assist the teacher in educating the deaf:

> All the children wear hearing-aids and there are class-room installations as well as the induction loop systems and special speech-training units in use. To develop sound consciousness highly amplified electronic equipment is used.[46]

Getting the deaf children to accept the use of hearing aids seemed to be a challenge. The hearing aids then were heavy as they were attached to an amplifier that was worn around the neck. The children were given these hearing aids as soon as they arrived at school so that they would be able to familiarise themselves with the hearing aid as soon as possible.

> Experience has shown that deaf children will not befriend hearing aids unless they become used to them at a very early age. Therefore, as soon as a child is admitted to the Nursery Class he is fitted with a high fidelity aid. Only the best aids on the market are good enough, for the child will produce the voice and the speech quality he hears through his aid.[47]

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[45] 'Radio teaches the deaf: Afflicted children listen-in, learn to speak,' *Sunday Express*, 18 July 1937.
[46] 'St Vincent's School cracks isolation of the deaf child,' *TSC*, 27 April 1966, 4/196.
[47] Sr Thomasia, 'Report 1960/61,' *SVQ*, 6, 1, March 1961, 2.

In 1961, Mr H. Reichenberg of Westdene Products, a company that sold hearing aids, gave a talk at St Vincent School and explained to parents and teachers that there were essentially three types of hearing aids used in educating the deaf.[48] Firstly, there were specially designed speech training hearing aids for individual tuition. St Vincent's had three of these hearing aids and they were used to teach children who were slow in grasping speech and therefore battled with following the lessons in class. Secondly, there were group amplifiers for class teaching. Each child in the class uses headsets similar to those used by pilots and radio operators. The teacher speaks into a microphone which then amplifies the sound to each child in the room. Thirdly, there is the loop induction system. This system did not require the wearing of any heavy headsets. The children's personal hearing aids were able to pick up the sound amplified through a wire that was looped around the classroom. The same system was also operative in the schools for the deaf in Cape Town.

> Today it is her [Sister Alacoque Broderick[49]] delight to see the classrooms in Dominican-Grimley School, Cape Town, and in the Wittebome School equipped with the most modern group-hearing-aids including the induction loop system.[50]

6.3.3. The Sound Perception Method (SPM)

As an extension of the acoustic method, the sound perception method was introduced into Catholic schools for the deaf in the late 1950s.

> This method is used as far as I know by a few schools only, at Cabra in Ireland, a few schools in Australia, the Dominican Grimley School in Cape Town, the Dominican School for the Coloured Deaf, Wittebome, and St Vincent's.[51]

Bishop Boyle of Johannesburg blessed the new Brian Hall at St Vincent School, on 5 September 1959, which was fitted with the most developed technological aids to teaching the deaf and incorporated a sound perception room.[52]

[48] See H. Reichenberg, 'Hearing aids and how they function,' SVQ, 6, 1, March 1961, 10-19.
[49] Sr Alacoque Broderick was a veteran teacher of the deaf down in the Western Cape. See 'Jubilarian taught deaf for 44 years,' *TSC*, 19 September 1962, 9/453.
[50] 'Jubilarian taught deaf for 44 years,' *TSC*, 19 September 1962, 9/453.
[51] Sr Thomasia, 'The Sound Perception Method,' *SVQ*, 9, 4, 1964, 5.
[52] 'Deaf school extension provided by pupil's parents,' *TSC*, 30 September 1959, 12/472.

This was new and innovative and international visitors like Edwin Stevens, a British hearing aid specialist, came to St Vincent's school in October 1960 to study the sound perception method. He was impressed by what he saw, saying:

> It is quite remarkable, and there is nothing like this being done in Britain, so far as I know.[53]

The method was teaching the deaf children to perceive or feel the various vibrations and pitches of music or sound 'and to interpret these with different actions, like marching, walking, trotting, running or skipping.'[54]

By 1961, this method had become so successful that Sr Thomasia Knoepfle, the principal of St Vincent School, could report that:

> the acoustic training was intensified by the development of training in Sound Perception. This specific training in rhythm and pitch discrimination has greatly contributed towards an appreciation of sound and aesthetic values. Sometime ago the loop system was installed in Brian Hall to enable the teacher to speak to the pupils through a microphone during Sound Perception Lessons. The experiment seems promising and has already created quite a sensation among the teachers.[55]

The method was an adaptation of the Barczy method of teaching speech and language to the deaf children. It was introduced into the Sint-Michielsgestel School for the Deaf in the Netherlands, by its director Fr van Uden in 1940.[56] The method encouraged the use and the developing of the deaf child's residual hearing. The teacher spoke directly into the deaf child's ear but unlike the SPM, no amplification of any kind was used. The male voice was favoured over the female voice, probably because most deaf children suffer from perceptive deafness with loss of the high frequencies.

However, the sound perception method was developed from the Barczy method. It sought to improve deaf children's speech by enabling them to experience highly amplified speech

[53] 'Deaf children march to sound of music: But they cannot hear it,' *The Star*, 27 October 1960, 11.
[54] 'Deaf children march to sound of music,' 11.
[55] Sr Thomasia, 'Report 1960/61,' 2.
[56] Fr van Uden was responsible for transforming the Sint-Michielsgestel School for the Deaf into an oral school.

and sounds 'at first through contact feeling and later through resonance feeling'.[57] The contact and resonance feeling was known as the feedback or 'cybernetic principle'.

> The cybernetic idea is embodied in all automatic processes in which a principle of feedback operates.[58]

As a result of the feedback, which comes from feeling or 'hearing' music or person's voice vibrations, deaf children could improve the quality of their own voice production and speech quality. They could gain a greater sense of rhythm which comes through the awareness of sound rather than sight. Thereby the children's speech would improve.

The equipment was required for the SPM to work effectively included a Hammond organ which was used because 'it produces strong vibrations and a continuous flow of music as compared with the interrupted sounds of a piano'[59] Music was played on the organ, which was connected to four loudspeakers, and the children were left free to respond to the music in their own way.

> No directions were given during the exercises and the children were free to act and re-act in their own way. They have to pick up patterns and interpret intervals unaided. This trains them to independence, and they are compelled to concentrate on their perceptual powers.[60]

The SPM was introduced for the younger children to train them to distinguish sound from noise and to 'appreciate simple rhythmic patterns and variations in pitch.'[61] The SPM was understood to reinforce the oral method because speech, language and speech reading all benefit as the child learns that pitch and rhythm are central to good speech. This also had the added benefits that:

> improved feeling for rhythm brings about improvement in the deaf child's walk, his balance, his whole bearing and all his bodily movements, a big step in his normalization process.'[62]

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[57] 'Africa's delegate to US education of deaf congress,' *TSC,* 2 August 1967, 3.
[58] Sr Thomasia, 'The Sound Perception Method,' *SVQ*, 9, 4, 1964, 5.
[59] Thomasia, 'The Sound Perception Method,' 6.
[60] Ibid, 7.
[61] Ibid, 7.
[62] Ibid, 8.

The children found the SPM pleasurable and they were eager to attend lessons.

> The children have probably more than once seen a horse galloping, but they have never sensed the rhythm. Sound perception gives them a much clearer concept.[63]

The teacher of SPM had to have musical and rhythmical ability to help the children. She was expected to understand children of all age groups as she was responsible for all the classes. She had to protect her own ears too from the loud music during class otherwise she may 'become deaf herself.'[64]

There were many misconceptions and prejudices too. There was an overwhelming trust in the superiority of the sense of hearing over that of seeing.

> It has been proved that the deaf child's vision is more superficial than the hearing child's. This is ascribed to lack of sound experience. Sound perception claims to develop inner focussing and stimulates mental activity. Lack of sound stimulation produces mental lethargy and dreaminess. Vision has not the same rousing effect as hearing. The teacher knows how quickly their attention wanders.[65]

The lack of awareness of sound was also thought to affect the deaf child's concept of space. They were presumed to be afraid of large empty spaces. This was because a hearing child could call out for help if it found itself in a large empty space, the deaf child does not have the same awareness. 'The hearing child knows that he can get help by calling, whereas the deaf child feels he has no contact.'[66]

6.4. Breaking the sound barrier[67]

Central to the Sound Perception Method and the oral approach to deaf education was the desire by educationalists to break through the sound barrier as the following quote makes clear:

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[63] Ibid, 8.
[64] Ibid, 9.
[65] Sr Thomasia, 'The Sound Perception Method' *SVQ*, 9, 4, 1964, 8.
[66] Ibid, 10.
[67] This was a common perception in the newspaper articles on the deaf schools. 'A "sound-barrier" is being lifted and children at St. Vincent's are being given a language for without language people cannot think.' See Cook, 'Breaking the other sound barrier,' 42.

> Movement, dancing, rhythmic activities, enjoying one's own productions, games, healthy competition, manipulation of attractive apparatus, dramatization and the feeling that one can control the situation is of the substance of the Sound Perception Method . . . We do want to break through the silence surrounding the deaf child.[68]

Thus, technological innovations like the Coyne Voice Pitch Indicator, hearing aids, amplifiers and the induction loop system became important in deaf education. Deaf children needed 'to hear sound in the normal way,'[69] if they were to learn a language as a pathway to knowledge. They needed to discover rhythm and the joy of music which would make 'their carriage, walk and bearing more normal'[70] and their speech more rhythmic and fluent. The focus of the education system was normalisation of deaf children and overcoming their defect, their lack of hearing. [71]

6.4.1. School psychologists and deaf children

Psychology was also marshalled into providing the testing and supervision required for the normalisation and rehabilitation of the deaf child. Psychological tests were useful for determining the child's intelligence levels but were also to play a part in remedying the effects of the absence of hearing. In 1958, St Vincent School employed a teacher-psychologist as a member of staff.

> It was her duty, in co-operation with the other teachers, to supervise and promote the rehabilitation of every pupil, boy or girl, in making those adjustments which are necessary as a result of the child's handicap. Her delicate task implies a thorough knowledge of each child, and to this end various tests are carried out and records compiled and studied in respect of each child. Some of her time is devoted also to remedial teaching in subjects in which the children need extra coaching, and her knowledge of, and intimate contact with, the children enable her to attend to problems of behaviour, give vocations guidance and assist in the placement of pupils when schooldays are over.[72]

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[68] Sr Thomasia, 'The Sound Perception Method,' 10-11.
[69] Sr Thomasia, 'The Sound Perception Method,' 11.
[70] Sr Thomasia, 'The Sound Perception Method,' 11.
[71] See Reynolds, *Vulnerable Communion*,' 46ff: Thomas Reynolds critiqued this desire to rectify the defects in the disabled and calls this obsession to normalise the disabled or handicapped person: the cult normalcy.
[72] 'St Vincent's 25 years work for deaf children,' *TSC*, 1 April 1959, 11/155.

Being deaf was seen to be the source of psychological problems for the deaf child. This included firstly, the lack of full experience. The deaf child's experience was limited by the absence of hearing. Visual experience was one-sided and would never fully 'compensate for the absence of normal auditory experience.'[73] Consequently, the child's thinking and reasoning abilities were limited. The psychologist's role was to help the child deal with this deficit of experience.

Secondly, the deaf child needed to find a sense of acceptance about their handicap and not resent the hearing. They had to develop 'coping abilities'[74] that would equip them to function well in a hearing world. They needed to avoid developing a complex about being deaf or seeing in the hearing an enemy who was always against them or prejudiced against deaf people. Again, the adjustment required social maturity and this was understood as being able to integrate well into the hearing world.

> For a deaf person there is nothing more difficult to attain than proper social behaviour. Educationally and economically, by sheer industry and will power he can attain the normal level, but socially he is at a great disadvantage. We must not be blind to this fact. His mere presence in a hearing society does not affect social integration. A good standard of education is a condition for social integration.[75]

Thirdly, the psychologist was employed to help the deaf child accept their handicap and not use it as an excuse for misconduct or shirking responsibility in life. The child needed to learn acceptable behavioural patterns and not to use their handicap as an escape from living a disciplined life.

6.4.2. The science of audiology and speech therapy

The providing of hearing aids to deaf children at school meant that the audiologist played an integral part in oral deaf education. They did the ear tests to determine the children's hearing capacity, they made the ear-impressions and prescribed the necessary hearing aid.

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[73] 'Deaf children's problems,' *SVQ*, 9,4, Fourth quarter 1964, 15-16.
[74] 'Deaf children's problems,' 15.
[75] 'Social maturity,' SVQ, 10, 1, First quarter 1965, 8-9.

There was an industry heavily invested in hearing aid manufacture and which therefore had an invested interested in the oral method of education.

> Sophisticated hi-fi stereo equipment, said to be the most modern of its kind in South Africa, has been installed in St Vincent's School for the Deaf in Johannesburg to help children with hearing defects to learn to speak . . . Mr H J Reichenberg, director of the company which supplied the equipment, says that a child with impaired hearing who is just learning to recognise and retain sounds is dependent on high-fidelity acoustic amplification. The speech to be learnt must be presented without ambient noise and sound reproduction calls for high levels, the peak values of which must be reproduced without distortion.[76]

Scientific and technological solutions to deafness were seen as eventually resolving the problems experienced by deaf people and equipping them with the ability to function normally within a hearing world.

6.5. The superiority of the oral method

The success of the school was primarily acknowledged by the academic results attained by the various schools. As early as 1948, reports of the successes were recorded in the Southern Cross regarding the pass rates by St Vincent School and the Dominican-Grimley schools.[77] In 1957, the Chief Inspector of Schools in the Western Cape, M.D.J. Liebenberg, congratulated Dominican-Grimley School for its scholastic achievements as reflected in the school report.[78]

However, alongside school results, the concerts of the schools for the deaf were more visual signs of the successes of the oral method. Whenever the mayor of the town, or a government education official attended a school function, there was always a display by the deaf children on how good they were in speaking and lipreading. Concerts were also organised for parents to see the progress of their children.

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[76] See 'Hi-fi helps the deaf,' *The Star*, 17 December 1971.
[77] 'Deaf children succeed,' *The Southern Cross*, 25 February 1948, 2/72.
[78] 'Work for deaf children,' *TSC*, 29 May 1957, 12/268.

In 1948, in a rendition of *Snow White* for the school concert at St Vincent School for the Deaf the following report in the Southern Cross imagined the inner thoughts of some of the hearing audience:

> "How could deaf and dumb children give a concert? I suppose it will be a few 'action' items, that is all one can expect." Such were the thoughts of the greater part of the audience at St. Vincent's School for the Deaf recently while they waited for the curtain to rise for the start of a programme of several items. Two-and-a-half hours later as that same audience left the hall one heard on every side, "Wasn't it marvellous! Who could have believed it! What patience those Sisters must have? I never expected anything like that! Imagine a complete play with over thirty actors and eight different scenes!"[79]

This was not limited to St Vincent School. Similar concerts were held by other schools for the deaf to show the expertise of the Deaf children in speaking and communicating through the spoken word.[80] On 18 April 1951, on the occasion of the biennial general meeting of the Dominican Schools for the Deaf, organised in St Mary's School Hall in Hope Street, Cape Town, a deaf children's exhibition and entertainment was organised for Cardinal Owen McCann; the Mayoress Mrs C.O. Booth; and the Secretary for Education, Arts and Science, Mr H.S. van der Walt, were among the gathered guests:

> To illustrate the success achieved in training the deaf and dumb child to speak distinctly, one of the senior boys gave a recitation. He spoke quite distinctly with the proper inflection in his voice and putting a great amount of expression into it.[81]

At times, it was the teaching staff rather than the pupils who received the praise. In 1956, after a concert conducted by the deaf children of the Wittebome school, the Mayor of Cape Town, Mr P.J. Wolmarans, said:

> Now, having seen the entertainment provided for us this afternoon, I must say the teachers of the deaf at this school have amply demonstrated what kindness and

[79] 'The Deaf Entertain,' *TSC*, 26 October 1949, 2/410.
[80] See 'Forthcoming Exhibition at Dominican School for Deaf,' *TSC*, 11 April 1951, 2/170; 'Dominican Work for the Deaf,' *TSC*, 25 April 1951, 12/194; 'Mayor's tribute to Sisters,' *TSC*, 16 May 1956, 12/240; 'Two good things clash,' *TSC*, 12 September 1956, 12/444; 'At school for the deaf: "Only love and devotion could produce such wonderful results," *TSC*, 4 June 1958, 12/276; .
[81] 'Dominican Work for the Deaf,' *TSC*, 25 April 1951, 12/194.

> patience can accomplish. Theirs is a difficult task, but they do have a wonderful reward in seeing the accomplishment of their work in revealing to those who must always live in silence the joy of being useful and of being like other people.[82]

The work of bringing education to the deaf was considered truly miraculous and worthy of the highest praise.

> In a crowded City Hall, the Children's Music Festival of the Dorothy Boxall Young People's Music and Drama Movement was winning tremendous applause. The most moving item of the evening, however, was the performance of the St. Vincent's School for the Deaf percussion band of drums, cymbals, triangles, tambourines and vibraphone[83] . . . The children's playing is a miracle of patient teaching, for they have learnt the delight of rhythm by eye . . . Their eye for rhythm was sound though they could not hear, and it praised God mightily, indeed.[84]

In 1957, Dominican-Grimley school had a concert for gathered guests whereby deaf children of varying ages displayed their progress in lip-reading and speaking.

> The seniors took part in an unrehearsed quiz, grasping the normally spoken questions entirely by lip-reading and answering questions just as difficult as those asked on Springbok radio much more promptly and accurately than their unhandicapped elders on the air. Even the loud and clear, "I do not know" from one of them was loudly applauded, for it was the measure of triumph over a handicap.[85]

On the 25th anniversary of the existence of St Vincent School for the Deaf, the *Southern Cross* reported that the school had educated 270 girls and 330 boys. The most outstanding pupil had been Nigel Pickford, who lip-read his way through Springs Technical College on way to becoming a draughtsman at Daggafontein Gold Mines. He received 'the award for the most outstanding student in the National Certificate section' gaining 'individual distinction in mathematics and machine construction.'[86]

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[82] 'Mayor's tribute to Sisters: "Unselfish devotion to deaf children",' *TSC*, 16 May 1956, 12/240.
[83] 'A xylophone type of instrument in which piano-like keys are struck, and the only instrument of the band which gives out a real tune.' See 'Two good things clash,' *TSC*, 12 September 1956, 12/444.
[84] 'Two good things clash,' *TSC*, 12 September 1956, 12/444.
[85] 'Work for deaf children,' *TSC*, 29 May 1957, 12/268.
[86] 'St Vincent's 25 years work for deaf children,' *TSC*, 1 April 1959, 2/146, 11/155. Pickford was grateful to the oral method of education for his success in life. He wrote in a speech: '[…] when I left school and started working at Anglo American they required me to attend College for my NTC 2 and 3. The teacher at the college

6.6. Securing employment in a hearing world

Sign language was understood as locking up oneself into a deaf ghetto whereas the oral method freed the deaf child so that they could live and work in the hearing world of work. This fitted with the idea that education was necessary to make one useful in society and it gave the skills needed to fit into society as a productive member and made the deaf person able to provide income for their family.

6.6.1. Vocational training in schools for the deaf

The task of the deaf school was understood as empowering the children so that they would have the necessary skills to be employable. There was great emphasis placed on vocational training.

> Vocational training includes the two official languages, mathematics, science, geography, engineering, drawing, trade theory and workshop practice, typewriting and book-keeping.[87]

They were also taught lip-reading and finger-spelling. While the schools sought to give the deaf pupils vocational training they discouraged parents from removing their children from school and sending them out to work before this training was completed.

> Parents who withdraw their children prematurely are guilty of the same office as those who postpone sending their children, who are of school-going age, to a nursery. Both types are curtailing their children's education. The children are the losers. It will be increasingly difficult for them to continue their education after they have left school. Deaf children can follow certain courses at Technical Colleges, but these are limited in number. They usually miss the point in oral instruction given by the uninitiated instructor, who is confronted with a large class, and does not realise that one of his

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did not know for 3 weeks that he had a deaf person in his class and at the end of the year I came top of 80 hearing students. This story hit the newspaper. I still keep a copy of it with pride. He had reported to my work that I had not been attending College because every time he called out my name I had not responded.' See Nigel Pickford, "My years at St Vincents,' Appendix, 465. Sr Macrina Donoghue recorded similar success stories with the 'auditory-verbal approach' in Cape Town too. See Sr Macrina Donoghue, interview conducted by Mark James, 12 July 2016, Cape Town, 446.

[87] 'St Vincent's School cracks isolation of the deaf child,' *TSC*, 27 April 1966, 4/196.

> pupils cannot lipread unless he is facing him. Or the tutor cannot be bothered with a handicapped pupil.[88]

Besides the problem of not being able to follow oral courses at the Technical College, there was the added problem that:

> the average deaf child at 15 or 16 years of age has not reached a stage of maturity of character and personality that will face up to the strain imposed by a complete change of environment and occupation. Another three years' training would qualify him for his entrance into adult life. Three parties would benefit from such prolonged training, the pupil, the parents and the employer. Moreover, the school would have the satisfaction of having completed its task.[89]

The school was specialised in vocational discernment for the deaf child too so that the child would be allocated to the most suitable employment. This may not necessarily happen if the child was thrown into a job prematurely.

6.6.2. Gender-based vocational training

In the schools for the deaf during the 1950s and 1960s, the vocational training on offer accorded with the stereotypes of jobs for men and women.

> Past pupils have been successful as draughtsmen, jewellers, engravers, woodcarvers, sheetmetal workers, shopfitters, cabinet-makers, carpenters, plasterers, upholsterers, electricians, plumbers, farriers, hairdressers; one is a fingerprint expert and another studies medical science. Girls have done well as bookkeepers, typists, commercial artists, dressmakers, photographers' assistants and hairdressers.[90]

Just like hearing schools, schools for the deaf strictly divided practical skills into those subjects for boys and those which were considered suitable for girls. It was presumed that the work and skills should be gendered understood as biologically constituted. Judith Butler has argued that rather than gender being biological constituted and a stable identity and locus of agency, it should be recognised as an identity which is 'tenuously constituted in time – an identity

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[88] 'Editorial,' *SVQ*, 1, 5, March 1954, 1

[89] 'Editorial,' 1.

[90] 'Editorial,' *SQV*, 1, 5, March 1954, 1-2.

instituted through a *stylized repetition of acts*.'[91] Understood in this way, gender is a constructed identity or what Butler called 'a performative accomplishment' which society and even 'the actors themselves come to believe.'[92] Thus Esme Cleall claimed that the role of the school was to ensure that deaf children were 'properly gendered'[93] so that they would be ready to enter a gendered job market and find employment in a gendered workplace.

However, there were some exceptions in jobs which were available for both men and women. In 1955, girls at St Vincent School had the option to be trained in draughting by two women teachers: J. Humphreys and N. Thorpe.[94] In Catholic schools for the deaf, all the schools were co-educational unlike the hearing schools which, in South Africa, were divided into separate boys' and girls' schools.[95] This brought a different dynamic to the school. Dominican Sisters were teaching the boys subjects that were seen patriarchally as the preserve of men.

At St Vincent's school Sr Dosithea, referred to as 'an expert craftsman,'[96] taught boys woodwork, metalwork, fitting and turning, welding, workshop practice, mechanical drawing, how to handle lathes, drills, forges, planers and bandsaws. 'The training she gives them is the same as is given in Government-run technical high schools.'[97] Consequently, the deaf boys at St Vincent School for the Deaf had a different role modelling being taught by nuns or religious women than those who attending hearing schools or other schools for the deaf where the teachers would have been men.[98]

On completion of their education and training, teachers from the Catholic schools for the deaf went out to employers and convinced them to employ the deaf pupils, both men and women, from their schools.[99]

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[91] Judith Butler, 'Performative acts and gender constitution: An essay in phenomenology and feminist theory,' *Theatre Journal*, 40, 4, (December 1988), 519.
[92] Butler, 'Performative acts and gender constitution,' 520.
[93] Esme Cleall, '"Deaf to the Word": Gender, deafness and Protestantism in nineteenth-century Britain and Ireland,' Gender and History, 25, 3, (November 2013), 597.
[94] 'St Vincent's 25 years work for deaf children,' *TSC*, 1 April 1959, 11/155.
[95] Congregations of religious sisters ran schools for the girls and religious brother congregations like the Marist Brothers or Christian Brothers ran schools for boys. In hearing schools, boys were only allowed at Convent schools until Standard 1, now Grade 3. They were then expected to move over to a boys' school.
[96] The Man on the Reef, 'This sister is an expert craftsman,' *The Star*, Thursday 20 April 1961.
[97] Ibid.
[98] Further research is required to investigate whether or not this had any impact on deaf men's view of gendered roles in the workplace.
[99] Ibid.

6.6.3. Job placements and opportunities for the deaf

Dr E.D. Cooper, from Cape Town's City Health Department, was very positive about the vocational training of deaf afforded by the Dominican-Grimley School saying it was in the forefront in equipping deaf persons to be employable and 'thought the time might have come for legislation to foster the employment of the deaf'.[100]

In the schools for the deaf, often job placements were negotiated with businesses for the school-leaving deaf pupils.

> All school-leavers were successfully placed at Engineering and Architectural Draughting, Metal Work, Panel-beating, Blacksmithing, Pattern-making, Welding, office work and Dressmaking respectively. The firms approached have been sympathetic and co-operative. With the progress of time, new types of openings for the deaf, will have to be investigated, and the girls and boys given the necessary vocational training. With this end in view, plans for the expansion of the boys' training centre have been envisaged, and it is hoped they can be carried out during the next financial year. The project does not involve great expenses, but if brought to fruition, will widen the scope of training considerably. It would include sheetmetal work, fitting and turning, welding, electric work and upholstery.[101]

The schools also sought to provide the skills required by the job market. They were forward-thinking and enterprising, wanting the best result for their school leavers and to ensure that they had a future. It was not enough to only train deaf people in skills if there were no jobs available for them.

> A review of the conditions prevailing in industry pointed to changes which would be eventually affect the placement of the deaf boys. It was clear that, in the near future, the woodwork industry would no longer be able to absorb handicapped workers. New avenues had to be explored. There were good prospects in steel and metal work and in engineering and, in 1956, a new department was set up, catering for various branches of the steel and metal industries.[102]

[100] 'Nuns are up-to-date in training the deaf to earn a living,' *TSC*, 24 June 1959, 12/300.
[101] Thomasia Knoepfle, 'St Vincent's School, Johannesburg: Report for 1955/56,' *SVQ*, 2, 1, March 1956, 2-3.
[102] 'St Vincent's 25 years work for deaf children,' *TSC*, 1 April 1959, 2/146, 11/155.

The Sisters often kept in touch with their ex-pupils. At St Vincent School, Sr Thomasia was known to visit the factories and offices where deaf school leavers had found employment. In a jewellery workshop, where all the workers were deaf, the owner Mr Max Segal said of them: "These boys are the salt of the earth. They absorb instructions with surprising intelligence. And no workmen I have met surpass them in diligence – or in loyalty, either. I set great store by these qualities in my boys – who are my friends rather than my employees".[103]

Some businesses were happy to take on deaf employees and appreciated their work. They found their dedication commendable. However, this was not always the case.

6.6.4. Prejudice against the deaf in the workplace

Alan Cook highlighted, in an article on St Vincent school in 1955, that some of the contemporary prejudices towards the deaf that were prevalent at this period. He wrote:

> What did I know about deaf children? As much as the average, I knew, for example, that some people were known as "deaf and dumb". The inability to speak always went along with deafness. I had heard about "mutes" and I always felt that these unfortunate people suffered from mental disturbances as well.[104]

If hearing people thought that deaf people were mentally deficient, they would not willing to employ them. They would think that the deaf were incapable of doing the type of work done by the hearing. Therefore, the vocational training in the deaf school had to be of a high standard.

> Deafness today should not – indeed must not – carry the stigma, as in bygone days, of mental deficiency or derangement; to let it be known that with proper education and parental guidance, the deaf of today can attain the highest standards of education and conformable communion with their fellowmen.[105]

[103] The Man on the Reef, 'Silent Workshop,' *The Star*, 30 August 1962. It is interesting that the owner speaks of adult men as 'his boys'. Among the workers in Segal's workshop was Max Ordman, 36 years of age, who was a South African heavyweight wrestler as well as the Jewish Maccabi wrestling champion; Billy Henschel, a South African welterweight wrestling champion; Robert Wynne, a weightlifter and a very young apprentice jeweller called John Turner, who later joined the Congregation of Mariannhill Missionaries (CMM). He dedicated his life to being chaplain to the deaf.
[104] Cook, 'Breaking the other sound barrier,' 42.
[105] L.J. Paolo, 'The role of the parent of the deaf child,' *SVQ*, 10, 1, 1965, 8.

But even if they were employed, these prejudices could still work against them. There was always the danger that deaf people would be discharged from work if they were perceived to be slack or lazy or did not fit into the work environment. Deaf workers had to be extra vigilant and to work hard to counteract the prejudices of the hearing employer and thereby avoid being dismissed.

> Another consideration in favour of prolonged school attendance is the risk immature deaf children run of being the first to be discharged on work becoming slack. There is the added danger of their being ostracized from a society that demands a certain standard of education and culture.[106]

White schools for the deaf had more resources and were able to give better vocational training than black schools. Among the schools for the deaf, there were many other discrepancies between white and black schools.

6.7. The racialisation of Catholic Deaf education

As the Dominican Sisters, both Cabra and Kingwilliamstown, were committed to the oral method of education, it was to be expected that these new African schools would also employ the oral method of deaf education.

> In school, the eagerness of these deaf children to overcome their handicap is admirable. They are taught principally by the Oral Method, and great emphasis is placed on reading and writing. [107]

However, there were clear differences between the white schools for the deaf and their black counterparts.

Firstly, the National Party insisted on mother-tongue education for all groups. This had the effect in dividing the black community into different ethnic and linguistic groups. Dominican-Grimley School was for whites, Wittebome was for Coloureds, St Thomas School was for Xhosa speakers and Hammanskraal for Tswana children. This meant that the medium of instruction in these schools varied enormously.

[106] 'St Vincent's School, Johannesburg: Report for 1955/56,' *SVQ*, 2, 1, March 1956, 2.
[107] See 'St. Thomas School for the Deaf Bantu Children: Report for the year 1963/64,' 5. KDSA, Box: Thomas School for the Deaf, 123/373 31.

> The children at St. Thomas's School, said Mr. Maree, would be taught reading and writing in their mother tongue. For communication purposes they would be taught finger spelling and gestures. In cases "where it can be profitably undertaken", a little speech training may also be given.[108]

As sign language was permitted in African schools for the deaf, and not in white schools for the deaf, it also had the effect of enabling the birth of a variety of dialects of SASL.[109]

Secondly, there was a discrepancy in the financial support that the different schools received. Funds were allocated according to race. The white schools for the deaf, just like the white hearing schools, benefitted much more from government subsidies than their black counterparts. This made the starting up of these schools difficult. The government gave the black schools a 50% subsidy but in effect, this was only a reimbursement after the school's expenses had already been paid in full. Sr Michael from the newly-established Hammanskraal school made an appeal for support in *The Southern Cross* to assist the new cash-strapped school[110] which was already R30 000 in debt. The Johannesburg diocese had already organised a collection on Efeta Sunday, 26 August, and raised R1 289.82 for the school but more was required. In the drive, the example was given of a young boy who arrived at the school without any identification and unable to write or speak his name. The implication being that the Sisters were involved in the task of raising the deaf from gross neglect to civilised life.

The Bantu Education Act was an instrument of the Nationalist government, not only to divide and rule but also to maintain white supremacy. Black education was an 'educating for ignorance' to ensure that Black people 'carry out automatically the menial and lowly tasks set for them, the hard and dirty work. They were taught not to think, but to obey; not to initiate but to carry out; not to aspire, but to grudge.'[111] Inferior Black education was to remind black people of their inferior status in society. This proved true even in schools for the deaf.

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[108] 'New school for African deaf is joint Church-State effort,' *TSC*, 17 October 1962, 11/503.

[109] See Aarons and Akach, 'South African Sign Language,' 1-2. They argue that there is one South African Sign Language but with some variations arising from the differing systems used in the various schools around the country.

[110] 'These deaf children do not even know they have names,' *TSC*, 31 October 1962, 11/527. See also Monsignor Desmond Hatton, 'The deaf to hear,' *TSC*, 21 November 1962, 5/557.

[111] Pamphlet produced by the Congress of Democrats, *Educating for ignorance*, 5. Historical Papers Research Archive, University of the Witwatersrand, Box: Federation of South African Women 1954-1963, Collection number AD 1137.

Suzanne Lombard, a pupil at the Dominican School for the Deaf in Wittebome in the late 1960s and early 1970s, said that:

> the education for the whites was better, ours was of a dubious quality. There was no matric and so looking for work without a matric is difficult. Whites got good jobs, they were taught well. They had special classes unlike us. We were not taught well.[112]

The white schools for the deaf offered studies up to matric whereas the black schools only went as far as Standard 8. This limited the employment opportunities for black Deaf adults in comparison to their white counterparts. Job opportunities were more diverse for whites and less so for black Deaf people. Nigel Pickford who attended St Vincent School for the Deaf was appreciative of the Sisters who took care:

> to assess their pupils according to their I.Q. and ability for employment after leaving school. They even approached firms to find work for their pupils. They have produced a Professor, Priests, Engineers, Architectural draughtsmen, Staff working with insurance claims and banks, carpenters, welders, panelbeaters, typists. What an amazing range of opportunities.[113]

Pickford became a draughtsman. Jennifer Gillespie who went to the Dominican-Grimley School for the Deaf got jobs as a typist and later computers with insurance companies like Old Mutual and Metropolitan Life, Cape Town City Council and the University of the Western Cape.[114] Those who Suzanne Lombard got her first job sewing in a textile factory and later for an electrical company. Her husband Stephen Lombard trained as a tailor but later went into upholstery work.[115] Faith Cronwright got jobs in factories doing embroidery.[116]

Many white deaf people, not all, had the skills to get white-collar jobs but black people were limited to blue-collar employment in factories. There were also different opinions about the extent to which their schooling equipped them for life outside of school.

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[112] Suzanne Lombard, interview conducted by Mark James, 13 November 2015, 423.
[113] Nigel Pickford, 'My years at St. Vincents,' 468.
[114] Jennifer Gillespie, interview conducted by Mark James, Cape Town, 12 November 2015, 406.
[115] Suzanne Lombard, interview conducted by Mark James, Cape Town, 13 November 2015, 419-420.
[116] Faith Cronwright, interview conducted by Mark James, Cape Town, 16 November 2015, 428.

6.8. Integration into a hearing world: the liberation from silence

There is no doubt that the oral method of deaf education was understood, at the time, as the most effective means by which deaf children could be taught and trained in order that they would become functional members of an overwhelmingly hearing world. It was generally held that the oral method would release the deaf from the prison of silence and liberate them so that they could more fully participate within a hearing world.

> Resounding applause greeted such simple actions as a small boy brushing hair, a little girl skipping, at the unheard, lip-read instructions of their teacher [...] The reason for the applause was obvious. The audience saw in these demonstrations reassuring proof that children cut off from the world by lack of hearing, and thus of speech, were finding a point of contact which would in time, enable them to take an active part in everyday life.[117]

By acquiring the skills of a spoken language, through patient teaching and the use of modern technological advances, the deaf were released from the grip of ignorance. They were empowered through education to relate to the hearing by speaking as clearly as possible and comprehending what the hearing were saying to them through the means of speech-reading or lip-reading. Consequently, they could find employment and attain the financial independence needed to raise a family. Their handicap no longer held them back and they could now be considered normal and fully-functional members of society.

6.8.1. Overcoming the handicap and functioning normally

In 1963, at the centennial celebrations of the Dominican-Grimley school, Dr J.J.P. Op't Hof, the secretary of the Department of Education, Arts and Science, one of the guest speakers, referred to the work of the school as a 'great deed of faith'.

> This deed of faith opened up new horizons for those so handicapped, and the school has helped them to lead normal lives.[118]

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[117] 'Nuns are up-to-date in training the deaf to earn a living,' *TSC*, 24 June 1959, 12/300.

[118] Quote from Dr J.J.P. Op't Hof in 'Dominican school for deaf commemorates centenary,' *TSC*, 22 May 1963, 1/241, 2/242.

In the same speech at Dominican-Grimley school, Dr Op't Hof neatly summed up the whole intention and objectives of the oral method of deaf education:

> Theoretically, of course, we know that the more fully a deaf person can be habilitated to the human society of which he is an integral part as much as every other citizen, i.e. the more completely he can enter into his community, so as to share in its economic, cultural and spiritual life, the more successfully he has been educated and prepared for life. And since contact between one individual and another is established and maintained chiefly, in many cases almost exclusively, by directly talking to that person, we realise that the ability to speak intelligibly is the only door which can lead him from the isolation imposed on him by his deafness and its many adverse consequences, to a fuller life in relation to his fellowmen.[119]

There is no doubt that the oral method of deaf education that the Dominican sisters gave to the deaf children came from dedicated service by which they sacrificed and cared for 'God's handicapped ones.'[120] They were commended by for their patient work[121] and unselfish devotion[122] but being advocates for the oral method came at a cost.

Sign language usage in the schools for the deaf was considered as gesture. This was assumed to be a primitive form of language development and, therefore, it hampered the children's progress in acquiring language. Consequently, it was forbidden at school and the children were punished if caught signing. This did not stop the children signing but encouraged to them

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[119] Sr Hermina, 'Speech for the deaf,' *SVQ*, 9, 2, 5.

[120] See 'New hostel for the deaf,' *TSC*, 24 June 1953, 2/292: 'His Lordship [Bishop W.P. Whelan] spoke feelingly of the sacrifice and efforts of the Sisters to care for these deaf children. The care bestowed on them here was not just the patient imparting of knowledge, though in that the Sisters had been wondrfully (sic) successful, but the love and interest that follows from the realisation that they are God's children. Other teachers may take up and try to emulate the work done by the Sisters, but even if they had more financial assistance and greater facilities they would never attain the success that comes to those who dedicate their lives in the service of God's handicapped ones.'

[121] See 'Concern over schools for deaf,' *TSC*, 10 June 1953, 2/268: 'Professor Burger, Deaf of the Faculty of Education of the University of Cape Town … said that for a number of years he had been bringing large parties of his students to Wittebome to teach them the greatest lesson that any teacher could learn – the lesson of patience. Patience and unfailing love, without which no educational system could be successful, were what the children at Wittebome received from the Dominican Sisters.'

[122] ' See 'Mayor's tribute to Sisters: "Unselfish devotion to deaf children."' *TSC*, 16 May 1956, 12/239: 'The Mayor of Cape Town, Mr. P.J. Wolmarans paid tribute to the "unselfish devotion" of the Sisters and lay teachers who conducted the Dominican School for the Deaf, Wittebome, when he moved the adoption of the report at the annual general meeting last week.'

to engage in public and hidden transcript behaviour as they sought to communicate in their first language.

6.8.2. Disparaging manual methods and the use of sign language

In fact, all manual methods of educating the deaf were thought to be grossly inferior to those of the oral method. Addressing parents of deaf children at St Vincent School in 1957, Sr Hermina said:

> Arouse in your child a desire to speak. Show him by practical examples that speech is a means of getting what we want. Do not respond to your child's signs or gestures, and he will soon abandon them.[123]

Speaking in Port Elizabeth, Mother Nicholas Griffey,[124] the principal of St Gabriel's School for the Deaf in Ireland, argued that the manual or sign system of training and education only equipped deaf children to exist in a silent world, 'whereas those who were oral trained grew into more normal adults.'[125]

In response to a question from Bishop Green,[126] Mother Nicholas acknowledged that the deaf 'do usually revert to sign languages when they are together. They are under constant strain, living in a world of sound, and they need to relax when together, as for example, they can in a club for the deaf.'[127] Sign language was acknowledged as important for the deaf to communicate among themselves but was not to be used in the education environment.

Sign language was seen to promote 'ghetto-isation' of the deaf thereby isolating them further from involvement in the hearing world. However, it was also more than just this, sign language was not appreciated as a language. Sign Language was perceived to be merely gestural and did not constitute a language. It was assumed that the signs comprised of natural gestures whose meanings were obvious, transparent and self-evident. For this reason,

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[123] Sr Hermina, 'Home responsibilities in the education of deaf children,' *SQV*, 3, 4, 1957, 12.
[124] For more information on Sr Nicholas Griffey OP and oral education in Ireland, see Leeson and Sheikh, *Experiencing Deafhood*, 67-69.
[125] 'Teaching the deaf: Public address by nun from Ireland,' *TSC*, 28 July 1965, 12/360.
[126] As we saw in Chapter 5, Bishop Green was a fluent signer. This question raises the unresolved tension in Catholic ministry that existed between the oral method of deaf education among children and the acceptance of sign language in pastoral ministry with adults, as discussed in Chapters 4 and 5. I could find no references to Bishop Green's views on this debate.
[127] 'Teaching the deaf,' 12/360.

teachers in schools for the deaf advised parents that if they discouraged their deaf children from using signs or gestures, the children would 'soon abandon them.'[128] This did not happen.

6.8.3. Deaf children taught each other sign language

It was precisely at school that deaf children taught each other how to sign. The majority of deaf children are born into hearing families. Jennifer Gillespie remembered that:

> in my family there were none who were deaf. They were all hearing. I was the only deaf one in my family. But I have my sister who at the age of 13 became hard-of-hearing. I have a brother too who at about 12 also became hard-of-hearing.[129]

Gillespie learnt to sign at school. 'When I was small I used to watch the bigger children sign.'[130] Carmen Kuscus had a similar experience, 'I used to watch the older Deaf children at school […] It was the same in the family, I learnt from my older sister.'[131] Cyril Axelrod remembered:

> at school, I was picking up sign language from the other children in the playground and benefiting from the stimulation and motivation this gave me. For the first time I could fully understand what people were talking about and I could share my feelings and thoughts with others.[132]

Sign language played a significant role in helping deaf children in helping them to learn understand what was happening around them. In fact, many of them complained about the oral method of education as it favoured those who were hard of hearing. Suzanne Lombard recalled that:

> I finished Standard 7. The teaching wasn't very good. The teachers didn't really encourage the deaf. There was too much focus on the oral method.[133]

> The hard of hearing can manage in school but the deaf not. When the teacher was writing on the board and speaking we couldn't follow. We were not allowed to sign

[128] 'Home responsibilities in the Education of Deaf children,' *SQV*, 3, 4, October - December 1957, 12.
[129] Jennifer Gillespie, interview conducted by Mark James, 12 November 2015, Cape Town, 404.
[130] Jennifer Gillespie, interview conducted by Mark James, 12 November 2015, Cape Town, 404.
[131] Carmen Kuscus, interview conducted by Mark James, 13 November 2015, Cape Town, 416.
[132] Cyril Axelrod, *And the journey begins*, (Coleford, Gloucestershire: Douglas McLean, 2005), 34.
[133] Suzanne Lombard, interview conducted by Mark James, Cape Town, 13 November 2015, 419.

and we had to keep our hands behind our backs. Thus, we failed. We failed school. When we had opportunity to go outside school we learnt more than inside.[134]

Faith Cronwright confirmed Suzanne Lombard's view that the oral method benefitted the hard-of-hearing more than the profoundly deaf.

> We had a very good teacher Mrs Smith. She taught us well, a very good teacher. She gave us examples, and this helped us understand. It was easier for me because I wasn't fully deaf. For those who were completely deaf, it was more difficult to explain especially when it came to history and geography.[135]

Prior to the work of linguists like William Stokoe,[136] sign language was not understood to have any structure, grammar or vocabulary that constituted a language. Consequently, the deaf children were discouraged from using signs and told they had to learn a spoken language. Corporal punishment was often the measure meted out to deaf children who were caught signing in the classroom or on the school playground. However, a blind eye was turned to signing in the hostels.[137]

6.8.4. Punishing the use of sign language

Signing during school hours was strictly forbidden. Those Deaf children who were caught signing on the playground were often severely punished. This was a common experience in all the Catholic schools for the deaf where the oral method was used. Both Carmen Kuscus, who attended the Wittebome School, and Jennifer Gillespie, who studied at Dominican-Grimley School, recalled that at school they used to hide their signing.[138] In the classroom, they signed behind their backs to the child seated behind them so that the Sister or teacher could not see.[139] Gillespie recalled that 'if they found out we were signing they would hit us

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[134] Suzanne Lombard, interview conducted by Mark James, Cape Town, 13 November 2015, 425.
[135] Faith Cronwright, interview conducted by Mark James, Cape Town, 16 November 2015, 427.
[136] William Stokoe, an American linguist, who argued for American Sign Language has having the same fundamental building blocks of any spoken language and therefore ASL should be recognised as the natural language of deaf people in the United States. See W.C. Stokoe, 'Sign language structure,' *Studies in Linguistics: Occasional papers*, 8, 1960 and *Semiotics and human sign languages*, (The Hague: Mouton, 1972).
[137] Faith Cronwright, interview conducted by Mark James, Cape Town, 16 November 2105, 426.
[138] 'We would sign under the trees, or behind a wall where we could not be seen.' Carmen Kuscus, interview conducted by Mark James, Cape Town, 13 November 2015, 416. Jennifer Gillespie, interview conducted by Mark James, 12 November 2015, Cape Town, 403.
[139] Jennifer Gillespie, interview conducted by Mark James, 12 November 2015, Cape Town, 403.

on our hands with the ruler.'[140] Nigel Pickford remembered being hit on the hands with a golf stick 'which bruised me so badly that I could not even open a door handle or write.'[141]

James Scott theorised that in situations where people feel dominated or oppressed there are different responses which he referred to as the public transcript and the hidden transcript. The public transcript is the 'respectable performance' where people say or do things to be seen to be conforming.[142] The hidden transcript, in contrast, is the discourse that subordinate groups develop when they are out of the public eye.

> The hidden transcript of subordinate groups reacts back on the public transcript by engendering a subculture and by opposing its own variant form of social domination against that of the dominant elite.[143]

An example of the relationship between the public transcript and the hidden transcript is that the deaf children were instructed by their teachers to keep their hands behind their backs as a method to ensure that they spoke and did not sign.[144] The deaf children complied which indicates adherence to the public transcript. However, unknown to the teacher or in the classroom when the teacher was not noticing, the children were signing behind their backs to those behind them. This is the hidden transcript. Gillespie said that 'you have to sign behind your back to the children behind you because otherwise the oral, the hearing catch you.'[145] The deaf children were also signing in places where there was less likelihood of being discovered and in so doing were signing behind the teachers' backs.[146]

It would also be helpful to reflect on the children's ways of challenging the power that the Sisters had over them. Scott argued that 'by recognizing the guises that the powerless must adopt outside the safety of the hidden transcript, we can, I believe discern a political dialogue

[140] Jennifer Gillespie, interview conducted by Mark James, 12 November 2015, Cape Town, 403.
[141] 'The boys got wise and hid the whipping sticks under the teacher's platform. I am sure the sticks are still there today.' See Nigel Pickford, 'My years at St. Vincents,' A talk prepared for the St Vincent School 75th anniversary celebrations in September 2009, Appendix, 465.
[142] James C. Scott, *Domination and the arts of resistance: Hidden transcripts*, (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1990), 45-46.
[143] Scott, *Domination and the arts of resistance*, 27.
[144] 'They [the Sisters] would say: "You are not allowed to sign you must be oral!" We had to keep our hands behind our backs and speak.' See Faith Cronwright, interview with Mark James, 16 November 2015, Cape Town, 426.
[145] Jennifer Gillespie, interview conducted by Mark James, 12 November 2015, Cape Town, 404.
[146] Nigel Pickford, 'My years at St. Vincents,' 465.

with power in the public transcript.'[147] Pickford gave several examples of the guises employed, most of them describing how they could outwit the Sisters. He described how after getting beatings from the Sisters, 'the boys got wise and hid the whipping sticks under the teacher's platform. I am sure the sticks are still there today.'[148]

There was a power-play taking place between the boys and the school authorities, who in this case were women. 'Senior boys had to get up at 5.30am for COLD showers (brrr). In Winter when we were woken up for showers we would go to the showers, run the taps on the pretext that we were showering then rush back to bed. The advantage of having female nuns.'[149]

The boys also looked to get their revenge on the Sisters when the occasion allowed and would not result in expulsion. Pickford related one occasion when this happened.

> Fetes were held every year to fundraise. One morning we were woken at 4 a.m. by the nuns to get rid of rainwater that had sagged the canopies. We got underneath one with a broom to push the canopy up and there was one nun who was interfering with us, so we pushed so hard and the rainwater splashed all over her. Due to the weather the Fete was cancelled and a caring man donated £10 000 to the school.[150]

Further research is required on the public and hidden transcripts in schools for the deaf as well as how sign language functioned as an identity marker for the deaf children who often left home at the age of three. What were the other 'arts of resistance' that they developed in response to oralism? I have only been able to provide a few limited insights into these areas which shows that a more extensive social history of schools for the deaf is required.

6.9. Levinas, totality and good conscience

In this chapter we have reflected on the details of the oral method of deaf education. It can be understood as an imperialism of the same, where the hearing attempt to assimilate the Deaf Other into the world of the hearing.[151] There was no malicious intention behind it but was done in good conscience to transform the lives of deaf people, 'to liberate them from

[147] Scott, Domination and the arts of resistance,' 138.
[148] Pickford, 'My years at St. Vincents,' 465.
[149] Pickford, 'My years at St. Vincents,' 465.
[150] Pickford, 'My years at St. Vincents,' 466.
[151] Levinas, *Collected Philosophical Papers*, 26.

their prisons of silence.' Education was the gateway to a better life for the deaf. We saw how some deaf people benefitted from the education they received at school and were able to progress in life.

Yet this is precisely what Levinas is pointing to in his discussion of totality. Totality inflicts wounds on those whom it has assimilated but it does this in good conscience.[152] Acting in good conscience is when 'I am the bearer of a fault which is not reflected in my intentions.'[153] The Dominican sisters who advocated the oral method of deaf education had good intentions and wanted to help the deaf children they taught. Theirs were acts of piety and generosity but it was also wounding. It was wounding not only in the discipline they exercised over the children but wounding and violent in the way it undermined the deaf children's own ways of learning and studying through sign language. As Minister pointed out:

> Much of the ethical force of Levinas's thought comes in the claim that our attempts to persist in being, and be at-home in the world, tasks we carry out in good conscience everyday, make us complicit in the suffering and deaths of unseen, unrecognized others.[154]

Audism and phonocentrism have been identified as a violence underpinning the oral method of deaf education. Many of Sisters teaching in these schools for the deaf were unaware, or would disagree, that they were operating from totality, acting from self-interest or interestedness. Interestedness, for Levinas, is to think that one is 'the whole' instead of 'a part of a whole.'[155] The self is just one part of the whole and is not the centre of the world. There was a need to recognise that the Deaf Other was in an asymmetrical relationship to the teacher. They needed to learn from the exteriority of the Deaf Other. For Levinas, totality or

> essence weaves between the incomparables, between me and the others, a unity, a community, and drags us off and assembles us on the same side, chaining us to one another like galley slaves, emptying proximity of its meaning.[156]

[152] Levinas, *Collected Philosophical Papers,* 31.
[153] Levinas, *Collected Philosophical Papers,* 32.
[154] Minister, *Defacing the Other*, 206.
[155] Levinas, *Collected Philosophical Papers*, 26.
[156] Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 182.

The teachers can be understood to have acted unjustly, but in good conscience, towards the deaf children to whom they were ministering. They did not see any problem with what they were doing. In fact, it was perceived to be pious work, an act of charity.[157] It was lauded by all the hearing government officials, hearing journalists and all the clerics as God's work,[158] a work from infinity. But this was precisely the problem: the deaf were being chained and forced into accepting a hearing view of the world.

Totality at the level of 'the Said' was also seen in the interests of commercial companies supporting the oral method of education because they have an interest in the selling of hearing aids and the most sophisticated audio equipment to schools. The medical profession had much to gain from the clinical approach to deaf education because there was an economic benefit. The fields of speech therapy and audiology and even psychology flourished under the oral method of deaf education. Rehabilitation was profitable.[159] Rather than the crude economic factors, the oral method of deaf education as totality is recognised as a hearing way of grasping and understanding of the Deaf Other and effecting a 'hospitable' response. This disguised 'hospitality,' for Harlan Lane, was a 'mask of benevolence'[160] because it hid and obscured the relations of oppression to which Deaf people were being subjected. This oppression was linguistic discrimination because hearing people denied deaf adults and children access to sign language in education and communication in society.[161] To be hearing was the norm and to be deaf was to be impaired and to be suffering in a world of silence. This was a hearing way of understanding deafness or, as Levinas would argue, it was a perspective from and the egoist economy of the hearing. For Levinas, the fundamental problem with totality was not that it was violent but that it claimed not to be.[162]

[157] See Levinas, *Collected Philosophical Papers*, 31: 'The pious soul can, to be sure, suffer from its social guilt, but since this differs from the wrong which *I* commit with respect to *you*, it is reconciled with a "good conscience." Conscience torments the pious conscience only with a secondary torment. One is healed of it after a fashion by charity, the love of the neighbour who knocks at the door, alms given to the poor, philantrophy, or an action undertaken for the first one to come along.'
[158] See the discussion in Chapter 5, 184-185, 193, 195 and in this Chapter 6, 233.
[159] 'Behind the mask of benevolence is the professional engaged in the human-services market, staking out his particular claim in the fastest-growing sector of our economy.' See Lane, *The Mask of benevolence*, 77.
[160] Lane, *The Mask of benevolence*, 77.
[161] Lane, *The Mask of benevolence*, 84.
[162] Minister, *De-facing the Other*, 234.

For Levinas, infinity rather than chaining hearing and deaf on the same side, breaches totality.[163] It exalts alterity and otherness. Infinity or 'the Saying' gives us a 'bad conscience' making us aware of the harm, damage and wounds being inflicted on the Other through our pious and not so pious acts.[164] Breaching totality or discovering the need to be otherwise than being is to recognise our guilt and complicity in acting unjustly towards the Other, by diminishing them, reducing them to objects to fit into our, or the self's, way of seeing and living in the world. This 'bad conscience' would make us aware of the ethical relation, bring us to recognising that we are responsible for the Other's good.

6.10. Conclusion

Through education, it was believed, deaf people would be able to better integrate into hearing society. They need no longer carry the stigma of being handicapped or worse, having a mental deficiency. Deaf education was the means through which deaf people could be rehabilitated and find their place in a hearing world. What this way of thinking showed is that deaf people were perceived through a totalising optic that saw their alterity as a problem that required rectification.

Deaf people were Other. They were different and 'this difference causes problems.'[165] Deaf people were seen to be the ones that need changing.[166] There is no awareness that perhaps it is hearing people who need to adjust the totalising and colonising way in which they viewed and interacted with deaf people.

In the next chapter, we will address some of the limitations of the oral method of deaf education and its weaknesses. We will also see some educators were troubled with a 'bad conscience' and encouraged the use of sign language in deaf education. This was the beginning of a return from exile for sign language in the classroom.

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[163] Levinas, Totality and Infinity,

[164] 'My "being in the world" or "my place in the sun," my home – are they not a usurpation of places that belong to the other man (sic) who has already been oppressed or starved by me?' Levinas, *Entre Nous*, 130.

[165] 'Deaf children's problems,' *SVQ*, 9, 4, 1964, 16.

[166] 'Social maturity,' *SVQ*, 10, 1, 1965, 8-9.

Chapter 7 Total Communication, bad conscience and shifts in deaf education (1969 - 1981)

7.0. Introduction

In the last chapter, we reflected on the oral method of education evident in Catholic schools for the deaf in the period from 1948 until 1968. In this chapter, we will reflect on the shift that took place in deaf education where Total Communication became seen as the new solution to the failures of the pure oral method of deaf education.

In the African schools for the deaf, since inception, sign language usage was permitted as a language of learning and teaching. While the oral method was still the preferred option, provision was made to allow the use of sign language. This was not the case in the Catholic schools for the deaf that catered for white and coloured Deaf children.[1] During the course of the next ten years, however, some changes did happen at St Vincent School for the Deaf where the use of a combined method in the classroom was unofficially practiced even though it was officially disavowed.[2]

These changes were the result of the debate happening both internationally and nationally around Total Communication as a new philosophy of education. This chapter will also show that it was not as revolutionary a philosophy as it was touted to be, even though its long effect was to open the door to much more revolutionary understandings of Deaf identity and subjectivity.

7.1. Alternatives to the Oral Method?

In 1967, the principal of St Vincent School for the Deaf, Sr Thomasia Knoepfle OP, was invited to attend a conference in Northampton, Massachusetts on "The Oral Education of the Deaf Child." The conference took place from the 18th to the 21st of June. While in the United States. Sr Thomasia took the opportunity to visit and assess the various approaches to deaf education that were prevalent in the country. She managed to visit a total of nine different schools. 'In

[1] W. van der Sandt, 'Audiology in South Africa', *The Silent Messenger*, December 1967, 9.
[2] Liguori Töns, interview with Mark James, Johannesburg, 16 December 2016, 434-435.

this way,' she said, 'I had an opportunity to study a good cross section of various types of schools.' [3] Her comments on her trip were very interesting. Firstly, she was very impressed by the pure oral schools. After ten years of primary school education, these deaf children were able to apply to study at hearing high schools. Before acceptance, the deaf children had to pass some tests set by the hearing schools.

> I was told that records are on hand to prove that most of the deaf high school pupils in ordinary schools make the grade and integrate with their hearing peers.[4]

While she was complimentary about how they conducted all the lessons orally and were convinced that the pure oral method only is justifiable, she was, nevertheless, also critical when she saw teachers 'over-doing oralism.'[5] She wrote:

> One teacher spent a whole general science lesson on the oral spelling of vocabulary such as atomic, alchemist, acid, photosynthesis, etc [...] If I had not been ushered out of his classroom I probably would have fallen victim to the temptation of prompting him to resort to the chalkboard to give the children the visual picture of those difficult words.[6]

Secondly, she noted that the supporters of the oral method, in contrast to pure oralism, recognised that not all deaf children had 'the potential for 100% success in oralism.'[7] Some deaf children had very little residual hearing to exploit and never developed a fluency in lip-reading. Despite this realisation, the oralists believed that given enough time and using the correct procedures 'every deaf child can learn to speak,'[8] if they had the right motivation.

Thirdly, Sr Thomasia also reported on the schools using the combined method, thereby employing a combination of the oral method, fingerspelling and signing.

> These schools feel that at the higher level quicker and better results are achieved if lipreading and speech are supplemented by the manual system on the part of both

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[3] 'All in all I visited nine schools; the Kendall School attached to Gallaudet College, Gallaudet College itself, De Paul Institute at Pittsburgh, Central Institute and St. Joseph Institute at St. Louis, St. Mary's School for the Deaf, Buffalo, Lexington School and St. Joseph School in New York and finally the Clarke School at Northampton.' See Thomasia Knoepfle, 'Visit to the United States, *Saint Vincent Quarterly (SVQ)*, 3, 3, 1967, 2.
[4] Knoepfle, 'Visit', 3.
[5] Knoepfle, 'Visit', 3.
[6] Knoepfle, 'Visit', 3.
[7] Ibid, 3.
[8] Ibid, 3.

teachers and pupils. They also hold that their pupils would win in the contest for greater happiness.[9]

In discussion with those advocating the combined system, Sr Thomasia said that many argued that the oral method did not help deaf children or adults meet all life's challenges. The oral method had its limits. There were times when deaf people had to resort to the use of paper and pencil to facilitate communication in the outside world, despite their oral training.

While Sr Thomasia reported on the combined method and the arguments used in support of this method, she remained committed to the oral method until her retirement. She retired as principal of St Vincent School in 1969,[10] and then in 1971 from teaching altogether.[11] She never permitted the use of the combined method or the use of sign language at the school. However, her successor as principal Sr Liguori Töns[12] started out initially as an oralist[13] but gradually came to have a different opinion. Even while still a teacher she realised that there were limitations with the oral method. She was much more open to using whatever worked best.[14]

> To me it was to make contact. If I only talk all the time and they just look at you, then you know that they are not getting what you are saying. For me, the main thing was to be able to communicate with them. Like if you don't know Spanish and you go to Spain [...] you have to know that language. For me it was the same with the hearing impaired. You have to be able to communicate in the way that they can communicate. But officially it wasn't allowed.[15]

So, although the official school policy was strictly an oral approach, there were teachers who used signs as way to communicate with the children. Sr Liguori remembered that there was no official sign language in the school and so she made do with the signs that she knew.[16]

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[9] Ibid, 4.
[10] 'Surprise for Sister Thomasia', *The Star*, 25 March 1969.
[11] '"Sister Chips" says goodbye', *The Star* 30 November 1971, 27.
[12] Sr Liguori started teaching at St Vincent School in 1954 and became principal in 1969. See Liguori Töns OP, Interview with Mark James, 16 December 2015, Johannesburg, 434.
[13] In an article written when she had just become principal in 1970, she upheld all the values of the oral method of education. See Sr Liguori Töns OP, interview with Mark James, 16 December 2015, Johannesburg, 434.
[14] Sr Liguori Töns OP, interview with Mark James, 16 December 2016, Johannesburg, 434.
[15] Sr Liguori Töns OP, interview with Mark James, 16 December 2016, Johannesburg, 434.
[16] Sr Liguori Töns OP, interview with Mark James, 16 December 2016, Johannesburg, 434.

Speaking on 12 May 1970, to an educational meeting of St Vincent School's Parents' Teachers' Association (PTA) on the communication problems a deaf child experienced, even Sr Thomasia, a fervent oralist, accepted that there were times when a teacher 'forgets herself and uses gestures.'[17] Sr Thomasia was quick to point out that she herself never did because she neither learnt to fingerspell nor to sign. However, this did not mean she was against the use of signs and gestures.

> To combat supplementary methods, i.e. fingerspelling, gestures, signs when there is no alternative to self-expression and communication, is most unpsychological and harmful, and amounts to an infringement of the individual's human rights, which in case of the deaf may be rendered instead of "freedom of speech, freedom of communication." No parent, no educator has the right to silence the child, should he indicate that he wants to convey something and cannot find the words for it.[18]

However, the emphasis on spoken language was still seen as primary because the expectation was that as the children grew older, they would be expected 'to substitute words for gestures'[19] in their communication with others. Similarly, there was also 'nothing wrong with fingerspelling'[20] as it did not interfere with correct grammar and language. Despite this, she had hard words to say to those teachers, who approved of using conventional signs in the classrooms. They were committing an 'offence against the oral method.'[21] This was because 'signs mutilate correct language apart from labelling the users as deaf-mutes.'[22] Sr Thomasia was concerned that deaf people were being seen as 'a race apart'[23] and she wanted them to be included as full members of society. For this reason, if deaf people were to fit in and not be considered a people set apart, they had to conform to the demands of the hearing world. Therefore, 'the greater the deaf person's facility in oralism the more successful he will be in being accepted.'[24]

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[17] Thomasia Knoepfle, 'Communication problems of the deaf child', *Saint Vincent Quarterly*, 5, 6, (Second Term, 1970), 13.
[18] Knoepfle, 'Communication problems', 11.
[19] Ibid, 12.
[20] Ibid, 13.
[21] Ibid, 13.
[22] Ibid, 13.
[23] Ibid, 16.
[24] Ibid, 16.

After the talk, a panel discussion ensued where three deaf respondents who had been pupils at St Vincent's school: Cyril Axelrod,[25] Robert Simmons[26] and Alan Mansfield.[27] They were given an opportunity to share their thoughts on Sr Thomasia's talk. Her presentation, as we have seen, endorsed her lifelong commitment to the oral method of education. All three respondents related their own experiences of living as deaf persons in a hearing world.

They listed numerous issues that affected them. There was a lack of patience from hearing people in accommodating themselves with '"deaf" speech.'[28] Also hearing people did not speak distinctly and slowly when communicating with deaf people. There was the challenge that deaf people faced in lip-reading within groups of hearing people. This meant that deaf people had to improve their oral skills. Equally difficult was the embarrassment they suffered when deaf people misunderstood a question put to them and gave a 'totally irrelevant answer.'[29] They felt foolish and were worried that hearing people may think that deaf people were deficient in intelligence and 'not all there.'[30] Also mentioned was the inability to use the telephone.[31]

Implicit in most of the issues raised was that it was often the deaf who had to accommodate themselves to the dictates of the hearing world. Cyril Axelrod did not agree with this. He felt that hearing people also needed to change and adapt themselves to the needs of the deaf. 'Both parties should make efforts to establish satisfactory mutual contacts.'[32] Therefore,

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[25] Cyril Axelrod was a candidate for the priesthood at St John Vianney Seminary. Further reflection on Cyril Axelrod will be covered in the next chapter.
[26] Robert Simmons was a past pupil and a lecturer at Wits University. See 'The silent world of Robert Simmons,' 153/1106 25, KDSA.
[27] Alan Mansfield had written an article earlier in the year about the need for specially-trained psychologists to work with deaf children. He related how as a hard-of-hearing pupil at a hearing school his speech lessons were severely retarded when conducted in the presence of the rest of the class. He was embarrassed and flustered by being corrected in front of other pupils and how he lost confidence. He suggested that if any corrections could be done privately by a psychologist who understood deaf children then it would build up the confidence of deaf children rather than humiliate them. See Alan Mansfield, 'Some views from the "other side",' *SVQ*, 5, 5, (First Term, 1970), 9-11.
[28] Knoepfle, 'Communication problems,' 17.
[29] Ibid, 18.
[30] Ibid, 18.
[31] Simmons made an interesting comment: 'What a boon it would be if someone would invent a "visual" telephone to ease our position'. See Knoepfle, 'Communication problems,' 18. Technology has been able to address some of these issues for the deaf through Skype, What's App, IMO and the video-telephone.
[32] Ibid, 18.

when public speeches were made an interpreter should be made available for any deaf people who are present.[33]

This was a telling comment. Axelrod raised the issue that there was something fundamentally wrong if it was always deaf people who had to adjust to the demands of a hearing world. Why did the hearing not recognise the need to adjust to the needs of deaf people. This view would also have enormous implications for deaf education.

7.1.1. Growing appreciation for sign language

In the late 1960s, several voices emerged in South Africa calling for a re-look at the manual methods of education. In March 1968, Nicholas Nieder-Heitmann, the hearing principal of the Kutlwanong School for the Deaf in Rustenburg, admitted that:

> those of us who have anything at all to do with the teaching of the Deaf, know very well that in even in schools where actual gesture-language and finger-talk are not officially allowed, gesture-language and finger-talk are practised by scholars, whatever the teaching policy of that school may be.[34]

He pointed out that the deaf themselves communicated easily with one another. They got married, they were good workers, they raised their children and generally were well-adjusted in society. Among themselves, the deaf had no communication problems. The problems only existed in the interaction between deaf and hearing people. Therefore, in deaf education, he said, they should be allowed to use the method of communication which is their own, that of 'gesture-language and lip-reading.'[35]

Even in the Catholic schools for the deaf, as we saw in the previous chapter, sign language was tolerated.

> When growing up, I was staying at boarding school from the age of two. When growing up I was very good at sign language. In boarding school, when sister wanted a meeting with the Deaf children, she would call me to stand in front of the all boarders and sign to the other children. When the children responded to sister I would have to tell the

[33] Ibid, 18.
[34] Norman Nieder-Heitmann, 'Guest Editorial: The new study at Cape Town,' *The Silent Messenger*, March 1968, 2-4.
[35] Nieder-Heitmann, 'Guest Editorial,' 4.

> sister what they were saying. I was acting as an interpreter. Whenever anything happened it was always me who was asked to stand up and sign to the others. Other than in the boarding hostel, signing was not allowed in the school.[36]

While signing was forbidden in the classroom, it did not mean that chaplains working with deaf adults did not appreciate sign language. Writing in *The Silent Messenger* in 1969, a deaf chaplain, the Reverend Corfmat spoke in favour of an increased use of the manual method of communication, not just in education, but also in church services. 'Signs have so much ingenuity and beauty.'[37] He recounted the story of two deaf women who told him 'that they were first attracted to their future husbands when they saw them finger-spell and sign so gracefully.'[38] While he considered fingerspelling more accurate and as more grammatical than signing, nevertheless, he appreciated:

> how pleasant and relaxing it is to watch another who thinks of our Silent Language as an Art and uses it with obvious enjoyment. He or she [...] gives life and colour to every conversation, lecture or sermon.[39]

By the beginning of 1970, the whole oral method of education came under greater scrutiny and criticism.

7.1.2. Critiquing the Oral Method

Various educationalists, especially in the United States, began to express their reservations about the effectiveness of the oral method. Like Axelrod, they also questioned whether it was right that deaf people were always the ones being expected to conform to the demands of a hearing world. One such educationalist, McCay Vernon, wrote articles and books highlighting the shortcomings of deaf education. He identified eight 'persistent, pervasive, and unrealistic myths'[40] that were prevalent up to the 1960s and which needed to be dispelled.

The first myth, he identified, was that deaf children lack intelligence. He pointed to fifty independent research studies that showed that 'the intelligence of deaf children is distributed

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[36] Faith Cronwright, interview conducted by Mark James, 16 November 2015, Cape Town, 426.
[37] R. Corfmat, 'Signs ... Signing and Signers,' *The Silent Messenger*, June 1969, 16.
[38] Corfmat, 'Signs,' 17.
[39] Corfmat, 'Signs,' 17.
[40] McCay Vernon, 'Myths of the Education,' *The Silent Messenger*, March 1971, 16-17. Reproduced from the Maryland Bulletin.

in especially the same way as that of nondeaf.'[41] He concluded that 'there is no causal relationship between deafness and IQ. Deaf people are as bright as hearing people.'[42]

The second myth was that 'we have done a good job of educating deaf children.'[43] Studies in the United States again showed that 30% of deaf children leave school at the age of 16 or older functionally illiterate. Sixty percent leave school having only achieved Grade 5 or below and only 5% achieved Grade 10. Most of this 5% group were hard of hearing or were post-lingually deaf.[44] Deaf children lagged behind hearing children with respect to reading ability. For Vernon, this was an indication that there was something drastically wrong with the education system.[45]

The third myth was that fingerspelling and sign language impair academic achievement. In fact, he argued, that studies showed that:

> Children who have had and who use fingerspelling and the language of signs do far better in reading, mathematics and academic work in general than do children who have been limited to just "oral" communication.[46]

Despite these findings, the education of deaf children continued to be directed by the assumptions of the oral method.

The fourth myth he challenged was that 'sign language will cause deaf children to develop poor habits of expressive language'.[47] Again the research, he believed, showed the contrary opinion. Early exposure to sign language and fingerspelling did not detract from but rather improved the writing ability of deaf children in contrast to those restricted to the oral approach. As we saw in the previous chapter, this view contrasted from the view of Catholic

[41] Vernon, 'Myths,' 16.
[42] Ibid, 16.
[43] Ibid, 16.
[44] Deafness has been divided into two categories: pre-lingual deafness and post-lingual deafness. Pre-lingual deafness is identified as being deaf from birth or before the age of three, that is before the child has acquired a spoken language. Post-lingual deafness is those of have lost their hearing after acquiring a spoken language. For more information, see 'Problems: Prelingual deafness, Postlingual deafness,' *The Silent Messenger*, September 1969, 8.
[45] Vernon, 'Myths,' 16.
[46] Ibid, 16.
[47] Ibid, 16.

schools for the deaf which insisted on the oral method of education because it promoted a far more superior writing ability.[48]

The fifth myth, he identified, was that the use of fingerspelling and sign language have a negative impact on the ability of deaf children to attain speech and lipreading skills. Vernon contradicted this, arguing that research showed that 'there is no difference in the speech intelligibility of deaf children who used sign language and fingerspelling and those who did not.'[49] Vernon saw in Total Communication a way out of the predicament caused by the prevalence of pure oral methods of education in schools for the deaf. Consequently, he rejected the sixth myth that 'there are people who advocate manualism.'[50] Total Communication was not manualism.

> Those who support the use of a total communication system involving speech, spelling, amplification, sign language, lipreading, and writing are increasing in number because the factual data indicate total communication to be far superior for deaf children.[51]

Vernon challenged the seventh myth that 'most deaf children can learn auditorially.'[52] Oralists believing this had stopped referring to deaf children and were now referring to them as hearing-impaired. He said that this claim was very problematic. This sleight of hand masked the problem.

> They claim that because a child can hear a fog horn or gunshot he is not deaf and that by hanging a hearing aid on him he will learn to understand speech which he cannot hear.[53]

These teachers merely evaded the truth before them that a total aural-manual approach to deaf education was far more helpful to deaf children than the oral method.

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[48] Interview with Sr Siobhan Murphy OP, conducted by Mark James, Cape Town, 12 July 2016, 454-455.
[49] Vernon, 'Myths,' 16.
[50] Ibid, 16.
[51] Ibid, 17.
[52] Ibid, 17.
[53] Ibid, 17.

The last myth he challenged was that 'all deaf children should be sent away from home for education.'[54] Deaf children should be educated locally in their home areas rather than the buck being passed on to residential schools situated far from the deaf children's families.

Vernon concluded that the research had shown overwhelmingly that a Total Communication approach to education was far more effective than the oral method and that directors of special education had to now see how they could integrate these findings into their programmes for schools for the deaf.

7.2. Total Communication

McCay Vernon advocated that the approach being used by the Maryland School for the Deaf in the United States should be used instead of the oral method. By 1968, the school had introduced a new philosophy of education that was called Total Communication.[55] In many respects, Total Communication was an adaptation of what previously was known as the combined method.

However, rather than just seeing it as a practical solution to the shortcomings of the oral method, Total Communication saw itself as something more positive. It was an approach to education which not only encouraged the use of sign language in conjunction with lipreading and speech; but advocated this method as far superior to the oral method.

7.2.1. Total Communication in the United States

Throughout the 1970s, Total Communication became more acceptable in American schools for the deaf. By 1975, even the National Association for the Deaf (NAD) in the United States had begun to promote Total Communication.[56] On 5 May 1976, the Conference of Executives of American Schools for the Deaf in Rochester, New York officially adopted the following definition:

[54] Ibid, 17.
[55] D.M. Denton, 'The philosophy of Total Communication' *Silent Messenger*, September 1979, 15.
[56] See Frederick Schreiber, 'Total Communication - As the adults see it, *The Silent Messenger*, September 1975, 14-16. Reproduced from *The Deaf American*. Schreiber was himself deaf.

> Total Communication is a philosophy requiring the incorporation of appropriate aural, manual, and oral modes of communication in order to ensure effective communication with and among hearing impaired persons.[57]

Gallaudet University, the deaf American university, insisted that all new staff at the college attend classes in Total Communication before they were permitted to teach.[58]

Despite growing support for Total Communication, there were still many who criticised this new approach because of its use of sign language. The idea persisted that sign language was not a language, like spoken languages, but mere gesture and a primitive form of human communication unlike spoken languages.

In 1960, when William Stokoe, professor of Linguistics and English at Gallaudet University in Washington DC, proposed the novel but radical idea that the signs deaf people used was a language; he was vilified by educators of the deaf and even staff at his own university.[59] However, over the years his theory proved itself to be 'an idea that would not go away.'[60] In comparing the grammatical structure of spoken languages with that of sign language, Stokoe discovered that while spoken languages used sound to convey symbolic meaning, sign languages utilised space. For syntax, sign languages used handshapes, non-manual features (facial expressions) and classifiers. The grammatical structure of sentences differed between English and signed languages. By 1979, Stokoe was arguing that sign language was the deaf person's native or first language and the spoken language was a second one. English and American Sign Language (ASL) were two separate languages with different grammatical structures and syntax.[61]

It was not only in the United States that Total Communication was being readily adopted in schools for the deaf, as the preferred philosophy for education, but the same was also happening in other countries. By 1977, the Scandinavian countries had adopted Total

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[57] R.G. Brill, 'Total Communication, *'The Silent Messenger*, September 1978, 10. Reproduced from *The Maryland Bulletin*.
[58] Frances Parsons, 'Total Communication,' *The Silent Messenger*, September 1981, 8-9.
[59] William Stokoe, 'Sign Language Structure,' *Studies in Linguistics: Occasional papers*, 8, (1960). For more information on how this idea was received, see William Stokoe, *Language in Hand: Why sign came before speech*, (Washington DC: Gallaudet University Press, 2001, 1.
[60] Stokoe used this phrase as the title of the first chapter in his book, *Language in Hand*, 1-16.
[61] William Stokoe, 'Sign language research: What it knows and whither it leads,' *The Silent Messenger*, December 1979, 7-11.

Communication in their schools,[62] as had many schools in the United Kingdom and other European countries.

The Fifth World Conference on Deafness held in Copenhagen that year welcomed the shift to Total Communication.

7.2.2. The Fifth World Conference on Deafness

Mrs Beryl Jones and her husband Mervyn[63] were delegated by the SANCD to attend the Fifth World Conference on Deafness in Copenhagen, Denmark from 7-12 August 1977. On their return, the Jones' highlighted the extent to which Total Communication was being readily accepted worldwide. She said that 'the deaf people[64] at this Conference were overwhelmingly in favour of "Total communication."'[65]

Sign language was being called 'the mother tongue of the deaf' and their preferred mode of communication 'because it was the most natural, comfortable and easy way for them to communicate and to acquire language.'[66]

The call to accept sign language as the mother tongue and natural language of the deaf was a major new development. Prior to this, the different manual sign systems that were created for education were not those used by the deaf themselves. They were artificially constructed to supplement spoken languages.

The conference took issue with the fact that pre-lingually deaf children were getting a raw deal in oral schools. Denying deaf people, the right to use sign language was seen as disrespectful. One deaf delegate said, 'The deaf feel like Puppets – the Hearing pulling the strings.'[67] The delegate urged the hearing "experts" in education to take note and comply with

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[62] Beryl Jones, 'Fifth world conference on deafness Copenhagen. August 1977,' *The Silent Messenger*, November/December 1977, 8.
[63] They were the hearing parents of Alan Jones, a past pupil of St Vincent School for the Deaf.
[64] Jones reported that 400 people attended the conference from 30 countries from around the world. This number included 100 deaf people. She does not list the countries from which they came. See Jones, 'Fifth world conference,' 6.
[65] Jones, 'Fifth world conference,' 6-8, 10.
[66] Jones, 'Fifth world conference,' 6.
[67] Ibid, 8.

the wishes of the deaf so that Total Communication would become acceptable in all schools for the deaf throughout the world.

The voices in support of Total Communication began to grow and develop in South Africa too.

7.2.3. The initial reception of Total Communication in South Africa

One of the first advocates of Total Communication in South Africa was Robert Simmons. In 1971, he was a senior lecturer in anatomy at the University of the Witwatersrand and received the Vista Award for outstanding life achievements. He was the first deaf man in South Africa to attain a matriculation pass at St Vincent School in 1949. He went onto study anatomy at Wits University and by 1971 was working on his doctoral dissertation.[68]

> He is passionately devoted to the problems of deaf and partially deaf children and to the improvement of educational standards and vocational status of deaf persons in this country.[69]

Already in 1971, he wrote in favour of the Total Communication approach. He encouraged hearing parents of deaf children to use any means of communication to enable them to develop a good grasp of their home language, whether it be English or Afrikaans.

> Please use all means of communication, manual or oral, as long as your children are able to develop a good concept of the spoken language. Do not be ashamed, or pay attention to other people if they remark on your using the sign language, because you will be sure of your triumph one day when your child is able to compete well and equally with his or hearing friends outside the school and home.[70]

His emphasis was on the acquisition of language rather than speech. In fact, he argued that sign language was the deaf person's first language whereas English and Afrikaans were secondary languages.[71] Simmons was incredibly well-read and it is very likely that he was versed in the writings of William Stokoe or was at least aware of his thinking.

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[68] 'Robert Michael Thomas Simmons: Winner 1971 Wenner,' *The Silent Messenger*, December 1971, 22.
[69] 'Robert Simmons,' 22.
[70] Robert Simmons, 'Deaf Education,' *The Silent Messenger*, March 1972, 24.
[71] This argument is possibly influenced by the writings of William Stokoe who argued that sign language was a language and Deaf people's natural language. It is also at the basis of the present debate about the importance of using the bilingual and bicultural method of education for deaf schools. Deaf children need to be taught via two languages - sign language and a spoken language for written work.

7.2.4. Mixed response to Total Communication in South Africa

7.2.4.1. African schools for the deaf

As was argued in the previous chapter, sign language usage in African schools was already common place. In these schools, the introduction of Total Communication was not particularly very controversial. Instead it gave theoretical justification for the combined method that was already in place. Up until then the Paget-Gorman sign system was used in most of the schools. The Paget-Gorman sign system was used in conjunction with signs to illustrate the grammatical structure of a spoken language. An additional sign was used to indicate whether the sign was a conjunction, preposition or verb, and in which tense it was being signed. It was an artificially created sign system that was not indigenous to deaf people.[72]

Norman Nieder-Heitmann, the Dutch Reformed principal of the Kutlwanong School for the Deaf in Roodepoort, wanted to use Total Communication in his school instead of the Paget-Gorman method. This spurred him on to start what he called his One-man Committee on the South African Sign Language.[73] Nieder-Heitmann gave a report to the Twenty-Third Biennial Conference of the SANCD on the findings of his 'committee.'[74] He had done a personal survey of 134 specially chosen signs commonly used by deaf people in South Africa. He arrived at these signs by interviewing 180 people in the major cities. He wanted to determine their origin and after studying these signs he discovered that roughly speaking 60% were of British (or Australian) origin. Very few signs were of American origin and no signs from the Paget-Gorman sign system were used. This last point was particularly interesting because the Paget-Gorman system had been extensively used in African schools over the previous past fifteen years.[75]

[72] See Charles Chittenden, 'The Paget Gorman Sign System,' *The Silent Messenger*, June/July 1976, 5.
[73] It is interesting to note that while Nieder-Heitmann spoke about the South African Sign Language he was still advocating Total Communication and not what is now known as SASL.
[74] See Norman Nieder-Heitmann, 'Extracts from the report of the One-man Committee on the South African Sign Language at the 23rd Biennial Conference of the SA Council for the Deaf,' *The Silent Messenger*, March 1977, 14.
[75] Nieder-Heitmann, 'Extracts,' 14.

However, it was in the white and coloured schools, which were greatly and intensely committed to the oral method of education, that the acceptance of Total Communication was met with fierce resistance.

7.2.4.2. Resistance to Total Communication

The Department of National Education, under which all-white schools for the deaf fell, was staunchly in favour of the oral method of deaf education. In a talk given to the SANCD, a senior department official, Mr K. van der Merwe, said that his department was not in favour of mainstreaming deaf children into hearing schools. Neither was the department going to permit the use of Total Communication at either the primary or secondary school level,[76] even though he had no problem with the use of sign language at the post-secondary school level. While he conceded that there were attractions to the Total Communication approach, such as its affordability when compared with the cost of the oral method, what concerned him was that deaf people constitute a minority group in the country. He was concerned that using an esoteric method of communication like sign language would just further stigmatise deaf people.[77]

Total Communication, he argued, ignored the reality that deaf people lived in a hearing world and, by implication, needed to conform to the demands of this world which the oral method trained deaf people to do. Total communication would just lead to deaf people becoming a minority group and a sub-culture in society. They would become stigmatised as deaf.[78] He was also against sign language because it did not conform to the structure and grammar of the spoken and written languages.[79]

Van der Merwe believed that there were no instant answers or cures to the problem the deaf had in acquiring language, speech and speech-reading through the exploitation of their residual hearing. Total Communication was too simplistic a 'solution to a very complex problem.'[80] He was adamant though that the deaf children in the schools under his

[76] K. van der Merwe, 'Comment: On the right track of Oralism,' *The Silent Messenger*, December 1975, 12-13.
[77] Van der Merwe, 'Comment,' 13.
[78] Van der Merwe, 'Comment,' 13.
[79] Van der Merwe, 'Comment,' 13.
[80] Van der Merwe, 'Comment,' 12.

department would not 'be used as guinea pigs in an experiment of which the final outcome is so uncertain.'[81]

> If the results prove to be better than we know what can be accomplished by the oral method, then, and only then can we reconsider our position regarding how deaf children should first be introduced to deaf education and the acquisition, development and comprehension of oral language.[82]

Until then he wished the schools in the United States good luck because if Total Communication proved to be 'a totally calamitous failure, the disaster would at least be localised.'[83] Van der Merwe did not want any schools under his jurisdiction affected by any fallout that might arise from the premature introduction of Total Communication into schools for the deaf.

Despite some resistance to Total Communication in some quarters, the groundswell of support for this method of deaf education continued to expand. Even the National Council for the Deaf began to discuss the issue.

7.3. The visit of David Denton to South Africa

In July 1979, David Denton from the Maryland School for the Deaf, one of the foremost advocates of Total Communication, was invited out by Norman Nieder-Heitmann[84] to give the keynote address to the SANCD national congress.

In his talk, David Denton emphasised that the philosophy of Total Communication based itself on the view that deaf children would be able to acquire the necessary language skills they needed if they were given the 'opportunity to interact freely with all persons around them and if they were given a symbol system which they could use freely for communication and for language experimentation.'[85] The symbol system, to which he referred, was sign language. For Denton, signing was to be used simultaneously with speaking. Signing reinforced the speech-reading (or lip-reading) and speech-reading, in turn, reinforced the signing, so that

[81] Van der Merwe, 'Comment,' 12.
[82] Ibid, 12.
[83] Ibid, 12.
[84] 'Denton speaks in South Africa,' *The Silent Messenger*, March 1980, 6-7. Reproduced from *The Maryland Bulletin*, Oct/Nov 1979.
[85] David Denton, 'The philosophy of total communication,' *The Silent Messenger*, September 1979, 15.

better communication would result.[86] This new approach was based on the idea that deaf children listen by watching. At the Maryland School for the Deaf where he worked, Denton said that every staff member was expected to know how to sign while talking.[87] This was both when communicating directly with deaf children but also whenever and wherever they are present.

As background, Denton highlighted that Total Communication was conceived in response to the failure of the traditional oral method of deaf education in the United States. This failure, according to Denton, was brought to the fore by the 1965 Babbidge Report conducted by the United States Department of Health, Education and Welfare.[88] The oral-manual controversy had historically hampered and hindered the proper education of deaf children. Total Communication was an approach to deaf education that overcame the impasse and made the debate irrelevant. Both oral and manual methods were important and not one more than the other. He also pointed out that Total Communication was a philosophy rather than a method. Total Communication wanted to free up communication between hearing parents and their deaf child so that this could lead to a situation of mutual understanding and acceptance. The deaf child needed to feel accepted in their family of birth and to 'feel free to interact and learn to become a happy, literate and communicating member of society.'[89]

> Because of this humanizing influence of Total Communication, not only upon the child but upon the parents and professionals as well, we have found the bonds of trust between the deaf child, the parents, and the professionals to be growing as never before. This point is dramatized by the remarks of a five-year-old boy whose parents had just learned to sign when he said, 'mommy and daddy are deaf now'.[90]

Total Communication emphasised that deaf children should be introduced to early educational training. This started in the home, in the context of family life, as well as at the pre-school level with training in the acquisition of sign language acquisition rather than speech, as in the oral method. A benefit of Total Communication was that it involved signing

[86] Denton, 'Philosophy,' 15.
[87] Ibid, 15.
[88] Ibid, 16.
[89] Ibid, 16.
[90] Ibid, 16.

and speaking at the same time and so allowed for the use of proper English syntax.[91] Signs presented in this manner reinforced the correct grammatical features of the spoken language.

Alongside oral and manual methods, Total Communication also acknowledged the value of appropriate amplification. This helped with speech and language development. Denton concluded:

> Communication is total or multidimensional [...] one dimension enhancing, reinforcing and enriching the other.[92]

In an interview with *The Maryland Bulletin*[93] on his return to the United States, Denton said that during the eight days he spent in South Africa, he visited some of the schools for the deaf and spent considerable time with deaf adults. He became aware of:

> the subtle feelings of oppression experienced by deaf people, by their parents, and those who work with them regarding communication methods. In the schools I found the students to be literally begging for Total Communication, for the freedom to express themselves in the best way they could. Similarly, the teachers were hungry for information about Total Communication and were asking for the freedom to use the language of signs along with the oral and auditory methods.[94]

He identified that the real problem for the acceptance of Total Communication in South Africa lay with the attitude of those in the Department of Education who upheld the oral method of education.[95] This was an ongoing problem in the white and coloured schools. However, for the African schools, and even some Catholic schools, Total Communication alongside written English was accepted as a positive step forward.[96]

His perspective proved to be accurate for Catholic schools for the deaf. It is to these schools that we now turn.

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[91] In recent years, this form of signing is called Signed English as the signs support the grammatical structure of English as a spoken language. Sign language has its own grammatical structure employing space rather than sound, classifiers and non-manual features (facial expressions).
[92] Denton, 'Philosophy,' 17.
[93] 'Denton speaks in SA, 6-7.
[94] Ibid, 6.
[95] Ibid, 7.
[96] Sr Siobhan Murphy OP said when she came to the Dominican Deaf School in Hammanskraal in January 1983, Total Communication was already in use. See Sr Siobhan Murphy OP, interview with Mark James, 12 July 2015, Cape Town, 451.

7.4. Catholic deaf education and Total Communication

The two white Catholic schools for the deaf, namely Dominican-Grimley in Cape Town and St Vincent School in Johannesburg, showed very little interest in Total Communication. They were firmly committed to the oral method of deaf education. So too, the Wittebome School for coloured deaf children. The Dominican Sisters who ran these schools remained firmly committed to the oral method.

Likewise, the African schools, St Thomas School in Woodlands and the Dominican school in Hammanskraal were oral schools in which fingerspelling and sign language were taught and permitted because the Department for Bantu Education insisted that this be provided. In the School Inspector's report on St Thomas School for the Deaf in Woodlands, near Kingwilliamstown, the inspector stated that the general method of education used in the school is oralism. The basic elements of the oral method, such as lip-reading and speech training, were taught. He noted that in the previous year, a teacher was given in-service training in speech training and audiometry.[97] 'Fingerspelling, natural gesturing and signs and reading and writing receive due attention,'[98] he wrote in his report, but in general, he said, the combined method was only used extensively in cases of those deaf children who were slower in learning.

This was not the case with the later establishment of two new Catholic schools, Sizwile School for the Deaf in Dobsonville, Soweto and KwaThintwa School for the Deaf in Inchanga, KwaZulu-Natal, which we will introduce in the next chapter.

7.5. Total communication as bad conscience

The concept of Total Communication was not as radical a change or alternative to the oral method as its advocates, like Vernon and Denton, believed it to be. In 1979, at the Fifth Conference on Deafness in Copenhagen, Steve Mathis, a deaf delegate and director of the International Center on Deafness at Gallaudet College admitted that Total Communication

[97] 'The Chairman's annual report on the affairs of St Thomas School for Deaf Bantu Children for the year 1968/69, 2. 124/374 71, KDSA.

[98] WW Bouwer, 'Report on inspection of St Thomas School for Deaf Bantu: March 1970,' 4. 124/374 72, KDSA.

was basically 'an oral philosophy.'[99] Fingerspelling and signs merely augment and supplement the oral method.

However, Total Communication made the use of sign language in deaf education respectable again. Consequently, with the use of sign language in deaf education more radical models emerged.

7.5.1. Flourishing of sign language courses and appreciation of sign language

By 1981, one of the effects of the interest in Total Communication in the United States was reflected in more people going on courses to learn sign language. Frances Parsons, the Head of Languages at Gallaudet College, said: 'We are witnessing today an unprecedented boom in sign language classes springing up everywhere.'[100] A similar phenomenon was taking place in South Africa.

Already in 1978, Alan Jones, a deaf computer programmer and ex-pupil of St Vincent School, teamed up with Norman Nieder-Heitmann, the one-man committee for the study of sign languages, to formulate a dictionary of South African sign language.[101] The dictionary *Talking to the deaf* was completed and published in 1980. It was used in all the African schools under the Department of Education and Training. In the latter half of 1980, Alan Jones organised his first six-week sign language course which finished just before Christmas. He used the book he co-authored, *Talking to the deaf*, as the basis for the course. In January 1981, he advertised the next course at the Durban Deaf Club and received the enrolment of 24 students. He then ran two more sign language courses for the Lions in Durban and Pietermaritzburg.[102] His courses were open to people of all races.[103]

Due to his work in teaching sign language, Alan Jones was asked to represent the SANCD at the International Conference on Sign Language Research in England. At this conference, Jones commented on the interpreters' role in communicating the content of the conference to deaf participants that 'was crisp and clear and they used beautiful facial expressions.'[104]

[99] Jones, 'Fifth Conference,' 8.
[100] Frances Parsons, 'Total Communication,' *The Silent Messenger*, September 1981, 8.
[101] 'Meet some of our deaf: FOYSA award for Alan Jones,' *The Silent Messenger*, December 1981, 8.
[102] Alan Jones, 'Report on Sign language courses,' *The Silent Messenger*, September 1981, 11.
[103] Alan Jones, 'International Conference on Sign Language,' *The Silent Messenger*, December 1981, 14.
[104] Jones, 'International Conference,' 14.

The growing interest and appreciation of sign language opened up for deaf people a different perspective of their place in the world. Previously, they were consistently told that they were expected to conform to the demands of the hearing workplace and the hearing world. Now deaf people were asserting their own identity and rights within society challenging hearing people to learn sign language. In meetings with hearing people, deaf people began to insist that interpreters be made available to ensure that deaf people could participate more fully in public forums on their own terms and not those determined by hearing people alone.

7.5.2. Interpreters

Employment as interpreters for hearing people who could sign was another spinoff from Total Communication. In the United States, for example, there were an increasing number of employment opportunities for paid employment of interpreters at hospitals, courtrooms, churches, business meetings and conferences as well as at the universities.[105]

Although there were not as many opportunities in South Africa, nevertheless, many hearing people did see the value of learning sign language to assist in the work they were already doing. Alan Jones recounted the story of a social worker working in a law court in Zululand requesting to learn sign language, so that she could act as an interpreter for deaf people.[106]

7.5.3. Opening the door to natural sign language

Total Communication was taken on board by a growing number of deaf people. Often Total Communication became a synonym for sign language. Alan Jones and Robert Simmons, both ex-pupils of St Vincent School, promoted the use of sign language for education and were supporters of the Total Communication approach. This became a door through which deaf people would celebrate their natural sign languages.

7.6. Levinas, bad conscience and hospitality

In the previous chapter, we recognise how totality functioned in the schools for the deaf through the oral method of deaf education. It was a system devised by the hearing to respond to the needs and struggles of deaf people. The oral method of deaf education was a system

[105] Parsons, 'Total Communication,' 9.
[106] Jones, 'Report on sign language courses,' 11.

devised by hearing people who thought they knew what deaf people needed and therefore wanted. In good conscience, they uncritically assumed that what would be good for deaf people was to be trained to speech and lip-read so that they could function effectively in a hearing world. This revealed to be a grasping, possessing and comprehending of the Deaf Other or what Levinas referred to as totality. Hearing people thinking that their view of the world is the whole rather than just a part of a larger whole.[107]

In this chapter, we saw reflected on Total Communication as a response of teachers at Maryland School. Moved by proximity to the Deaf Other, they began to feel dis-located and uncertain that the oral method of deaf education was the only and right way. They began to recognise that the interests of the deaf other were not being served by the oral method of deaf education. They found themselves under question and wearing new shoes which chafed their consciences.

> The other's face is the revelation not of the arbitrariness of the will, but its injustice. Consciousness of my injustice is produced when I incline myself not before facts, but before the other.[108]

They suffered from what Levinas has referred to as bad conscience. They recognised that they were guilty of indifference to the Deaf Other and being unjust towards the Other. The teachers' bad conscience opened them up to begin to experience the wounds of the deaf children they were teaching.

> The I approached in responsibility is for-the-other, is a denuding, an exposure to being affected, a pure susceptiveness. It does not posit itself, possessing itself and recognizing itself; it is consumed and delivered over, dis-locates itself, loses its place, is exiled, relegates itself into itself, but as though its very skin were still a way to shelter itself in being, exposed to wounds and outrage, emptying itself in no-grounds, to the point of substituting itself for the other, holding on to itself only as it were in the trace of its exile.[109]

[107] Levinas, *Collected Philosophical Papers*,
[108] Levinas, *Collected Philosophical Papers*, 57.
[109] Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 138.

Having a bad conscience is to realise that one is guilty of usurping someone else's place in the sun.[110] The self's own bad conscience is ironically to have a good conscience where the self realises that it is the oppressor of the Other, the cause of the Other's suffering and pain. Levinas wrote that is a fear for the another:

> This is a fear for all that my existing – despite its intentional and conscious innocence – can accomplish of violence and murder.[111]

What I fear is not my death but that my life, my existence is the reason for another's death, another's hunger and suffering.[112] Denton remarked that the oral method of deaf education was detrimental to the success of the deaf children in the classroom. They are awakened to a problem, they fret and suffer from what Levinas referred to this as insomnia, a restlessness to find a way to respond more justly to the needs of the deaf children.

> Insomnia, vigilance and wakefulness restlessness of this peace. The subject arising in the passivity of unconditionality, in the expulsion outside of its being at home with itself, is undeclinable.[113]

They are adamant that there is a need to respond and do something about this situation. The bad conscience of the hearing Denton and members of the Maryland school caused them to recognise that they were responsible for the Deaf Other. They found themselves elected involuntarily or summoned to do good for the Other. They want to ensure that the children benefit from their education. They are remorseful of the mistakes made in the past and we saw this in the way that the myths of the success of the oral method were systematically dismantled.

> Identity gnawing away at itself – in remorse. I have not done anything and I have always been under accusation – persecuted.[114]

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[110] Levinas, *Of God who comes to mind*, 175.
[111] Ibid.
[112] Ibid.
[113] Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 139.
[114] Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 114.

In so doing, those advocating the total communication approach stumbled upon what Levinas called non-indifference[115] and so they embarked on a campaign to encourage the use of sign language in the classroom to supplement the oral method of education.

Total communication was proposed as an alternative to the oral method of education. Total Communication opened the door to 'welcoming the Other as hospitality.'[116] Welcoming in Other is an act of generosity, an expression of care for the Other and it is freely given as a gift.[117] It was a move in the direction of hospitality, transcendence and infinity. However, this shift remained with the ambit of the hearing desire to accommodate and assimilate deaf people into a hearing world. The totality of the oral method of education persisted but now it included the use of signed English to supplement the oral method. Total communication did not provide the full recognition of the Deaf Other's alterity. It was not a breach of totality but rather a compromise. It was a beginning.

7.7. Conclusion

Total Communication heralded a new chapter in deaf education providing a change to the oral method that had been a dominant force in deaf education in over 60 years. Yet, Total Communication was neither new nor innovative. It was an adaptation of the combined method of deaf education that had been used in the United States in the previous century. In many respects, it was a variation on the oral method, it was the oral method with a bit of sign language thrown into the mix for good measure. Nevertheless, in giving recognition to the importance of sign language as a tool for education it opened the door to the latent desires among deaf people to learn and study in their own natural language.

Total Communication remained a plain reading of the Other from a totalising perspective. In the following chapter which chronologically overlaps with this present chapter, there will be a discernible shift and break from the reading from totality that we have been doing since the beginning of this dissertation. Levinas argued that to be responsible for-the-other is to experience time diachronically. This is the breaking of chronological time or synchrony so that

[115] Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 138-139.
[116] Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 27.
[117] Spiros Makris, 'Emmanuel Levinas on hospitality: Ethical and political aspects,' *International Journal of Theology, Philosophy and Science*, 2 (2018), 84. (79-96).

the revelation of the Other and the responsibility that comes with being in proximity with the Other.

Diachrony is an experience of an immemorial past where the self has never been free from its responsibility for the Other. ‘Time is an encounter with the Other in which the trace of an immemorial past accuses the self of having delayed.’[118] The self’s response to the Other’s suffering and pain always is late in arriving. The Church’s ministry is often late on the scene.

We are shifting gears from this chapter where the focus has been from the starting point of the self and totality to the Deaf Other. In the next chapters will approach the themes of this dissertation from the narrative and accounts of Deaf people. This shift can be likened to the difference in reading in English or Western languages where one starts from the left and reads to the right. In Hebrew, one reads from right to left. In this sense, we will now be reading the Hebrew way from the Other to the self so that we can appreciate the teaching that comes from entering a foreign country.

The focus will swing to the Deaf ministry in the Catholic Church that was initiated and led by Deaf people themselves. It is the narrative of how ‘the face speaks’ or rather, how in the Deaf community, ‘the face signs.’

[118] Morrison, *A Theology of alterity*, 28.

Chapter 8

Deaf saints, hospitality and the shifts in Catholic Deaf ministry (1965 - 1983)

8.0 Introduction

The Second Vatican Council called together by Pope John XXIII in 1962 and which ended in 1965, was the major turning point in the history of the Catholic Church in the twentieth century. It was a pastoral ecumenical council with a focus on renewing the pastoral practice of the church in the modern world. It not only renewed but, at times, also revolutionised church life for Catholics. Even now fifty-three years after the last session ended, the ramifications of this gathering of the Catholic bishops of the world are still being felt throughout the Catholic world.

One of the effects of the Second Vatican Council was the growing awareness that the church, in Africa at least, had to move away from being a missionary church to becoming a truly local African church. It had to become a church rooted in the cultural values of the African people and served by local indigenous clergy. This development on the African continent became known as inculturation.

> Inculturation means the honest and serious attempt to make Christ and his message of salvation evermore understood by peoples of every culture, locality and time. It means the reformulation of Christian life and doctrine into the very thought-patterns of each people. It is the conviction that Christ and his Good News are even dynamic and challenging to all times and cultures as they become better understood and lived by each people.[1]

Inculturation needs to be distinguished from enculturation which is a cultural anthropological term which is similar to socialisation as it refers to the 'insertion of an individual in his culture.'[2] Many countries in Africa expended great effort on inculturation renewing the church's liturgical life in the light of African culture and traditions. The participation of the

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[1] See John Mary Waliggo, 'Making a Church that is truly African, in *Inculturation: Its meaning and urgency*, edited by John M. Waliggo, A. Roest Crollius et al, (Nairobi/Kampala: St Paul's Publications – Africa, 1986), 12.
[2] Inculturation is the 'process by which the Church becomes part of a culture of a people.' See Ary Roest Crollius, 'Inculturation: Newness and ongoing process,' in *Inculturation: Its meaning and urgency*, edited by John M. Waliggo, A. Roest Crollius, et al, (Nairobi/Kampala: St Paul's Publications – Africa, 1986), 34-35.

laity in the Church was being encouraged and there were many renewal courses for bishops, priests, religious and laity arising from the decisions of the Council to renew the church.

This was not just a time of change in the Catholic Church. The Second Vatican Council took place at a time when there was growing nationalism on the African continent and many African countries were gaining their independence from their colonial rulers. Political life in South Africa was not exempt. After the banning of the ANC and PAC in South Africa, at first white and then more so black university students formed the backbone of internal resistance to apartheid.[3] By 1971, Black Consciousness was a prominent feature of political life in South Africa. Steve Biko, a militant black activist and a founder of the Black Consciousness Movement, was encouraging black people to recognise their inherent dignity as Black people and stand up for their rights. He exhorted them to reject and resist the white colonial mindset that was being imposed on black people to keep them feeling inferior to whites. His famous statement: 'Black man you are on your own', encapsulated this new shift in political life in South Africa. Black Consciousness was a direct rejection of the apartheid policies, especially Bantu Education, which sought to keep black people from regarding themselves as the equal of whites and resigning themselves to an inferior position in society.

Similarly, Biko wanted Black people to have confidence in themselves, in their African cultures and their languages. He rejected the paternalism that was inherent in apartheid and believed that Black people had to take control of the struggle for their own freedom. Biko's militancy had an enormous effect on the struggle against apartheid which culminated in the Soweto Uprising in 1976. The spark to these protests was the education policy of introducing Afrikaans as a medium of instruction in township schools by conservative Bantu Education officials like Andries Treurnicht.[4] The imposition of Afrikaans was rejected by students and gave rise to a whole new militancy among the youth of the South Africa to work for a new dispensation in South Africa. This had an influence on raising the awareness of deaf pupils too.

[3] See Brown, *The Road to Soweto*, 20-61.

[4] In 1982, Andries Treurnicht later broke away from the National Party and formed his own Conservative Party in opposition to the Tricameral Parliament reforms being introduced by President PW Botha. See Saul Dubow, *Apartheid 1948-1994*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 203.

For the Catholic deaf community, both in South Africa and worldwide, the Second Vatican Council benefitted them by allowing the profession of religious men and women as well as the ordination of deaf priests. Within the South African context, this change was happening alongside the struggle for the liberation of Black people in society and the attempts being made to inculturate the church. However, for deaf people, it is the ordination of Father Cyril Axelrod in 1970, a convert to Catholicism and a past pupil of St Vincent School, that marked a new shift in approaches to Deaf ministry in the Catholic Church which, like Black Consciousness, would give rise to a sense of nascent Deaf Consciousness or Deaf Awareness among Deaf people. Fr Cyril Axelrod and Fr John Turner and Sr Bernadette Oelofse ministered in sign language. This made a major difference to deaf people's experience of Church life and it facilitated their full participation in the Church. Throughout the 1970s, there were several significant turning points and shifts that took place within the Catholic Deaf community which added significantly to a new way of thinking about the place of Deaf people in the Catholic Church and in South African society.

This chapter will focus on four different features. Firstly, the roles played by two deaf people Ruben Xulu, an artist, and Cyril Axelrod, the first deaf priest in South Africa in changing the face of the church after the Second Vatican Council. Secondly, the resistance of black deaf people to prejudice against deaf people and racism. Thirdly, the new pastoral developments that emerged after 1976 and the pastoral agents who got involved. Lastly, the growing Deaf Awareness which emerged at the beginning of the 1980s with Cyril Axelrod and Robert Simmons.

8.1. Changing the face of the church after the Second Vatican Council (1965-1974)

In the 1960s and 1970s in South Africa, inculturation was not a major concern for most bishops, priests, religious congregations or the laity.[5] Yet in a corner in the country, in the Catholic prefecture of Ingwavuma, KwaZulu, two unknown Zulu artists were giving an African face to the Catholic Church in South Africa. One of these artists Bernard Gcwensa (1918-1985) was hearing, the other Ruben Xulu (1942-1985) was deaf. Both Gcwensa and Xulu were lay

[5] Clement Langa, "The Prayer of the people,' in *The Catholic Church in Contemporary South Africa*, edited by Joy Brain and Philippe Denis, (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 1999), 310.

people, yet they preached through their art. They were doing inculturation even before the Second Vatican Council had pronounced on it.

8.1.1. Ruben Xulu (1942-1985)

In 1953, Fr Edwin Kinch OSM, an American missionary and Servite priest, was the parish priest of KwaHlabisa in the prefecture of Ingwavuma. He was doing home visits and ventured upon the Gcwensa homestead. While visiting the family, he was intrigued by a unique doorframe that adorned the front of the home that Gcwensa had made. He also admired the figures that Gcwensa had carved on different walking sticks that he was selling to support the family.[6] Kinch realised that Gcwensa had talent and invited him to do some carvings of statues of Mary for the Cathedral church at the Catholic mission in KwaHlabisa. This was the beginning of a productive collaboration between Gcwensa and Kinch.

The plight of Ruben Xulu was brought to Fr Kinch's attention in 1961. Ruben Xulu was born on 10 May 1942 at KwaHlabisa in Zululand. As a hearing child Xulu had been an excellent singer and dancer.[7] In 1949, at the age of seven and while herding cattle, Ruben Xulu had a traumatic experience in the forest from which he never fully recovered. It is not clear what happened, but it resulted in Xulu going deaf and losing his ability to speak. Xulu's family attributed his sudden deafness to an encounter with evil spirits.[8]

In 1957, at the age of 15, Ruben went to a hearing school in Mgangatho. Mrs Seraphina Magubane, a teacher at the school, took Xulu under her wing and taught him to read.

> Mrs Magubane told me how she had taught Ruben to read by drawing pictures on the blackboard to illustrate the meaning of words. She would question him by means of signs and he could give her the correct answer.[9]

While still at school, Xulu's artistic talent began to be noticed, especially after he won the annual art competition for black schools in KwaZulu one year.

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[6] Dina Cormick, *Bernard Gcwensa and Ruben Xulu: Christian artists of Natal*, (Pretoria: Academica, 1993), 12.
[7] Cormick, *Bernard Gcwensa and Ruben Xulu*, 23.
[8] The family believed that neighbours had cast a 'bewitching spell on Ruben out of jealousy or spite. Ruben Xulu was extremely intelligent but also had a short temper. He was often involved in fights with the neighbours' children. He suffered nightmares for many years after this incident in the forest. See Cormick, *Gcwensa and Xulu*, 24-25.
[9] Cormick, *Gcwensa and Xulu*, 26.

In 1960, when Xulu was in Standard 2, the new teacher did not have the patience to give him, a deaf child, the devoted attention he required in class. So Magubane approached Father Kinch and requested that Xulu be placed under the tutelage of the woodcarver at the mission,[10] Bernard Gcwensa. Gcwensa accepted the new apprentice and trained him in woodcarving. In 1962, Ruben Xulu was baptised a Catholic at the Good Shepherd Mission in Hlabisa.[11] He worked with Gcwensa there for about five years and much of their artwork decorates the Cathedral church.[12] In 1965, Gcwensa was also commissioned by Father Oswin Magrath OP, the Dominican rector of St Peter's Seminary in Hammanskraal, to carve the chapel doors there.[13] Gcwensa and Xulu worked on them at KwaHlabisa.

In the same year, Kinch was transferred to the parish in St Lucia. Xulu followed him to this new assignment while Gcwensa remained behind in Hlabisa. No longer under Gcwensa's influence, Xulu began to develop his own style. Unlike Gcwensa, Xulu had always been more open to using African figures and themes in his work than.[14] While in St Lucia, Xulu did a lot of art for the church there.

In 1971, he accepted a commission to do art for the new church in Matsemhlophe.[15] One of his most famous carvings is in this church. It is a crucifix with the outline of Africa on the face of Christ. Christ was Africa crucified. Xulu worked not only with wood but also with stone. In 1972 and 1973, he practised his craft extensively in KwaMashu near Durban. In 1974, Xulu moved to Mariannhill where he worked with Sr Johanna Senn and then he moved to Seven Oaks to work with Fr Anton Maier.

From being an unknown artist from Ingwavuma, Xulu was making a name for himself. His art was being seen increasingly as contributing to the inculturation of the Catholic faith in

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[10] A doctor advised Ruben Xulu's parents that Ruben could get some assistance at a special school 'where people with "Ruben's type of illness" could get technical tuition'. However, 'the grandfather was adamantly against the idea as he felt it would be like rejecting him [Ruben] as a social outcast simply because of his illness'. Deafness was still being perceived as a medical condition requiring rehabilitation. See Cormick, *Gcwensa and Xulu*, 25.

[11] Cormick, *Gcwensa and Xulu*, 27.

[12] Cormick's book is a visual and textual testament to the artistic abilities of both Xulu and Gcwensa in inculturating the Gospel message within a Zulu context. Cormick, *Gcwensa and Xulu*, 34-43.

[13] Cormick, *Bernard Gcwensa and Ruben Xulu*, 44.

[14] Cormick, *Gcwensa and Xulu*, 8.

[15] Cormick, Gcwensa and Xulu, 58-60.

KwaZulu. At an art exhibition at the Mariannhill Art Centre in November 1977, he won first prize.

> Mr Reuben Xulu's carved cypress-wood paschal candle-stick, titled Israel's Way to Light is about 1,75m tall and features 19 figures climbing upwards in a spiral towards the Light of Christ, the Easter candle.[16]

He was one of the first Catholic African artists in South Africa to use African themes extensively in his artwork. In doing so he gave an African face to Christianity in Catholic Churches throughout KwaZulu.

8.1.2. Father Cyril Axelrod (1942-)

A significant shift took place in pastoral care for the deaf with the priestly ordination of Fr Cyril Axelrod on 28 November 1970. Axelrod was ordained by Bishop Ernest Green in the St Vincent School chapel in Johannesburg. Father Cyril, a convert from Judaism, is the first South African deaf priest.

Born in Johannesburg on 24 February 1942 of a Lithuanian mother and a Polish-born father,[17] Cyril Axelrod attended St Vincent School for the Deaf. After completing school, he worked as an accountant for a couple of years before deciding to become a priest.[18] He had converted from Judaism,[19] much to his mother's consternation. As part of his studies for the priesthood, Axelrod went to study at Gallaudet University[20] and the Catholic University of America (CUA) in Washington DC before returning to South Africa to complete his theological studies at St John Vianney Seminary in Pretoria in 1969.

Cyril Axelrod was only the third Deaf Catholic priest in the world to be ordained[21] and the first in Africa. The first to be ordained was Fr Vincente de Paulo Burnier, a Brazilian from São

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[16] 'Deaf artist takes first prize,' *The Southern Cross*, 13 November 1977, 12. Picture of the paschal candle was on the same page. On the front page of the same issue of *The Southern Cross* was another picture of Xulu's crucifix with an outline of Africa on the Christ's face which was a natural feature of the wood.
[17] Cyril Axelrod, *And the journey begins*, 10-11.
[18] Initially, Cyril had longed to become a rabbi, but this was refused. In the Deuteronomic Code it states that a priest cannot approach the altar if he suffers from a defect or a blemish like blindness, lameness or skin disease (Leviticus 21:18-20). See Axelrod, *And the journey begins*, 55-57.
[19] Axelrod was baptised and received into the Catholic faith on 14 August 1965 in Immaculate Conception parish, Rosebank, Johannesburg.
[20] Gallaudet University is the only university for the Deaf in the United States.
[21] 'Deaf priest one of only three in world', *The Southern Cross (TSC)*, 2 December 1970, 5.

Paulo,[22] who was deaf from birth. The second priest was Fr Yanes Valer, a Cuban born in 1929, who became deaf in infancy.[23] Prior to the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), Canon Law forbade the ordination of any man with a disability. The 1917 Canon Law was still in effect and it stated that 'bodily defective men' were unable to be ordained.[24] When Cyril applied to join the Diocese of Port Elizabeth under Bishop Ernest Green, a dispensation had to be granted by the Vatican in Rome prior to his ordination.[25]

8.1.2.1. The beginnings of Axelrod's ministry

After his ordination Cyril Axelrod was assigned to be chaplain at St Thomas School for the Deaf near Kingwilliamstown, teaching catechism to the children and saying Mass for them.[26] He also worked as Fr Donal Cashman's curate for 2 years, while learning isiXhosa.

> The school was run by four Dominican Sisters and some dedicated teachers. The three hundred deaf pupils were all Xhosa people. Under the apartheid policy the Government insisted that African languages be used, and so teaching at the school was in their mother tongue, the Xhosa language [...] I set to work to learn enough to communicate with the children and teachers, both in Xhosa and in their tribal sign language.[27]

Being only the third deaf man to be ordained worldwide, and the first in the English-speaking world, meant that Axelrod became internationally well-known. In June 1971, he was invited to Rome to meet Fr de Blais, a member of the Piccolo Mission. This religious congregation was comprised of priests, Sisters and deaf oblates who were dedicated to serving only the Deaf. He also preached to the Italian Deaf community in Rome, Florence, Bologna and Milan for a whole month.[28]

[22] 'Only Deaf-Mute priest,' *TSC*, 2 September 1953, 11/421.
[23] See Cyril Axelrod, 'Fr Cyril's Trip', *The Silent Messenger (TSM)*, June/July 1975, 8; 'The personal triumph of one man!' *The Irish Independent*, 29 July 1971; and 'Benedict XVI names deaf priest "Prelate of Honor",' Catholic News Agency, 27 March 2008. Accessed on 20 September 2018. url: https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/benedict_xvi_names_deaf_priest_prelate_of_honor.
[24] See Canon 827, 2 in S. Woywod, *The New Canon Law*, (New York: Joseph F Wagner, 1918), 197. In this respect, the Catholic Church's teaching prior to Vatican II was no different to that of Judaism.
[25] See 'Deaf priest one of only three in world', *TSC*, 2 December 1970, 5.
[26] Axelrod, *And the journey begins*, 115.
[27] Axelrod, *And the journey begins*, 115.
[28] 'Chronology of Cyril Axelrod', 1, n.d. Box 1 File 5: Fr Cyril Axelrod: Life, Work, Spirituality of the Deaf, Cyril Axelrod Papers, Redemptorist Archives, Cape Town.

Axelrod was invited to visit schools for the deaf and Vocational training centres for deaf boys and girls in Italy too. Mr Vittoria Ieralla, the President of National Education of the Deaf in Italy escorted him. Ieralla was also the first president of the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) established in 1951. He was himself deaf.[29] On 17 July 1971, they both had a 40-minute private audience with Pope Paul VI at the Vatican.[30] They spoke about how the Deaf could integrate themselves into the Church's mission.[31] For Axelrod, meeting the Pope was one of the highlights of his trip.

After Italy, Axelrod travelled to Ireland. There he attended the International Catholic Conference for the Religious Education of the Deaf held at St Patrick's Training College, Dublin from 26-31 July 1971. Approximately 120 delegates from fifteen nations from America, Africa, Europe and India attended the conference.[32] Axelrod had to lip-read his way through all the talks as no provision was made for interpreters.[33]

In her talk to the conference, Sr Nicholas Griffey, the principal of St Mary's School for the Deaf in Cabra, Dublin noted that only 22% of Catholic deaf children in the United States were practising their faith. This was in sharp contrast to Ireland where 98% of deaf students attended Mass on Sunday and considered their faith as an important part of their lives. The low total was attributed to an insufficient number of Catholic schools for the deaf.[34] The conference proposed that every diocese appoint a professionally trained priest to look after the religious education of deaf Catholics.[35] Other concerns raised were that a new catechism for the deaf needs to be developed in light of the changing times and that teachers and priests working with the deaf need to be well qualified.

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[29] Axelrod, 'Fr Cyril's Trip', 7-9.
[30] See Axelrod, 'Fr Cyril's Trip,' 7 as well as the photo and caption in *The Southern Cross*, 1 December 1971, 1.
[31] Axelrod, 'Fr Cyril's Trip', 7.
[32] Axelrod, 'Fr Cyril's Trip, 8.
[33] Axelrod wrote: 'The conference gave me a kind heart by allowing me to take part of the interesting meeting wholly. The speakers show their sympathy and great understanding towards my difficulty to follow the lectures. The[y] spoke quite clearly and considerately so that I took courage to discuss with them at all costs without a bit of frustration or strain.' See Axelrod, 'Fr Cyril's Trip, 7.
[34] This point was made by Sr Nicholas Griffey OP from St Mary's School for the Deaf in Dublin. Sr Griffey was integrally involved in promoting the oral method to deaf education in Ireland (see previous chapter). In fact, Axelrod will challenge this statement. His view was that it was due to lack of sign language being used for Deaf people and them also feeling isolated in hearing churches. See 'More priests urged for the Deaf' *TSC*, 15 September 1971, 5.
[35] 'More priests urged for the deaf' *TSC*, 15 September 1971, 5.

After Ireland Axelrod went to Paris. He attended the Sixth Congress of the WFD held in Paris at UNESCO from 31 July to 5 August 1971. At this conference, he was a representative of the South African National Council for the Deaf.[36] Among 700 Deaf people from all over the world Axelrod found a deep sense of solidarity among delegates who, even though they were divided by different mother tongue languages, were united by their use of sign language.[37] The main focus of this gathering was to achieve the social rehabilitation of the deaf, to share on what was being done to overcome deafness, and to promote the human rights of Deaf people.[38]

After this meeting, Axelrod went to Geneva to attend his third conference. This time the meeting was a gathering of the First Ecumenical Seminar for the Training of responsible Christian workers among the deaf from 9-26 August 1971. Among the 120 delegates were Catholic priests, Protestant ministers and several social workers. During this meeting Axelrod met the other two deaf priests who were ordained before him; they were able to share on how they approached the spiritual and pastoral needs of deaf people in their respective countries.[39] Before returning to South Africa, he also had an opportunity to visit the Sint-Michielsgestedt School for the Deaf in the Netherlands.

Axelrod's international visit to different schools for the deaf in Europe and his attendance at three conferences gave him, he said: 'a refreshing experience that may encourage me to my practical care for the Deaf more effectively and securely.'[40] He also helped him reflect on the work that needed doing in South Africa.

8.1.2.2. Building up Catholic deaf communities[41]

While he was chaplain at St Thomas School for the Deaf, Axelrod's contact with the deaf community throughout the rest of the country was very limited. Bishop Ernest Green had

[36] 'Chronology of Cyril Axelrod', 1.
[37] Axelrod, 'Fr Cyril's Trip', 8.
[38] Ibid, 8.
[39] Ibid, 8.
[40] Axelrod, 'Fr Cyril's Trip,' 9.
[41] See Appendix, 475 for diagram on the structure of the Catholic Church.

envisaged that he should serve the deaf throughout the whole country and not just in the Diocese of Port Elizabeth.[42] Axelrod recollected that:

> After my ordination in 1970 Bishop Green proposed to the Bishops' Conference that I would be seconded to service the ministry among the deaf people in the country while I was a diocesan priest for Port Elizabeth. Unfortunately, Bishop Green resigned[43] from diocese of Port Elizabeth as he struggled to accept himself as a bishop and went back to Cape Town and my plan to work for the country fell apart.[44]

However, in 1973, Axelrod offered Masses to the deaf in Johannesburg over the Easter weekend for the first time. The deaf people encouraged him to return more frequently.[45]

> I was an incardinated priest of Port Elizabeth. So, I couldn't just travel all over. But I asked Bishop John Murphy of Port Elizabeth diocese if I can work in Johannesburg. He wrote a letter to Bishop Boyle to ask him if it could be possible for me to work in Johannesburg. But there was no reply.[46]

The following year Axelrod moved to Johannesburg and established himself there even though the negotiations between the respective bishops was still unclear.

> I came because I knew many [deaf Catholics] needed my help. I came on my own. I had no formal introduction or acceptance into the diocese of Johannesburg. I just came because the Bishop didn't communicate. The Bishop was just focused on parishes. You can't work for the deaf and also work in a parish. It is not my responsibility. In the Bishop's mind, I must take a parish. The work for the deaf is outside of parish work. I came on my own accord because I was focused on building up the deaf and that they need my help.[47]

With his arrival in the Diocese of Johannesburg, the establishment and strengthening of Catholic deaf communities began in earnest. He immediately immersed himself in visiting the deaf population, black and white, spread all over the Reef. He travelled extensively

[42] Hatton, 'Deaf deacon', 6.
[43] Bishop Ernest Green resigned as bishop in January 1971. This was a major setback for Axelrod as a newly ordained priest. He lost the support of the bishop with whom he could most easily communicate and had who had always supported him.
[44] Cyril Axelrod, personal email to Mark James, 15 March 2015.
[45] 'Chronology of Cyril Axelrod', 1.
[46] Cyril Axelrod, interview conducted by Mark James, 15 September 2015, Dunnottar, Nigel, 396.
[47] Cyril Axelrod, interview conducted by Mark James, 15 September 2015, Dunnottar, 396.

establishing, developing and sustaining various Deaf communities in various towns and townships in and around Johannesburg and Pretoria.

> For nine months of the year, I spend most of my time ministering to the English speaking deaf of all denominations in and around Johannesburg where the largest grouping of deaf people is to be found.[48]

He even went to outlying areas like Potchefstroom, Parys, Carolina, Balfour, Pietersburg, as well as travelled to Durban, Pietermaritzburg and Cape Town.[49] While he worked mostly with Catholic communities he did not do so exclusively. Axelrod was ecumenical in his approach and sought to serve all the deaf regardless of colour or creed.[50]

The Dutch Reformed Church already served the Afrikaans deaf community as it had a well-established network of hearing pastors who knew sign language and ministered to Dutch Reformed deaf people.[51] They also had schools and had been very involved in deaf education going back over a century.

Axelrod saw his ministry as being responsible for the English-speaking deaf people in the white community and for the black deaf community. Many non-Catholics attended his Masses and services especially from those churches that had no chaplain to serve their deaf congregants. Axelrod also reached out to deaf Jews who sought out his help and guidance.[52] Everyone was free to participate in Axelrod's celebrations of the Eucharist and judging from the way related to people of different faiths and Christian denominations, he did not try to proselytise or convert them to the Catholic Church.

8.1.2.3. Axelrod's ministerial approach

Being in Johannesburg meant that Axelrod also became involved with the SANCD. He was asked to write an article for the SANCD’s magazine *The Silent Messenger*. Reflecting on his four years of ministry, Axelrod stressed four key aspects: 1) the importance of deaf people’s spiritual formation; 2) that deaf people be encouraged to discover their self-respect and

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[48] Axelrod, 'The spiritual care', 5.
[49] Cyril Axelrod, personal email to Mark James, 16 March 2015, 3.
[50] Axelrod, *And the journey begins*, 141.
[51] 'Die geestelike versorging van die dowes' *TSM*, 46, 3, September 1977, 8-9.
[52] Axelrod, *And the journey begins*, 146-147.

autonomy; 3) the importance of sign language for communication with deaf people and its use in the liturgy; lastly, 4) that a spiritual leader had to be a good role model for deaf people.[53]

From his experience, Axelrod saw that the primary task of pastoral ministry to the Deaf was to provide Deaf people with adequate spiritual formation in order that:

> the deaf person attain a life of holiness, a life of faith, hope and charity and we must see that he is motivated to appreciate and understand it. We have in the past experience perhaps placed too much emphasis on developing the intellect and not made enough allowance for understanding with the heart affection and love. We have not showed faith as a matter basically of loving and showing love.[54]

For Axelrod, Deaf people needed a personal experience of their faith. Faith should not be presented as something abstract. Instead, it should be a daily encounter with the living and loving God. However, he believed that we cannot love God unless we love other people and they love us. Deaf people needed to experience this love through their interpersonal relationships they had in the family. Unfortunately, these relationships had not always been that life-giving or affirming experiences, as there was often a lack of adequate communication between deaf children and their parents.

Deaf people also needed to learn how to express their faith and to explain their beliefs to others. But having faith and being loving were not enough. Hope was also required. It was therefore important for ministers and priests to understand that the deaf had something to teach us from their experience of ‘not hearing.’

> The deaf must be treated as a person who contributes to the community once his own personality has been developed. We must love the deaf, we must give them courage and hope and our main aim must be to make them independent of us.[55]

From his earliest writings, we also see his concern that deaf people be empowered and given autonomy. They should not be kept dependent on the hearing or even a deaf minister.

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[53] Cyril Axelrod, 'Spiritual welfare and care for the deaf,' *TSM*, January 1975, 4-7.
[54] Axelrod, 'Spiritual welfare', 4.
[55] Axelrod, 'Spiritual welfare', 5.

For Axelrod, priests and ministers working with the deaf needed to know how to communicate with the deaf. This requires that they know sign language or Total Communication. This was vital! Deaf people needed to know their faith just like hearing people did, so that they could participate in the life of the Church and arrive at personal union with God. But to do this effectively, those ministering to the deaf had to know sign language and use it to explain to the basic religious concepts and fundamentals of faith.

Finally, the priest or minister had to be a good role model. For deaf people the basis of faith was not hearing but seeing, as deaf people are visually-focused.[56] They needed to see their priests, ministers and spiritual leaders as good role models that they could follow and emulate.

8.1.2.4. Ministering in sign language

As we have seen, from the beginning of his ministry Axelrod insisted on the importance of sign language for an effective ministry to Deaf people. When he was at Gallaudet University in the United States, he had to learn ASL[57] and experienced himself becoming 'more confident and independent as an adult deaf man.'[58] While a deacon at St John Vianney Seminary he became known for organising spiritual courses,[59] conducting services in sign language[60] as well as interpreting and preaching at Masses for the deaf.[61] Once while talking to his good friend, Robert Simmons, who was also a Jewish convert to Catholicism,[62] Axelrod asked him whether deaf people needed a priest? Simmons responded to the affirmative saying: "[D]eaf people feel excluded and could only really be included if the priest could use sign language."[63]

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[56] In promoting the idea that faith for deaf people comes through seeing rather than hearing Axelrod challenged the long-standing position that was attributed to St Augustine who, quoting St Paul, said that faith comes through hearing. We have discussed this previously in chapter 4. For Axelrod faith for Deaf people comes from seeing the example of the role models.
[57] For more information on the history and nature of American Sign Language, see Harlan Lane, *The Mask of Benevolence: Disabling the Deaf community*, (San Diego: Dawn Sign Press, 1999).
[58] Axelrod, *And the journey begins*, 85.
[59] 'Spiritual courses for deaf people' *TSC*, 5 February 1969, 2.
[60] 'Letter to the Editor from Beryl Jones', *The Silent Messenger*, September 1969, 20.
[61] Desmond J. Hatton, 'Deaf deacon was nearly a rabbi,' *TSC*, 10 October 1969, 6; 'Interpreting Mass for deaf,' *TSC*, 21 January 1970, 3.
[62] Robert Simmons had come from a Progressive Jewish family. See Axelrod, *And the journey begins*, 69.
[63] Axelrod, *And the journey begins*, 70. Simmons was horrified when Axelrod then inquired whether he (Cyril) could become a priest. Axelrod relates how Simmons 'looked startled and signed wildly, "You must be mad! How can an Orthodox Jew like you become a Catholic priest? Your family would kill you."

For Axelrod the use of sign language in ministry was about a more profound inclusion of deaf people into the life of the church. Throughout his ministry Axelrod promoted the use of sign language in Church liturgy. This was inspiring to both deaf and hearing alike, as Beryl Jones, a non-Catholic but a hearing Executive Member of the SANCD, wrote:

> On Sunday, 13th July, a special religious service was held in the Roman Catholic Cathedral, Durban, for European deaf - (a similar service was held the week before for non-Europeans). Priest[64] Cyril Axeliod (sic), profoundly deaf (an ex-pupil of St. Vincent's School for Deaf) conducted the service [...] Of the congregation of about 65 people the majority were deaf. It was the first time I had attended such a service and it was a revelation to me and other hearing people. I think almost every deaf person present knew Priest Cyril and so what he had to say was much appreciated. For once "the shoe was on the other foot", and I could not understand his message. The deaf lip-read him and fully understood the sign language used to convey his thoughts to them. It was a real joy to realise the deaf were following intelligently, every step of the way. They laughed at his humour and entered fully into the whole service.[65]

In the same letter, Jones admitted that she had come to realise the importance of sign language for the deaf. She related that her 'profoundly deaf son'[66] even though he 'is a facile lip-reader without the aid of finger spelling or signs he could never follow a sermon or talk with intelligence or understanding'.[67]

This was affirmed by Sheila Eakins, a hearing Catholic, who attended the Palm Sunday Mass celebrated by Cyril Axelrod with a small congregation of about 25 people in Durban in 1974. She was overwhelmed by the evident intimacy and sense of community among the deaf congregants. Writing as a hearing person experiencing a signed Mass for the first time, she said:

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[64] In fact, Axelrod was not a priest yet but a deacon.

[65] Beryl Jones, 'Letter to the editor', *TSM*, September 1969, 20.

[66] Alan Jones was a pupil at St Vincent School for the Deaf. As we saw in the previous chapter, Jones was later to assist Mr Norman Nieder-Heitmann – a previous principal of the Kutlwanong School for the Deaf in Rustenburg and who then later worked for the Department of Education and Training – in producing the first sign language dictionary 'Talking to the Deaf'. This dictionary is still being used in some deaf schools although other dictionaries have been developed. See the photograph of Nieder-Heitmann and Jones working together and comments in 'Opmerking', *TSM*, November/December 1978; 'Meet some of our deaf: FOYSA award for Alan Jones', *TSM*, December 1981, 8.

[67] Jones, 'Letter', 20.

I noticed how attentive everyone was, following the signs the priest made swiftly and naturally, and lip-reading with serious concentration. Such attentiveness in church would put us to shame. The lessons were read accompanied by mime - waving of the palm, touching the heart to denote love. The reader led them in the repeated response: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Then followed the homily, and the appeal to "accept Jesus as our Saviour, our friend", with Fr Axelrod clasping his wrists to denote the handshake of friendship. The Credo and the Lord's Prayer were said with a feeling of fellowship in which I joined happily; the kiss of peace was full of joy, people stretching across rows of chairs and across the aisle to give hearty signs of friendship - not the self-conscious gestures we so often witness at Mass. And smiling! Their Mass had particular interest for me, because I felt we could borrow much of their simplicity of approach, and so learn that the Mass can be shared happily and with love.[68]

As is evident in the Eakins' account, Axelrod used signs and voiced simultaneously in the liturgy. So much of what was understood to be sign language at this time was called Total Communication.[69] In another context and when speaking about the spiritual welfare and care for the deaf, Axelrod said:

The deaf must be able to comprehend the way of communication i.e. speech, lipreading and sign language. The best result is total communication.[70]

Language lies at the heart of any culture and it is no different in the deaf community. The inclusion of sign language in the liturgy was part of the new developments happening in the Catholic Church after the Second Vatican Council. It became known as inculturation. Axelrod was preparing the way for the inculturation of the Catholic liturgy for deaf people,[71] whereas Ruben Xulu did this for African people. In Levinasian terms, this is truly the face signing.

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[68] Sheila Eakins, 'Deaf Jewish priest celebrates in signs', *TSC*, 26 May 1974, 4.

[69] Total Communication is an educational method based on using all forms of communication be it speech, lipreading or sign language to ensure increased comprehensibility for deaf children. It was used also used outside of the classroom. It is also known as the Combined Method. The type of signing employed by Total Communication is referred to as Signed English as it employs the grammatical structure of English or a spoken language rather than the grammatical structure of natural sign language itself.

[70] Axelrod, 'Spiritual welfare', 6.

[71] There is no indication in his writings that Axelrod was thinking this way himself. Nevertheless, Axelrod's pastoral practice accorded with the five prerequisites for the fruitful inculturation of Christianity in Africa as outlined by the Ugandan theologian, John Mary Waliggo: 1) The existence of a local language by means of which Christianity is communicable to African people. 2) The existence of a local culture with which Christianity

8.2. Challenging negative attitudes towards deaf people and racism (1975-1976)

But there were other changes on the horizon. Deaf people were no longer prepared to sit back and allow the hearing world to dictate terms to them. They began to challenge the prejudices of the hearing towards deaf people. The first was the actions of Ruben Xulu and the second was the pupils at the Dominican School for the Deaf in Wittebome.

8.2.1. Challenging hearing prejudices

Ruben Xulu challenged Catholic understandings of how Christ should be portrayed in art and promoted greater inculturation in the Catholic Church. As a deaf person he also challenged hearing people's perceptions of deaf people, especially in the African community.

Brother Florian Langmann CMM, a carpenter in Mariannhill, told the story of how Xulu, when he was working in Mariannhill around 1975, challenged hearing attitudes that deaf people were backward. At this time, deaf people were still referred to as deaf and dumb.

> [Ruben] had gone to the carpentry shop to collect a piece of wood for a commissioned carving. The men working in the carpentry shop had treated Ruben's inability to speak with a little scorn. However, a few weeks later when Ruben carried back to the workshop the finished carving, he went right up to the men and put it down in front of them as if to say, "There, take a look! I am somebody!"[72]

Through his art, Xulu demanded respect from the hearing community. He was not prepared to be treated in a scornful or paternalistic way. He was deaf but not dumb. He was a gifted artist. Through his art, he was claiming not only his identity as Black and African, but also as Deaf.[73]

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is in dialogue. 3) The promotion of a maturing, responsible and actively participating laity. 4) The presence and support of Church leaders who understand and promote the process of inculturation. 5) The development of local research centres for the study of inculturation in African culture. See Waliggo, 'Making a Church that is truly African,' 26-29.

[72] Cormick, *Gcwensa and Xulu*, 26.

[73] Xulu continued to work alternatively for Sister Johanna Senn in Mariannhill or for Father Maier in Seven Oaks for the next ten years until his untimely death on 13 December 1985. He was stabbed to death in Mariannhill in a senseless killing outside the Mariannhill convent. This was the sad end to a brilliant deaf sculptor who, with Bernard Gcwensa, challenged the Eurocentric conceptions of Christian art and prepared the way for a greater appreciation of African depictions of Christ, the saints and Christian symbols. See Cormick, *Gcwensa and Xulu*, 75 and 'Deaf artist dies violently,' *TSC*, 12 January 1986, 1.

In Cape Town, a group of school pupils at the Dominican School for the Deaf in the suburb of Wittebome, did the same in an equally dramatic way.

8.2.2. The August 1976 Wittebome School protest[74]

At the Wittebome school in August 1976, black pupils at the school staged a protest against the racist attitudes held by some of the teachers towards their pupils. This virtually unknown event sowed the seeds for Deaf empowerment, autonomy and human rights in South Africa.

In August 1976,[75] Standard 7 pupils of the Dominican School for the Deaf in Wittebome staged a sit-in protest. 'We had a two-week sit-in where we attended class but folded our arms and did nothing and said nothing.'[76] Similar to the events in Soweto on June 16, the protest at Wittebome School erupted spontaneously. 'The irony was that we acted spontaneously as we did not have sufficient information to know how to stage a political resistance activity.'[77] Lindsay Moeletsi Dunn, one of the participants of the boycott, remembered that the spark that ignited the pupils' fury. Sr Jane (previously known as Fabian), the boys' hostel matron, slapped one of the girls, Jennifer Hess, 'for taking a short cut through the boys' hall to the playground.'[78] She was 'our "Hector Pietersen!", Dunn recalled. [79]

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[74] Most of the details of this event are the recollections of one person, Lindsay Moeletsi Dunn. Faith Cronwright and Suzanne Lombard alerted me to this event. However, they were vague about the specific details of what transpired during the protest. As there was no archival material relating to this topic, it was not possible to verify all aspects of Dunn's testimony. There is one thing that is without dispute: this event shaped the lives of Lindsay Moeletsi Dunn, Faith Cronwright, Suzanne and Stephen Lombard. It set them on their life paths asserting the dignity of Deaf people. We will investigate this further in the next chapter. There is need for further research on this topic as well as the resistance offered by deaf pupils against hearing domination in schools for the deaf. Despite these shortcomings it was necessary to include this protest in this dissertation as it brings to light a relatively unknown event of anti-apartheid resistance history. It also highlights the value of the oral history approach to data collection.

[75] Dunn could not remember the exact date. He was 'certain that it was around August 1976 after we had returned from the holiday (if we done that before the winter holidays I believe we would have been kicked out and not expected to return).' See Lindsay Moeletsi Dunn, personal email to Mark James, 27 April 2018, 472.

[76] Lindsay Moeletsi Dunn, personal email to Mark James, 27 April 2018, 472.

[77] Lindsay Moeletsi Dunn, personal email to Mark James, 27 April 2018, 473.

[78] Lindsay Moeletsi Dunn, personal email to Mark James, 21 April 2018, 469. In schools for the deaf, the Dominican Sisters taught boys and girls in the same school often from the age of three to eighteen. Inappropriate conduct and interaction between boys and girls in the hostels, especially in the high school, was to be avoided. Strict rules existed in the schools to keep the boys and girls separated from each other outside of the classroom and mealtimes. They were often rigidly enforced. See Cleall, '"Deaf to the Word",' 597.

[79] Lindsay Moeletsi Dunn, personal email to Mark James, 21 April 2018, 469.

'During the breaks, we would sing freedom songs such as "We shall overcome" in sign language gathering at the playground at the space that Sr Fabian used to sell candy/snacks to us.'[80] Another pupil, Faith Cronwright recalled singing songs during the protest.[81]

Dunn assumed leadership of the sit-in protest because he was 'the most familiar with the Black Consciousness Movement and had read the Heinemann African Writers series,'[82] including 'banned materials related to the American Civil Rights movement and the African National Congress.'[83] Dunn was influenced by the writings of Steve Biko but he also grew up in Clermont township outside Pinetown in KwaZulu-Natal in a family with struggle credentials. Dunn's mother 'is Elizabeth Marie Mkame,[84] an iconic figure in Clermont Township especially and in the eThekwini (Durban) region in general.'[85] As a result, Dunn grew up rubbing shoulders with families who were then part of the ANC underground. 'Dr Diliza Mji,[86] for instance, was a family doctor, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka[87] is a very close family friend, Thulani Gcabashe,[88] and others who became prominent in the post-apartheid government were all families I had grown up with.'[89]

During the sit-in, Dunn recalled that one of the teachers, Mrs N.Y. Hebbert, 'asked us who she could talk to as it was obvious, we were protesting something.'[90] Dunn volunteered and gave

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[80] Lindsay Moeletsi Dunn, personal email to Mark James, 27 April 2018, 473.
[81] Faith Cronwright, interview conducted by Mark James, 16 November 2015, Heathfield, Cape Town, 427.
[82] Billy Masetlha, a SASM activist in Soweto and a member of the Soweto Students' Representative Council (SSRC) in 1976, remembered reading the African Writers' Series. See interview with Billy Maseltha reproduced in Baruch Hirson, *Year of fire, year of ash, the Soweto revolt: Roots of a revolution?* (Cape Town: BestRed, 2016), 331.
[83] Lindsay Moeletsi Dunn, personal email to Mark James, 27 April 2018, 473.
[84] Elizabeth Mkame is presently an activist for the aged and a member of Age Demands Action (ADA). She is a board member of the Muthande Society for the Aged. Previously, she worked for the Diakonia Council of Churches in Durban for many years. For more information, see the link http://www.helpage.org/blogs/elizabeth-mkame-25201/how-nelson-mandela-inspired-me-as-an-older-person-820/. Accessed 21 July 2018.
[85] Lindsay Moeletsi Dunn, personal email to Mark James, 27 April 2018, 471.
[86] Diliza Mji was formerly a President of SASO, presently he is the founder and chair of Busamed Hospital Group. See www.sahistory.org.za/people/diliza-mji and www.africaoutlookmag.com/outlook-features/busamed-hospital-group.
[87] Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka was Deputy President under President Thabo Mbeki (2005-2008) but is currently the United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of UN Women (2013-). See www.unwomen.org/en/about-us/directorate/executive-director/ed-bio and www.sahistory.org.za/people/phumzile-mlambo-ngcuka. SA History incorrectly state that she was born in Claremont in Durban instead of Clermont near Pinetown. Accessed on 8 August 2018.
[88] Thulani Gcabashe is presently Chair of the Board of Directors for Standard Bank. See www.standardbank.com/pages/StandardBankGroup/web/directors.html Accessed 8 August 2018.
[89] Lindsay Moeletsi Dunn, personal email to Mark James, 21 April 2018, 469.
[90] Lindsay Moeletsi Dunn, personal email to Mark James, 27 April 2018, 472.

Mrs Hebbert the list of demands that the pupils had formulated. He also explained to her why they were protesting. 'Mrs Hebbert was furious when she heard that Jennifer Hess was slapped by the boys' matron.'[91] She personally delivered the pupil's list of demands to the principal, Sr Basil. Dunn remembered that they:

- demanded that all students be given an education equal to that given to students at St. Augustine's (the hearing school next door to the Deaf school) and
- that the choice of academic or vocational education beyond Standard 6 be made by students themselves.
- demanded more social integration among girls and boys so we can learn the proper social etiquette/behaviours expected of us in adulthood
- demanded that instruction be in Sign Language in all classes
- demanded an end to what we considered abuse by school authorities - they saw it as discipline but we argued that we were never given a fair say and were punished without the right to present a defense.[92]

Faith Cronwright's memory of why they boycotted was because she and others wanted to go on to get their matriculation certificate.[93] Suzanne Lombard (née Barrett) also said they boycotted because they wanted to get their Matric but also because they wanted more use of sign language in classes at school.[94] The pupils were stonewalled by the principal who did not respond to their demands. Both Lombard and Cronwright said that they were very disappointed with the decision of the school authorities to refuse their request.[95] Dunn was more scathing in his response: 'It was Sr Winnock who was apparently assigned to "investigate". This really was giving Sr Winnock powers to scare us and threaten us with expulsion if we did not name the ringleaders who started this.'[96]

The Dominican Sisters refused to entertain any of the demands and the protest and sit-in ended to the dissatisfaction of the pupils. Dunn remembered that 'after the school closed for the summer holidays in December, we were told we were not coming back and there would

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[91] Lindsay Moeletsi Dunn, personal email to Mark James, 27 April 2018, 472.
[92] Lindsay Moeletsi Dunn, personal email to Mark James, 21 April 2018, 469.
[93] Faith Cronwright, interview conducted by Mark James, 16 November 2015, 427.
[94] Suzanne Lombard, interview conducted by Mark James, 13 November 2015, 425.
[95] See Faith Cronwright, interview conducted by Mark James, 16 November 2015, Cape Town, 427; and Suzanne Lombard, interview conducted by Mark James, 13 November 2015, Cape Town, 425.
[96] Lindsay Moeletsi Dunn, personal email to Mark James, 27 April 2018, 472.

not be a Standard 8 class to come to.'[97] Faith Cronwright and Suzanne Lombard left school to find employment. As Cronwright recalled: 'At age 16, we had to finish and leave school … I wanted to study further but my family were poor. They couldn't afford for me to study further and pay for it themselves. So, I had to go out and look for work.'[98] Lombard returned home to Ladysmith in KwaZulu-Natal. Dunn went to study for his matric at Bechet Senior Secondary School in Sydenham, Durban. He earned his matric in 1979 without the aid of any interpreters. 'An Indian classmate who became my buddy throughout my time at Bechet, David Naicker allowed me to copy his notes in class. My hearing aid was not enough for me to understand anything in class, so it was pretty much useless.'[99]

8.2.2.1. June 16 and the Wittebome protest

The events at Wittebome school were largely inspired by the events of June 16. Dunn pointed out that pupils at the Deaf school came from all over the country and 'so many were aware of the protests, boycotts and police abuse.'[100] A certain portion of the students was politicised. Dunn remembered that two of their teachers, Mrs Hebbert and Mrs Arendse, were 'instrumental in exposing us to knowledge that stimulated our inquisitive minds.'[101] In class they discussed and debated both the national and international newspaper articles in the *Cape Argus* and *Cape Times*.

This was not the case in all the classes. Dunn recalled a few clashes and ideological disputes he had with Sr Amata in the catechism classes. Having read the writings of Steve Biko, Dunn objected to ideas of racial privilege and that black people 'ought to be grateful to white people for what they have done for us.'[102] When Dunn took exception to what Sr Amata said in class, pointing out that denying black people 'equality and liberty was nothing to be grateful for,'[103] he was sent to Mr van der Berg, the shoe-making instructor, to receive a caning for his 'cheeky retorts.'[104] Other Deaf students were also conscious of the injustices of apartheid and the

[97] Lindsay Moeletsi Dunn, personal email to Mark James, 27 April 2018, 472.
[98] Faith Cronwright, interview conducted by Mark James, 16 November 2015, Cape Town, 427.
[99] Lindsay Moeletsi Dunn, personal email to Mark James, 27 April 2018, 472.
[100] Lindsay Moeletsi Dunn, personal email to Mark James, 27 April 2018, 473.
[101] Lindsay Moeletsi Dunn, personal email to Mark James, 21 April 2018, 471.
[102] Lindsay Moeletsi Dunn, personal email to Mark James, 21 April 2018, 470.
[103] Lindsay Moeletsi Dunn, personal email to Mark James, 21 April 2018, 470.
[104] Lindsay Moeletsi Dunn, personal email to Mark James, 21 April 2018, 470.

racism prevalent in the school. Few, however, were as brave as Lindsay Dunn to challenge the teachers head-on.

This indicates that the protest was not as spontaneous as has been asserted. Firstly, there was no doubt many small indignities suffered by the Deaf pupils like attitudes of racial superiority, racism and the extensive use of corporal punishment which irked pupils. These indignities and injustices no doubt accumulated and mounted up until the final straw, the slap suffered by Jennifer Hess, caused them to protest. Secondly, there were also those pupils who, like Dunn, having read the writings of Steve Biko or perhaps being influenced by other family members who supported Black Consciousness, refused to accept the ongoing injustices in the school any longer. They would have been in favour of a protest to challenge these injustices.

Under apartheid, whites thought they knew what was best for black people. The colonial mentality made white people think they were not only more superior to black people but could also make decisions for them. Steve Biko challenged these paternalistic attitudes not just among the white supporters of apartheid but also against white liberals and the Left who thought they could speak and act on behalf of the oppressed black majority.

> I am not sneering at the liberals and their involvement. Neither am I suggesting that they are most to blame for the black man's plight. Rather I am illustrating the fundamental fact that total identification with an oppressed group in a system that forces one group to enjoy privilege and to live on the sweat of another, is impossible. White society collectively owes the blacks so huge a debt that no one member should automatically expect to escape from the blanket condemnation that needs to come from the black world. It is not as if whites are allowed to enjoy privilege only when they declare their solidarity with the ruling party. They are born into privilege and are nourished by and nurtured in the system of ruthless exploitation of black energy.[105]

Black consciousness, for Steve Biko, was an expression of group pride and 'the determination of the blacks to arise and attain the envisaged self.'[106] Black people needed to rally together

[105] Steve Biko, *I write what I like*, (Johannesburg: Picador Africa, 2004), 71.
[106] Biko, *I write what I like*, 74, 101.

in solidarity around the cause of their oppression, namely 'the blackness of their skin'[107] and rid themselves of this oppression and servitude imposed upon them by white racism.

Thirdly, there was the influence of the June 16 uprising itself. Deaf pupils were aware that pupils in Soweto, and by this time also in the Western Cape, were protesting against the injustices of apartheid. It is no surprise that the Deaf pupils at Wittebome decided it was time they too did something similar in their school and organised the sit-in protest. But the short-term effects of the sit-in protest at the Deaf School in Wittebome were not immediately noticeable. In fact, the protest fizzled out after two weeks with little to show for it as it led to no immediate changes at the school. The oral method of Deaf education persisted in the school for another 15 years. However, the following chapter will reflect further on the long-term outcome of these events for deaf empowerment, autonomy and deaf rights awareness. At least, the seeds of change were at hand. Deaf people were showing that they were taking their own liberation into their own hands. They wanted to enjoy the same rights and privileges of hearing people both in church and society.

Integral to the protest as outlined in the demands made by the pupils was the beginnings of a critique against the oral method of education at Wittebome school and the hearing prejudice that would become known as audism. A change of mindset was taking place among deaf children too, not only the deaf adults. After this short interlude of resistance to apartheid and audism, it is to the deaf adults that we now return.

8.3. New pastoral challenges and new deaf pastoral ministers (1977-1980)

On 1 February 1976, Cyril Axelrod, after being professed as a Redemptorist, was assigned to the Monastery in Pretoria where he picked up the threads of his work with the Deaf in the dioceses of Johannesburg and Pretoria. The previous year, Axelrod had decided that he no longer wanted to continue as a diocesan priest and applied to join the Redemptorist Congregation. He was accepted and began his novitiate in Bergvliet, Cape Town.[108] During his absence, the ministerial field underwent a substantial shift. On his return, Axelrod had to adapt to new challenges.

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[107] Biko, *I write what I like*, 101.

[108] For more information on his reasons and experiences in the novitiate, see Axelrod, *And the journey begins*, 120-134.

Axelrod found himself now confronted with the growth of the establishment of new evangelical churches among the deaf and the arrival of television and preaching in the media. He himself was to embark on an educational project he had not envisaged namely, the establishment of a nursery school for deaf children in Soweto. He was also to discover that within the Catholic Church he was no longer alone as the only deaf pastoral worker in South Africa. This shift happened with the profession of a deaf Dominican Sister and the ordination of a Mariannhill priest.

8.3.1. Establishment of the Christian Deaf Fellowship

A new church called the Christian Deaf Fellowship (CDF) was expanding and growing. It was started originally by a Rev Barrett from the United States,[109] who came out to South Africa and trained local South Africa deaf pastors like William and Beverley Warmington.[110] These churches were still new and small but were becoming very attractive to deaf people. The churches sprang up quickly. They were Bible-based and charismatic with an important emphasis on evangelising others. The pastors were deaf and celebrated services in sign language. They had been trained in deaf theological colleges.

As with many hearing Pentecostal churches they adopted a fundamentalist reading of scripture and were often hostile to the teachings of the Catholic Church especially relating to Mary and the sacraments.[111] Francois de Villiers remembered that Catholics were also criticised for their way of praying too:

> Lots of deaf people don't like Catholics because of parrot prayer. We say the same prayers again and again and don't pray from your heart. They don't understand what Jesus has taught about 'Our Father who art in heaven,' but this they called parrot prayer. For me, it is ridiculous.[112]

Some of the English-speaking deaf, who previously had attended Axelrod's Masses, had never felt comfortable in the Catholic Church. Some were also angry at the way they were treated

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[109] Cyril Axelrod, interview conducted by Mark James, 15 September 2015, Dunnottar, Nigel, 400. Francois de Villiers, interview conducted by Mark James, 4 August 2016, Edenvale, 461.
[110] Francois de Villiers, interview conducted by Mark James, Edenvale, 462.
[111] Cyril Axelrod, interview conducted by Mark James, 15 September 2015, Dunnottar, 400; and Francois de Villiers, interview conducted by Mark James, 4 August 2016, Edenvale, 462.
[112] Francois de Villiers, interview conducted by Mark James, 4 August 2016, 463.

in the Catholic schools for the deaf.[113] A number of Catholics were attracted to join the CDF too.[114] Axelrod experienced the monopoly that the Catholic Church previously had over English-speaking deaf people, due to its schools for the deaf, was being eroded away. Deaf people were making other choices for themselves, they were not going along with doing things the same as before.

8.3.2. Television and evangelism

In 1977, the benefits of television were being appreciatively lauded by hearing and deaf alike. Television was still very new in South Africa having been introduced the previous year.[115] This new technology had lots of benefits for the deaf and the SANCD were quick to appreciate this. They invited to South Africa a hearing pastor from the United States, Pastor John Stallings, a fluent ASL signer.[116] He was Mission Director of the CDF in the States. He arrived in February and trained deaf chaplains in South Africa from all churches in how to develop deaf ministry on television. [117] His programmes on SABC 'From the Book' were incredibly well-received among clergy and laity alike.[118] This was probably the first time that sign language had appeared on national television in South Africa. Beryl Jones from Durban wrote:

> Our totally deaf son's appreciation was a joy to behold. His face was a picture and he said, "I can understand very well." Very many phone calls, and verbal comments, from hearing as well as deaf people proved without any doubt that both hearing and deaf appreciated the inspiring messages by Pastor Stallings who for 41 years has been a minister for the Deaf. For 16 years he has had a unique T.V. ministry to the Deaf in U.S.A. We look forward now to Ministers to the Deaf, who are conversant with sign language, bringing God's word to our S. African deaf community through this medium – speech and sign together.[119]

Cyril Axelrod was equally supportive of this new venture.

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[113] 'There was also revenge because of the cruel time when the nuns hit children on the hands and disciplined them.' Francois de Villiers, interview conducted by Mark James, 4 August 2016, Edenvale, 462.
[114] Francois de Villiers, interview conducted by Mark James, 4 August 2016, Edenvale, 462.
[115] While television was introduced in 1975, extensive programming only began in 1976.
[116] 'Television for the Deaf?' *TSM*, March 1977, 6.
[117] 'Television for the Deaf?' *TSM*, March 1977, 6.
[118] Many comments were included in the article from individuals and newspapers. See 'Televisie Byna Toeganglik vir Dowes', *TSM*, 46, 3, September 1977, 9.
[119] 'Televisie Byna Toeganlik vir Dowes', *TSM*, 46, 3, September 1977, 9.

> The appearance of Pastor John Stallings on T.V. brings God's word in speech and sign language was an historical event. I found it very inspiring, and it brings real consolation to the Deaf. I hope it will be recorded on T.V. from time to time.[120]

Stallings also conducted a series of church services around the country at the Catholic Deaf hostel in Heathfield, Cape Town; for the Community for the Deaf in Belville as well as in another Dutch Reformed Church in Bosman Street, Pretoria; and he also visited St Vincent School for the Deaf in Johannesburg.[121] Axelod was not able to take up the challenge to do television programmes for the deaf. Another deaf priest would eleven years later.

8.3.3. Bernadette Oelofse: the first deaf Sister in South Africa

While Axelrod was contemplating his vocation as a Redemptorist novice in 1975, a former Servite Sister Bernadette Oelofse, a deaf woman from Port Elizabeth, was also entering the novitiate of the Kingwilliamstown Dominican Sisters in Brakpan.

Sr Bernadette Oelofse (1942-2016) was born, Mavis Elizabeth Oelofse, on 29 December 1942 in North End, Port Elizabeth. She was the only deaf child of four children. Her father was Afrikaans-speaking and a member of the Dutch Reformed Church and her mother was an English-speaking Methodist. She was brought up as a Methodist. On 5 May 1962, seven months before her twenty-first birthday, Oelofse was received into the Catholic Church.[122] A Cabra Dominican Sister had given her the necessary instruction in the faith. Oelofse had felt the call to enter religious life and wanted to enter with the Cabra Dominicans. Unfortunately, she was turned down due to being deaf. She then applied to join the Servite Sisters in Swaziland and was accepted in 1964. She entered the novitiate in 1965 and was professed on 6 January 1967.[123] There she got involved in missionary work, visiting the sick in hospital, women in prison and made home visits to Swazi people at their homesteads. As the Servite Sisters were a diocesan congregation, all the Sisters joining the congregation were Swazis. Oelofse faced increasing difficulties in communicating with her fellow Sisters as she could not understand or lip-read siSwati.

[120] 'Televisie Byna Toeganlik vir Dowes', *TSM*, 46, 3, September 1977, 9.
[121] 'Television for the deaf?' *TSM*, March 1977, 6.
[122] Certificate of baptism, Box 57 File 1153, Necrology, KDSA, Johannesburg.
[123] Letter, Sr M Eileen Tsoku OSM to Sr M Oblata, 8 February 1975. Box 57, File 1153, Necrology, KDSA.

Oelofse remembered that it was Bishop Green who recommended that she apply to join the Kingwilliamstown Dominican Sisters.[124] Bishop John Murphy of Port Elizabeth gave her a good recommendation to the Kingwilliamstown Sisters.[125] Bishop Murphy had also written to Sr Oblata, the Prioress General, requesting that the Sisters accept Oelofse into the congregation.[126] After meeting Oelofse, Sr Oblata agreed that she could try her vocation in the congregation.[127]

However, before she could start the novitiate, she needed to be dispensed from her vows with the Servite Sisters. Bishop Casalini of Manzini granted the dispensation of her temporary vows on 10 January 1975.[128] Consequently, Oelofse was permitted to enter the Dominican novitiate.

On 22 December 1977, Sr Bernadette Oelofse OP made her first profession as a Dominican Sister in the St Vincent School chapel in Melrose, Johannesburg. In January 1978, she took up her first, and only, assignment as a Dominican as a house mother to boarders at St Vincent School in Johannesburg.

> For 31 years, I was boarders' mother for the little ones and found it easy to identify with their problems. I could understand their language and give them my care and love.[129]

Throughout her religious life, Oelofse remained the only Deaf Sister to be accepted into the Kingwilliamstown congregation.[130]

Axelrod was not to know that he was soon to be venturing into the area of deaf education too. Up until now, his ministry had been exclusively focused on pastoral ministry and the only experience of education he had was the brief period when he was chaplain at St Thomas School for the Deaf in Woodlands. This experience was also to prove very formative.

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[124] 'Sister Bernadette Oelofse (29 December 1942-5 November 2016),' 1.
[125] 'Letter, Bishop John Murphy to Sister Oblata, 17 January 1975. Box 57, File 1153, Necrology, KDSA.
[126] See 'Minutes 1974-1979,' 44. Box 52a: Parktown General Council, Book 506, Johannesburg General Council – Lourdes Convent, KDSA.
[127] 'Minutes 1974-1979,' 45.
[128] 'Letter of dispensation for Sister Bernadette Oelofse,' 10 January 1975., Box 57, File 1153, Necrology, KDSA.
[129] 'Sister Bernadette Oelofse (29 December 1942-5 November 2016),' 1.
[130] Sr Bernadette Oelofse OP also remained the only Deaf Sister in South Africa involved in active ministry until her retirement in 2009. After being diagnosed with colon cancer she died on 5 November 2016 in East London. 'Sister Bernadette Oelofse (29 December 1942-5 November 2016),' 1.

8.3.4. St Martin's Nursery School for the Deaf, Orlando West

In 1978, prior to leaving for a Redemptorist pilgrimage to the Holy Land, Axelrod was approached by a speech therapist from Baragwanath Hospital in Soweto. She was concerned about the number of deaf children who had been abandoned at the hospital by their parents and for whom no education was being provided. She enlisted Axelrod's assistance.

> I got a phone call message from Baragwanath hospital. A speech therapist asked me to come and visit. She showed me so many deaf children, of varying ages, staying there and sleeping on the floor. Their parents had brought them to the hospital and then left them there. They didn't take them back home. The speech therapist couldn't cope with all these children. She couldn't teach all of them. She asked me to help. [131]

There was no school for the deaf in Soweto. Axelrod approached Sr Leah, a Notre Dame Sister, who was the principal of the school at St Martin's parish in Orlando West.[132] He asked for a classroom so that he could start a school for the deaf children. Even though the hearing school was already overcrowded with 1 000 pupils, Axelrod was given the use of a classroom, complete with desks and a blackboard. He divided the classroom into two. One side was for the little children and the other for the older ones.

Sr Conrada Förg, a Kingwilliamstown Dominican Sister and a teacher at St Vincent school, registered the pre-school with the Department of Co-operation and Training.[133] Axelrod had managed to secure a donation of R25 000 from *Propaganda Fide*.[134] With this money he could pay some of the expenses of the school like the stipends for retired teacher Mrs Susan Kabane and Eugenia Mthembu, a Catholic social worker. On 10 October 1978, the school opened its doors to 40 deaf children.[135] Working together as a team, they were able to make a beginning. The biggest struggle was to find the money to keep the school going. They continued to battle on.

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[131] Cyril Axelrod, interview conducted by Mark James, 15 September 2015, Dunnottar, Nigel, 394.
[132] 'Letter from Cyril Axelrod to Sr Mannes,' 4 July 1988, 1. Box 1 file 3 Correspondence, Cyril Axelrod papers, Redemptorist Archives.
[133] 'Letter from Axelrod to Sr Mannes,' 4 July 1988, 2.
[134] Ibid, 2. *Propaganda Fide* is a Dicastery in the Vatican which seeks to promote the evangelisation of peoples in different countries around the world. They collect money from Catholic church communities around the world and distribute it to mission churches in countries where the church has only been established recently.
[135] 'Letter from Cyril Axelrod to Sr Mannes,' 4 July 1988, 2. Box 1 file 3 Correspondence Cyril Axelrod Papers, Redemptorist Archives.

8.3.5. Developing the ministry to deaf adults

Even though Axelrod had just opened a nursery school for abandoned deaf children in Soweto, he was particularly concerned that far more attention was being paid to the deaf child in the school than to the deaf adult. [136]

> It must be realised that adults need religious instruction as much as the children if their lives are to be fully integrated. Religious Instruction should not end as soon as the person leaves school. The object of all education is to enable the individual to accept himself as a person endowed with fully human dignity, whether or not he is deaf.[137]

In his ministry that was continuing to grow and expand in white and black areas, Axelrod tried to provide the religious and spiritual instruction that was needed. Initially, he had started with a monthly Mass for the deaf at the Cathedral of Christ the King in Johannesburg[138] or sometimes at Regina Mundi in Soweto.[139] He would also travel to Hammanskraal for a Mass on the first Sunday of each month.[140] Eventually, he was also doing Masses in Pretoria, Springs and Benoni for white deaf Catholics and Mamelodi, KwaThema and Daveyton for black Catholics.[141]

> Inevitably, I face the great problems of adapting to the various sign languages which have developed within the various schools for the deaf.[142] However, one sign language is at present being formulated under the supervision of Mr. Nieder-Heitmann.[143]

One of the most challenging problems, he found in his ministry, was that deaf adults lapsed from the practice of the faith that they learnt at school.

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[136] Cyril Axelrod, 'The spiritual care of the deaf', 1978? Box 1: Cyril Axelrod papers, File 5: Fr Cyril Axelrod: Life, work spirituality of the deaf, Redemptorist Archives. The report is not dated but it was written before December 1978 as there is a reference to the forthcoming ordination of Fr John Turner CMM. He was ordained priest on 3 December 1978. This article is different from the one previously published as 'The spiritual welfare and care of the deaf'.

[137] Axelrod, 'The spiritual care', 6.

[138] Axelrod, 'The spiritual care', 3.

[139] Cyril Axelrod, personal email to Mark James, 16 March 2015.

[140] Axelrod, 'The spiritual care', 3.

[141] Cyril Axelrod, personal email to Mark James, 16 March 2015.

[142] For a more detailed discussion on variation and regionalisation in SASL, see Aarons and Akach, 'South African Sign Language,' 1-28.

[143] Axelrod, 'The spiritual care', 3. Norman Nieder-Heitmann was principal of the Kutlwanong School for the Deaf in Rustenburg and an Executive member of the SANCD. He had long argued for the use of sign language in Deaf education. This dictionary is still being used in some schools although other dictionaries have been developed.

> When the children had finished their education they were plunged into a wide society where they faced the difficulty of obtaining spiritual help because of the communication barrier with their priests and ministers. Most of the deaf were integrated with hearing, participating in their services but being unable to follow and understand the genuine presentation of the service. They then became frustrated.[144]

It was a challenge to get them back to church once they had stopped. But he found that by using sign language in the liturgy and by relying on the assistance of deaf people in the church community, it could be done.

> The spiritual care of the deaf began to take a better form when the deaf community came to encourage one another to attend the services and to enjoy being able to follow them in sign language.[145]

Axelrod also preferred to hold Masses in church or school halls as it proved easier for the deaf to interact during services and socialise afterwards. But just saying Mass using sign language was not enough. He needed to diversify his pastoral approach and so he encouraged the deaf to participate in Bible study groups on Wednesday evenings. In some groups there were as many as 20 deaf people gathering in homes, meeting with or without the priest or minister, 'to discuss what the passages mean and how they relate to their everyday Christian lives. At the same time, they are helped to understand how the bible (sic) reveals God's presence in us in our daily lives.'[146]

The deaf youth needed spiritual care too. He recommended the formation of deaf youth clubs. He saw the need for a residential training programme for deaf youth, along the lines of the one developed by the Rosebank Union Church in Johannesburg for their deaf youth. This group met every Sunday afternoon and was organised by the parents of deaf children with the idea of training deaf Christian youth leaders.[147]

He realised that he could not do all this work alone. He needed pastoral assistants. Initially, Axelrod spoke of training three deaf lay ministers to assist him in the spiritual care of the deaf

[144] Axelrod, 'The spiritual care', 2.
[145] Ibid, 3.
[146] Axelrod, 'The spiritual care', 4.
[147] Ibid, 5.

especially when the chaplain was not available.[148] The main criterium for him was that lay ministers needed 'a sound knowledge of the Bible'[149] so that they lead the community in communion services or Bible study groups. The Second Vatican Council had opened the doors to the training of lay ministers or extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist to assist the priest during Mass or to conduct communion services in the absence of a priest or deacon.[150] It was Axelrod's great hope that the work started by the Dominican Sisters in the schools for the deaf would bear fruit, where adult Deaf Catholics would 'be ready for God's call to serve their own community within the Church as a deacon or lay minister or priest.'[151]

His wish was answered with the ordination of Fr John Turner CMM in 1978 but he would have to wait until 1980 until he got two lay ministers, Mauritz Neethling from Springs and Frank de Klerk from Pretoria.[152]

8.3.6. Fr John Turner CMM (1945-2013)

John Turner was born in Johannesburg on 25 August 1945. Unlike Axelrod, Turner was a cradle Catholic. He was hard-of-hearing and attended St Vincent School for the Deaf in Johannesburg. After completing his schooling, he went to work as a jeweller for Max Segal.[153] After working for a few years he felt the call to priesthood and entered the novitiate of the Mariannhill Missionaries in KwaZulu-Natal. His novice master was Fr Urs Fischer CMM. He studied at St Joseph's Scholasticate at Cedara near Pietermaritzburg and was ordained to the

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[148] Cyril Axelrod, 'The Church has a mission to the handicapped', *The Southern Cross*, 1 October 1978, 11. The third person is not named.
[149] Axelrod, 'The spiritual care', 5.
[150] The Council of Trent instituted seven orders of priesthood in opposition to the Reformers' denial of the sacrament of Order with their emphasis on the priesthood of all believers and ministry as conferred by the community and not as a sacrament. However, in 1964 the Second Vatican Council passed *Lumen Gentium,* 10, which distinguished between the common priesthood and the ministerial priesthood. Ministerial priesthood or Order was reduced from seven to three orders namely, diaconate, priesthood and episcopacy. In his Apostolic Letter *Ministeria Quaedam* (15 August 1972), Pope Paul VI suppressed the subdiaconate and restored lay ministries. No longer was lector and acolyte conferred through ordination but rather by installation. In doing so, Paul VI permitted that laity could be allowed to exercise these ministries. The cooperation between priest and lay ministers was also affirmed by Pope Paul VI in *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (1975), 73. For more information on the teaching of the church concerning Order, see Jacques Dupuis, ed, *The Christian Faith in the doctrinal documents of the Catholic Church*, sixth revised and enlarged edition, (New York: Alba House, 1996), 671-701.
[151] Axelrod, 'The Church has a mission to the handicapped', *TSC*, 1 October 1978, 11.
[152] Cyril Axelrod, 'A time to do more for the handicapped', *TSC*, 10 May 1981, 10. Mauritz Neethling is a past pupil of St Vincent School and became an engineer and inventor of gadgets to assist the deaf. See 'Electric baby-alarm', *The Silent* Messenger, December 1962, 6-7. Mauritz Neethling and his wife Maureen converted to Catholicism and are members of Our Lady of Mercy parish in Springs. Mauritz continues in this ministry. Frank de Klerk was a member of the Monastery parish in Pretoria.
[153] 'Silent Workshop,' *The Star*, 30 August 1962, 6.

diaconate at Mariannhill Monastery on 12 March 1978[154] and then to the priesthood by Bishop Ernest Green on 9 December 1978.[155]

8.3.6.1. Early ministerial life

After his ordination, John Turner was sent to be curate to Fr John Driessen CMM, the parish priest in Umzinto. Driessen was very interested in working with the Deaf. Together they developed an integrated ministry for both hearing and deaf within the parish. This was new and innovative and had not been tried before. The celebration of the Eucharist was integrated, hearing and deaf together. When Driessen said Mass, Turner would interpret by signing the spoken word to the deaf people in the church. They also made use of visual aids, like pictures and sketches to make the message clear to both hearing and deaf people.[156] This was instructive to both groups. The hearing and the deaf got to appreciate one another's gifts and differences.

From his base in Umzinto, John Turner started making monthly visits to Durban and Pietermaritzburg to visit the deaf people in these cities and celebrate the Eucharist with them. Turner was also an excellent catechist and would teach the deaf about the Catholic faith after the Eucharistic celebration. He got to know deaf Catholics in Zululand too and so his mission extended to the whole of Natal.

8.3.6.2. Collaboration with Cyril Axelrod

As the first two deaf priests in South Africa, Cyril Axelrod and John Turner sought to work together. In 1980 or 1981, they conducted an Easter retreat together at Red Acres, Cedara in KwaZulu-Natal. Axelrod remembered that:

> One of our unforgettable ministry experiences together was a retreat during Easter weekend at Cedara. John and I worked together. We had such an impact among the Catholic and non-Catholic deaf people. It focussed on the drama of

[154] 'A priest for the deaf,' *Silent Messenger*, June 1978, 9.
[155] 'SA deaf honour bishop today,' *The Southern Cross*, 29 June 1980, 8.
[156] John Driessen CMM, interview conducted by John Turner CMM, posted on 12 May 2012. Accessed on 2 August 2014. url: www.deafcatholicchurch.mariannhillmedia.org and www.youtube.com/watch?v=Md4eB1qMrr4.

> Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter vigil. It was such a powerful experience, but it never came again.[157]

Axelrod expressed regret that he and John Turner were never able to collaborate again together. He attributed this to the differences between himself and Fr John Turner.

> There was a difference between myself and Fr John. It is what? My work with the deaf is broad. My focus was on human and social development. I built up a school and worked in different places. Fr John basically said Mass. That's all. His approach was narrow, whereas mine was broader.[158]

Francois de Villiers remembered that the differences between Turner and Axelrod also stemmed from the fact that Turner felt that Axelrod was too liberal in his interpretation of Catholicism and in his pastoral outreach. Turner, on the other hand, was much more traditional.[159] Axelrod continued to minister to deaf Catholics, including the deaf people who had left the Catholic Church whereas Turner ministered primarily to the faithful Catholics.

Nevertheless, the needs of the Deaf around the country were so extensive that they decided it would be better to divide the work.[160] John Turner concentrated on the Deaf community in KwaZulu-Natal and later would expand to the kingdom of Swaziland. Cyril Axelrod focused on Johannesburg, Pretoria and the Eastern Cape. There were new developments taking place at the school he had started in Soweto.

8.3.7. Sizwile School for the Deaf

In 1980, the St Martin's school, that Axelrod had started, underwent a name change to Sizwile School for the Deaf. It had become a state-aided school with a Board of Management. However, becoming a state-funded school was not without its hazards. The Department of Education and Training insisted that Sizwile School adopt one of the African languages as the school's medium of instruction. This was in line with the government's mother-tongue education policy.

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[157] Cyril Axelrod, personal email to Mark James, 15 March 2015.
[158] Cyril Axelrod, interview conducted by Mark James, Dunnottar, 30 September 2015, 401.
[159] Francois de Villiers, interviewed by Mark James, Edenvale, 4 August 2016, 463-464.
[160] Francois de Villiers, interviewed by Mark James, Edenvale, 4 August 2016, 460.

Already from his experiences at St Thomas School for the Deaf near Kingwilliamstown, Axelrod recognised how the apartheid policy of mother-tongue education was devised to keep people apart and separate them from each other. In effect, it accentuated the tribal and racial differences. The Group Areas Act forced schools for the deaf, just like hearing schools, to separate white deaf pupils from black deaf pupils, as well as the separation of Coloureds from Indians and Africans. Mother-tongue education kept Africans divided into various ethnic groups. This was being imposed on schools for the deaf too. This resulted in deaf people from one ethnic group not being 'allowed to make contact with deaf people from other ethnic groups in South Africa.'[161] In an urban context, Axelrod insisted, this was just preposterous and really impossible as people from all ethnic groups lived together and interacted on a daily basis in the ethnic melting pot that was Soweto.

Axelrod insisted that English be accepted as the medium of instruction. Initially, the officials of the Department of Education and Training refused to change government policy. Due to Axelrod's persistence, they eventually conceded and allowed Sizwile to use English in the classroom.

> I went to the government, [the Department of] Education and Training, and said that in Soweto there are 11 different languages. Which language do we use? I explained this to them. There are so many different languages, which to use? I wanted them to accept English, to have this language alone. They didn't accept at first, but I persisted. Eventually, they agreed with me. Sizwile School was the first to use English because Soweto had so many different languages.[162]

Secondly, he insisted that Sizwile be a day school rather than a residential one. He remembered that at St Thomas School for the Deaf,[163] he had been troubled:

> The biggest shock for me was to discover how isolated the deaf children were from their parents who mostly lived on farms far away. The children were only allowed

[161] Axelrod, *And the journey begins*, 115.
[162] Cyril Axelrod, interview conducted by Mark James, 15 September 2015, Dunnottar, 396-397.
[163] 'Because our pupils are drawn from all over the Cape Province, and indeed, from other Provinces too, it is very difficult to establish personal contact with their parents, as we would wish to do. I was very pleased, therefore, to learn that some of our teachers, in the course of spending their own holidays in some place, take the time to visit the local pupils and their families. They frequently encounter parents with problems and questions to which only a teacher or some other expert can provide the answers.' Quoted from the 'St Thomas School for Deaf Bantu Children. Chairman's report for the year 1972/73,' 2. 124/374 74. KDSA, Johannesburg.

home for holidays twice a year, and usually had little or no communication with their families. So, after a few years they regarded the school as their home and often did not want to leave at the end of their elementary education as they had little chance of building careers at home. The apartheid policy certainly destroyed family life by forcing deaf children to be separated from their families. It created a communication barrier between parent and children, which meant that the deaf children kept in closer contact with their own deaf peers with whom they *could* communicate.[164]

Rather than leaving their families and living in a school hostel during term time, attending a day school meant that the deaf children went home every day after school. In this way, the deaf children were kept in regular contact with their deaf or hearing families. Under apartheid, African family life was already under strain due to the migrant labour system.[165] Axelrod wanted the deaf children to experience family life rather than just grow up in an institutionalised boarding school environment. He required that the parents learn sign language that would enhance communication in the home between the hearing parents and their deaf children.[166]

> When I started this day school, I wanted to keep the children with their family. So, I insisted that the parents must learn sign language to communicate with their children. This was the first school to do this. This was the way I tried to fight against apartheid. I did not agree that the children must go away from their families.[167]

For Axelrod, 'apartheid destroyed family life'[168] and he was adamant that it should not affect families with deaf children too.

In 1980, Axelrod was given the opportunity to attend the Second International Conference for Religious Education of the hearing-impaired in Manchester, England. After this conference he preached retreats in Ireland and then the United States. While in the United States,

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[164] Axelrod, *And the journey begins*, 116.
[165] For further information on the effects of migratory labour on African family life, see Denis, 'A Case of pastoral myopia,' 439-460 and Peter Delius, 'The history of migrant labor in South Africa (1800-2014),' *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of African History*, (May 2017). Accessed on 13 October 2018. url: www.africanhistory.oxfordre.com/10.1093/acrefore/9780190277734.013.93.pdf.
[166] Cyril Axelrod, interview conducted by Mark James, 15 September 2015, Dunnottar, 397. Also see Axelrod, *And the journey begins*, 145.
[167] Cyril Axelrod, interview conducted by Mark James, 15 September 2015, Dunnottar, 397.
[168] Cyril Axelrod, interviewed by Mark James, Dunnottar, 30 September 2015, 397.

however, he was diagnosed with retinitis pigmentosa and had to give up driving.[169] This restricted his ability to travel around South Africa for ministry purposes as he done in the past.

8.4. 'Proud to be Deaf': Deaf Awareness and Deaf Rights (1981-1983)

During this period, we see Cyril Axelrod becoming more outspoken encouraging the Catholic bishops to take more responsibility for the pastoral care of the deaf and the handicapped. Axelrod was not only concerned with building up institutions for the deaf but also in promoting the human rights of all disabled and handicapped people. However, it is in the talks and writings of Robert Simmons, a Catholic layperson, that we see the clearest example of the emergence of Deaf Awareness. It was not only a recognition of the innate dignity of each deaf person but also a refusal to be conformed to the dictates of a hearing world. Deaf people needed to be recognised by the hearing world.

8.4.1. The Church needs to do more for the handicapped

The United Nations declared the year 1981 as the International Year of the Handicapped. Axelrod chose this theme for an article in *The Southern Cross*. Axelrod pointed out that while Pope John Paul II had given his support to the United Nations' call, the Southern African Bishops' Conference (SACBC) had not addressed this issue for the local church. As Church, he wrote, we need 'to re-examine our attitudes towards our handicapped neighbours and promote their wellbeing in the justice and compassion the Lord so clearly desires.'[170]

For Axelrod it was not enough to just affirm the rights of the handicapped. The Bishops needed to 'ensure a secure place for them in the human community.'[171] He complained that there was enormous ignorance and apathy within the church and society towards those who were handicapped. He expressed his disappointment that the Bishops had not shown any interest and had not even appointed a church commission for the handicapped, at either national or diocesan level. Axelrod exclaimed that 'justice demands that this be remedied.'[172]

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[169] Axelrod, *And the journey begins*, 154-155.
[170] Fr Cyril Axelrod, CSsR, 'A time to do more for the handicapped,' *TSC*, 10 May 1981, 10.
[171] Axelrod, 'A time to do more,' 10.
[172] Ibid, 10.

Axelrod was a prophet crying out in the wilderness. In calling for the rights of handicapped people to be respected within the church, he was challenging the bishops of the Church and the priests to bring about changes in the Church. However, there was no indication his challenge to the Bishops' Conference was ever heeded. His call was drowned out by the pressing demands of the struggle against apartheid and the challenges bishops faced in the day-to-day administration of their dioceses. They put the concerns of the handicapped, the disabled and the deaf on the back burner and even to this day no commission for the disabled and deaf has ever been appointed.

Axelrod was not only interested in promoting the human rights of the disabled but also advocated for the use of sign language in schools for the deaf.

Axelrod was appealing to the conscience of both church and society to take the needs of the disabled and deaf into account. Not to just view the world from the perspective of the able-bodied and the hearing. Levinas spoke about making totality aware of its bad conscience and calling into question its treatment of the disabled and the deaf.

8.4.2. Robert Simmons

The most radical and challenging view of the dignity of the deaf person was expressed not by a cleric but by a Catholic layperson, Robert Simmonds. In December 1981, Simmons gave an address to the St Vincent School's Annual Prize Giving. He was invited as a past pupil to inspire the school leavers and give them some advice on how to face life after school. He gave the talk by signing and voicing at the same time.[173]

At first, he outlined his own autobiography of studying anatomy at Wits University and eventually qualifying with his PhD in 1975. He spoke about the assistance he had received from his mentor Professor Philip Tobias and from his fellow students at the university, all of whom were hearing. Then changing tack, he advised the school leavers, saying:

> When you go out to earn your living, you will meet people who will display various attitudes towards you when they once discover your handicap. Do not be put off by their attitude of superiority; keep a cool head at all times. Have a strong pair of elbows

[173] 'An address given by Dr Robert Simmons (past pupil of the school) at the Annual Prize Giving, December 1981,' *St Vincent School Magazine*, June 1982, 44-49. Box: Cyril Axelrod's Papers, File 2: Magazines, Redemptorist Archives, Cape Town.

> to push your way through the world. Try not to behave as 'hearing' persons; be yourselves. Do not be ashamed of your deaf friends in public. Have plenty of self-confidence and enthusiasm for life even if you think that you do not possess good speech or excellent English. Do not be ashamed, but proud to be deaf . . .[174]

He explained that they must be prepared to make friends with hearing people and to encourage them 'to converse with you in sign-language.' Sign language, he said, was a gift to the deaf from God and the deaf should not be ashamed of it. If the hearing people are interested in learning, then one could suggest they start sign language classes.

Simmons' understanding of sign language being a gift to deaf people from God emphasised what Axelrod said about the ignorance and apathy of hearing people and the leaders of the Church. Hearing people saw deaf and disabled people as handicapped and, therefore, in need of hearing or able-bodied people's charity and benevolence. In no way did they see the deaf and disabled being able to bear gifts to the world. For Catholic Deaf ministry this was an important message that needed to be proclaimed to the broader church and society. Sign language for deaf people was the way that deaf people empowered themselves to communicate with each other and the world. It also showed their creativity and resilience in the face of a hearing world which dismissed them as handicapped. For Simmons, 'the face signs.'[175]

Simmons continued to advocate for the use of sign language. In 1982, two of his articles on Total Communication were published in *The Silent Messenger*.[176] For Simmons, Total Communication was more than just about speech and signing simultaneously and adapting to living in a hearing world. He challenged the idea that deaf people should constantly adapt themselves and 'learn to live in a hearing world.'[177] Instead, he argued that there is another reality for deaf people too: There is a deaf world[178] that equally exists, and it has much to offer.

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[174] 'An address given by Dr Robert Simmons,' 47.
[175] I have adapted Levinas' idea of 'the face speaks'.
[176] Robert Simmons, 'Deafness and total communication (1),' *The Silent Messenger*, Nov/Dec 1982, 7, 11; and 'Deafness and total communication (2),' *The Silent Messenger*, March/April 1983, 5-7.
[177] Simmons, 'Deafness and total communication (1),' 7.
[178] DEAF-WORLD is a concept used in contrast to that of the hearing world. Deaf people experience the world and life in a vastly different way to that of the hearing. DEAF-WORLD also expressed the Deaf self-understanding as a community with its own language and culture. It is capitalised because it is an English gloss

> When the hearing society is willing to accept total communication or sign language as the official language of the deaf community, conditions can be made possible for deaf persons to shape their own destiny through decision-making involvement in educational, social and government services. Also, the society can make it possible for deaf leaders and their fellows to "mainstream" themselves in the general public through the use of interpreters as "communication liaisons" or "ears" between hearing and deaf communities.[179]

Simmons acknowledged that educators and the hearing community in South Africa have not yet formally recognised sign language. But this does not mean that he cannot change the way that he as a deaf person can interact and relate to the hearing world around him. Simmons went on to assert his identity and dignity as a Deaf person, saying:

> I have decided to accept the fact that I am profoundly deaf, possessing imperfect but fairly good and rather facile lipreading. But *never* with the stigma "deaf and dumb" or "deaf-mute" [...]
>
> It is my choice to sign, to think and act as deaf, work for and within the deaf community. I am proud to be a deaf person in the world of sound, so long shut out to me [...]
>
> However, deafness does not limit my potentiality and qualifications in doing the same kind of work as my hearing colleagues. Limits, yes; limitations, no [...]
>
> I shall not accept my limitations because my profound deafness and imperfect speech appear to most people to be a barrier to my ability to communicate with my hearing colleagues and students, and also in performing my duties as far as my capability can permit. No longer shall I nod my head in pretended acknowledgement of long-winded conversations or lectures, the context of which I do not grasp at all. If I wish to express my views and opinions at seminars or formal meetings or conferences, I shall request either verbalized or written explanations of only important parts or points of the speech given there [...]
>
> I shall use sign language to friends in homes, in hotels, in restaurants, in shops and in public transport, and be oblivious to curious stares or perplexed fascination of other

(translation) of an American Sign Language (ASL) sign. See Harlan Lane, 'Construction of Deafness,' in *The Disability Studies reader*, second edition, edited by Lennard Davis, (New York/London: Routledge, 2006), 85.

[179] Simmons, 'Deafness and total communication (1),' 11.

people. I shall talk wherever and whenever in my own good voice, as I have always done in the past. But I shall not sit on the fence between hearing and deaf worlds, and pass judgement on people in self-righteousness. Neither shall I dictate to anybody, deaf or hearing, how to lead his/her life, nor whether they wish to use speech or sign language as their own mode of communication. Then, why cannot hearing people let us deaf adults be what we are, and have always been, deaf, and stop trying to tell us to conform to their world, in which we will never be fully accepted. Furthermore, we want to be treated with respect as normal human beings sans hearing sense, and not be regarded as second-class citizens![180]

In becoming conscious and aware of his own dignity and giftedness as a Deaf person, Simmons encouraged and freed other Deaf people to be themselves and encouraged them not to attempt to emulate hearing people. Simmons was proud to be deaf and encouraged other deaf people to feel the same way about themselves. This was a significantly different discourse to one which emphasised deaf people adjusting to the hearing world. This discourse was an empowering one, one that emphasised the dignity of deaf people, a people who have a language and culture of their own. It was a discourse which spoke about the gift that deaf people are rather than the audist discourse which spoke about deaf people as handicapped, as lacking hearing, as dependent on hearing benevolence. Simmons encouraged deaf people to stand up on their own two feet and to make demands on hearing people that they learn sign language. This was a revolution in mindset.

Although it was necessary to promote human rights and make hearing people aware of the struggles of the deaf and disabled, there was still necessary to minister to the needs of the deaf community. Axelrod did this by building up institutions to support the deaf community.

8.4.3. Bobokweng Deaf Hostel, Hammanskraal

On 29 August 1982, at the invitation of Archbishop George Daniel, the Archbishop of Pretoria, Bishop Green officially opened the newly completed buildings[181] called the Bobokweng[182] Centre for deaf working adults. It was situated on the property of the Hammanskraal school.

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[180] Simmons, 'Deafness and total communication (1),' 11.

[181] In his autobiography, Axelrod wrote: 'Bishop Green officially opened the hostel in 1979 in the presence of government representatives, my cousins and friends'. See Axelrod, *And the journey begins*, 149.

[182] Bobokweng means 'Place of Progress." See 'Meet some our deaf: Father Cyril Axelrod,' *Silent Messenger*, May/June 1982, 7.

The centre was built to provide accommodation and post-school vocational training facilities for 36 adults. Axelrod was the director of the centre.[183]

Already in 1979, when visiting the Dominican School for the Deaf in Hammanskraal, Axelrod became aware of the needs of ex-pupils of the school. Many of them came from the farming areas and had little opportunity to find employment in their home areas once their schooling was complete. Axelrod had already experienced the workings of two other deaf hostels, the Catholic deaf hostel in Heathfield, Cape Town that was started by Ernest Green, and the Jewish Hostel in Johannesburg started by his teacher Ralph Hahn.

Bobokweng was envisioned slightly differently from these hostels as the idea was not just to provide accommodation for deaf workers seeking employment in Pretoria but also to give them skills training too. In describing its function, it was stated that:

> When the deaf complete their elementary education at a school for the deaf, they are sent home without having qualifications. Most of their families live on farms where the deaf cannot make their living. The centre provides them with adult education and a vocational training which enables the deaf to acquire qualifications. The centre also trains the deaf to develop their responsibility of living independently like any hearing person [...] This centre aims to help the deaf overcome their feeling of deprivation of the human right to live and work.[184]

With the establishment of both Bobokweng and Sizwile, we see Axelrod putting his theology into practice. Ministering to the Deaf community for Axelrod, was not about providing spiritual care but building up institutions that benefitted Deaf people. Not everyone understood or shared his vision.

8.4.4. Sizwile School and conflict with the Archbishop

By 1983, the Sizwile School for the Deaf had grown so large there was a need to find alternative premises. The Soweto Council granted land in Dobsonville for the building of a new school for the Deaf. Axelrod realised that this was now a venture that he could no longer

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[183] 'Centre for adult deaf', *TSC*, 19 September 1982, 1.

[184] 'Meet some our deaf: Father Cyril Axelrod,' *Silent Messenger*, May/June 1982, 7.

manage anymore. He approached Archbishop Fitzgerald, the Bishop of Johannesburg,[185] to assist him in finding another religious order, one that specialised in Deaf education, to take over the school.[186] This led to a disagreement between Fitzgerald and Axelrod. The Archbishop wanted Axelrod to continue taking responsibility for the project he had initiated.[187] However, Axelrod believed that this was impossible as he was not qualified to act as principal of the school. This led to an acrimonious dispute between Axelrod and the Archbishop.[188] The situation was partially resolved later that year when the Brothers of Charity agreed to take over administration of the school.[189]

Brother Gerard Cox, a speech therapist, became principal of the school and a new Board of Management was appointed.[190] However, Sizwile School only moved from St Martin's Catholic School to its new premises three years later, in April 1986, when the buildings for the new school had been completed.[191] With this move, Axelrod was cast aside and he was never invited to assist in the school again, not even to say Mass for the children.[192]

8.5. Levinas, religion and saints

As we saw in the last chapter, the ethical relation reveals that the Deaf Other as one who challenges the self with a crushing charge,[193] calling the self's egoist economy and isolated well-being into question; bringing to the self's awareness its attempts to possess,

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[185] Prior to his appointment as Bishop of Johannesburg, Fitzgerald had been Archbishop of Bloemfontein. When he was moved to Johannesburg, only a diocese under the Metropolitan Archdiocese of Pretoria, he found himself in the position of being the Archbishop Bishop of Johannesburg. Johannesburg became an Archdiocese only in 2010 when Archbishop Buti Tlhagale OMI was also moved to from Bloemfontein to Johannesburg as Bishop in 2009.
[186] Cyril Axelrod, interview conducted by Mark James, 15 September 2015, Dunnottar, 395.
[187] Cyril Axelrod, interview conducted by Mark James, 15 September 2015, Dunnottar, 395.
[188] This conflict led to the breakdown in relationship between Axelrod and Archbishop Fitzgerald. Axelrod's contract as a deaf chaplain in the diocese of Johannesburg was not renewed by Fitzgerald and he left to work in Cape Town instead. Axelrod felt he was totally misunderstood and what he was trying to do misconstrued. See Cyril Axelrod, interview conducted by Mark James, 395. The situation is reminiscent of some of the conflicts the first Black priests experienced when they were involved in ministry. See George Mukuka, *The Other side of the story: The silent experience of Black clergy in the Catholic Church in South Africa (1898-1976)*, (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 2008).
[189] Gerard Cox, 'From the Principal's desk,' *Year report: Sizwile School of the handicapped*, 1987, 1. Box 1, File 2 Magazines, Cyril Axelrod papers, Redemptorist Archives.
[190] Gerard Cox, 'From the Principal's desk,' *Year report: Sizwile School of the handicapped*, 1987, 1. Box 1, File 2 Magazines, Cyril Axelrod papers, Redemptorist Archives.
[191] Cox, 'Principal's desk,' 1.
[192] 'They didn't recognise my work. They didn't recognise my pioneering work. It was sad […] they put me aside.' See Cyril Axelrod, interview conducted by Mark James, 30 September 2015, Dunnottar, 395.
[193] Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 181.

comprehend and assimilate the Other; and its guilt and tardiness in responding to the Other's suffering. The self's bad conscience and its guilt as well as open itself to a discourse where the de-centred or de-nuded self no longer sees life from its solitary perspective alone. The self becomes disengaged from its own world and opens up to the world of the Other in hospitality. We saw this opening up happening with the promotion of Total Communication as an alternative method of deaf education.

We saw how the opening up of Christian ministry to Deaf people made an enormous contribution to church life and it bore wonderful fruit. The opening up of the church in hospitality was evident in the artistic work of Ruben Xulu, a Black and Deaf artist who gave expression to a truly African church, an African Christ and an African Catholicism and Christianity, one which is also inclusive of the Deaf. Similar hospitality was evident in the Church's ordination of the first two Deaf priests and the first Deaf Sister Bernadette Oelofse and allowing Deaf people into the official ministry of the Church. This hospitality was evident in the process of inculturation and the permitting the use of sign language as a medium for liturgical celebration and church life. This turn to hospitality that the Catholic Church underwent was reflected in the documents of the Second Vatican Council where the spirit of *aggiornamento*[194] and the church opening itself to greater participation of people on the margins of the Church like Deaf people. This hospitable openness included the allowing of liturgical celebrations and the expression of faith life in the vernacular. Hereby the door was opened to the use of sign language in the liturgy but, more importantly, the Second Vatican Council allowed for greater openness to learning from others. The totalising Catholic idea *extra ecclesia nulla salus* (outside the church there is no salvation) was breached. Dialogue and learning from the other were encouraged. This hospitable turn was a Levinasian discourse and a teaching as the Church was opened up in discourse and teaching from the modern world.

Xulu, Axelrod, Dunn and his fellow protestors, Oelofse, Turner and Simmons were examples of Deaf people who called hearing people beyond totality. They lived in a dis-interested way.

[194] *Aggiornamento* was the word used by Pope John XXIII to describe the task of the Council. It means to renew and update the church in relation to the challenges of the modern world.

> The surprising saying which is a responsibility for another is against 'the winds and tides' of being, is an interruption of essence, a disinterestedness imposed with a good violence.[195]

Dis-interestedness is the rupture of being or essence.[196] Dis-interest is the opposite of self-interest. It is transcendence and the desire for the Good beyond being.[197] Dis-interestedness signifies a subjectivity that breaks with essence, it is to be one-for-the-other.[198] Axelrod, Dunn, Turner and Simmons challenged the interestedness of being, of audism, of hearing people conceptualisation of deaf people as handicapped and in need of hearing remedies. They supplied their own remedies from the heart of the Deaf world and Deaf experience. They accepted the challenge to live by truth, to do good and to live a life that became a teaching. They taught hearing people to see that they were not handicapped or disabled but differently abled. They changed and renewed the rationality and the content of the discourse, of the conversation. In fact, they revealed the 'Saying in the Said' regarding the Deaf Other. Living this 'Saying in the Said' is what Levinas called religion.

> We proposed to call "religion" the bond that is established between the same and the other without constituting a totality.[199]

Religion is living the ethical relationship that breaches totality. It is where a renewed and cleansed rationality and language emerges and where the content of discourse, 'the said', is transformed. This religion, for Levinas, is always embodied as prophetic spirituality, in a way of life, a saintly way of living.[200] A saint, for Levinas, is 'the person who in his being is more attached to the being of the other than to his own.'[201] It refers to those who live in a dis-interested way.[202] Throughout this chapter, we have highlighted the contributions of various Deaf saints. Ruben Xulu through his art; Cyril Axelrod through the witness of his diverse ministry including both pastoral and social work to the deaf; Moeletsi Dunn and his fellow pupils who protested against racism and audist attitudes; Robert Simmons through his

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[195] Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 43.
[196] Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 50.
[197] Levinas, *Collected Philosophical Papers*, 163-164.
[198] Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 136.
[199] Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 40.
[200] Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 149.
[201] Wright, Hughes and Ainley, 'The Paradox of morality,' 172.
[202] Levinas, *Alterity and Transcendence*, 171.

dedication to empowering Deaf people and by encouraging them to believe in themselves and be proudly Deaf; Bernadette Oelofse through her dedicated love of Deaf children and John Turner through his catechetical and preaching abilities. All these Levinasian saints revealed how to live beyond the confines set by audism and phonocentrism. To one extent or another, they pointed to a church and society that could live in a post-audist way.

These saints witnessed to the truth that Deaf people need to have their dignity respected in various ways. Ruben Xulu's art was a witness against those who ridiculed him and other Deaf people for being dumb. Lindsay Moeletsi Dunn and the protestors at the Wittebome school challenged the hearing principal and some of the teachers to respect the dignity of their pupils as Black and Deaf. Cyril Axelrod challenged the Church leadership to great compassion for the Deaf community. He felt impelled to leave his work in a rural part of the Eastern Cape for ministry in Johannesburg where there were many Deaf people in need of spiritual guidance and pastoral ministry. He who also started a school for deaf children in Soweto, even though both these events contributed to a painful misunderstanding and disagreement between himself and Archbishop Fitzgerald, the bishop of Johannesburg.

8.6. Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted the influence of the Second Vatican Council and the Black Consciousness Movement played in shaping the new shifts and developments in the Catholic Church's ministry to the Deaf from 1965-1983. However, these shifts were the result of the combined efforts of Catholic laity, professed religious and priests who were themselves Deaf. Ruben Xulu contributed enormously to changing the face of Catholicism through his art. Fr Cyril Axelrod CSsR and Fr John Turner CMM in their capacities as priests and celebrating the Eucharist in sign language and building up the Deaf Catholic communities. Sr Bernadette Oelofse OP contributed through her ministry as a house mother at St Vincent School.

The most radical contributions to promoting Deaf identity or what will be referred to as Deafhood in the next chapter were laity. The pupils at Wittebome School resisted the racist and audist attitudes in their school as well as the call by Robert Simmons to Deaf people to be proud of being Deaf. Simmons encouraged deaf people to loosen the audist straitjackets that had restrained Deaf people in South Africa for too long. He encouraged Deaf people to

experience a Deaf way of being-in-the-world. It was a call to Deafhood even though this word was not coined yet.

This process is what Levinas referred to as the Other calling the economy of the self into question. The self stands accused and finds itself to be unjust in its relationship to the Other. The self must forego its totalising stance in relation to the Other. The Other challenges the self to recognise its responsibility to practice justice in relationship to the Other.

The Deaf way of being in the world, Deafhood, contributed to a deepening understanding of the dignity of Deaf people, and especially Deaf Black people in South Africa. We will investigate this new shift in Deaf self-understanding in the next chapter. The hearing did not always hear the teaching or feel the wounds of the Deaf Other. Yet for Deaf people themselves totality had been breached and they were freer to find their own life and self-expression together in the church and society. Similar to the Black Consciousness Movement, it took a revolution in thinking and self-awareness to effect a more co-ordinated and intense mobilisation of people in the struggle for the justice and truth. We will look at this in the next chapter. These examples of ethical resistance, of 'the face speaks', where the Deaf Other from height and vulnerability, commanded and pleaded not to be 'murdered' or 'killed' by hearing ignorance and insensitivity.

In the next chapter, we will continue the reflection on 'the face signs' and see the contribution that Deaf people made to creating their own 'breathing spaces' and overflowed the history of audism in South Africa.

Chapter 9

Deafhood, sign language and breathing spaces (1984-1994)

9.0. Introduction

Deafhood can be characterised as the process that Deaf people experience as they become aware of their innate dignity and identity as a community of people with their own language and cultural traditions. Central to the development of this sense of Deafhood and cultural identity is sign language.

Following again the two aspects of Catholic deaf ministry, namely deaf education and chaplaincy work, I will attempt to outline the reception Total Communication, as a medium of deaf education, received in the different Catholic schools for the deaf.

The two Deaf priests continued to minister in South Africa providing social and liturgical ministry to the Deaf community. A new development was the establishment of Deaf organisations and institutions that lobbied for the rights of Deaf people in South Africa. There was a new shift from Deaf awareness, as being proud to be deaf, to Deaf mobilisation became evident in both the Catholic Church and in broader society. It was another step closer to promoting natural sign language as Deaf people's first or indigenous language.[1] In these developments, we will see an incarnation of 'the face signs.'

In this chapter, I limit my discussion of this primarily to the contribution made by Catholics and its effect within the Catholic Church. I will proceed in the following way: firstly, I will discuss the reception that Total Communication received in the different Catholic schools for the deaf. Secondly, I will reflect on the contributions of the two Deaf chaplains: Fr Cyril

[1] The use of the word indigenous for a sign language was used by Peter McDonough in a paper entitled 'The call to discipleship in the global Deaf community in the United Kingdom' presented at the *Many Languages, One Faith: The international pilgrimage of Catholic Deaf Peoples* conference in Rome in June 2008. Accessed on 25 September 2018 from www.docplayer.net/52346797-The-call-to-discipleship-in-the-global-deaf-community-in-the-united-kingdom.html. This use of indigenous language and indigenous culture fits with the debates around the inculturation of the church in relation to African cultures and so may be preferable in the context of Catholic debates.

Axelrod CSsR and Fr John Turner CMM. Thirdly, I will dwell on the creation of organisations that gave Deaf people 'breathing spaces' in which they could not only come alive but thrive.

9.1. Catholic schools for the deaf

The Catholic schools for the deaf were slow in coming to appreciate the value of sign language. However, during this period several Catholic schools for the deaf began to adopt the use of Total Communication in the classroom. In the first part of this chapter, I will begin with those schools which were the first to use Total Communication and end with those that resisted or grudgingly adopted its use.

9.1.1. Sizwile School for the Deaf, Soweto

In 1978, St Martin Nursery school was the first Catholic school for the deaf to wholeheartedly embrace Total Communication and the use of sign language in the classroom. This was still the case when the school underwent a name change to Sizwile School for the Deaf in 1980. This was a direct result of the school being under the leadership of Fr Cyril Axelrod, a Deaf priest, who was a proponent of Total Communication and sign language in Deaf education.

In an interview with the *Daily News*, Axelrod expressed his preference for Total Communication in schools.

> As a totally deaf person Father Cyril truly believes that a deaf child should be given the opportunity to be taught through "Total Communication" method which uses speech, lip reading, finger spelling and structured sign language. He thinks that the oral method of education should not be forced upon a deaf child.[2]

He also introduced sign language classes for hearing parents so that they could more easily communicate with their Deaf children.

In 1983, when the Brothers of Charity took over the school, under the leadership of Brother Gerard Cox, greater emphasis was given to the oral method of education than had been the case under Axelrod.[3] Brother Cox was trained as an audiologist at Sint-Michielsgested School in the Netherlands. This shift was evident with the building of an audiological diagnostic

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[2] 'Give deaf responsibility says priest' *The Daily News*, Monday, 28 September 1981.
[3] Brother Gerard Cox, 'From the principal's desk,' in *Year Report: Sizwile School for the Handicapped*, 1. Cyril Axelrod Box – Papers, File 2: Magazines, Redemptorist Archives, Cape Town.

centre to monitor the pupils' hearing for about R1,2 million in 1988.[4] Funding to the value of R19,7 million was secured for the expansion of the school. Over R11,4 million was provided by the government and the Brothers of Charity raised the remainder. The funds were used for improving the classrooms, building science laboratories and workshops to teach trades as well as improving the hostels.

Nevertheless, sign language at Sizwile was never completely abandoned. On 5 July 1989, the Department of Education and Training funded a literacy training programme for Deaf adults at Sizwile School. There were a significant number of Deaf adults in Soweto who were illiterate and had never attended school. Some of the teachers at the school were trained to teach literacy to the adults in sign language. In October 1989, 16 out of the 17 candidates who had started the programme completed the first two units successfully.[5] Sizwile was not the only school to embrace Total Communication.

9.1.2. KwaThintwa School for the Deaf

Another Catholic school for the deaf to wholeheartedly embrace education through Total Communication was KwaThintwa School for the Deaf in Inchanga, KwaZulu-Natal. The school was started after Archbishop Denis Hurley OMI of Durban encountered a young deaf boy, Henry Duma, in 1973, near Bergville. As Hurley explained in a letter to Beryl Jones, a friend and the fundraiser for KwaThintwa School:

> The origin of Kwa Thintwa School for the Deaf goes back to a confirmation service that I conducted in a small chapel in the foothills of the Drakensberg mountains to the north of Bergville on 23 September 1973. A hill near the chapel is called Thintwa.[6] Just before the service began a small boy came running to me, all joy and smiles. I tried to speak to him but after a few moments realised that he couldn't hear. It was hard to reconcile the lively and joyful look on his face with his hearing handicap. I asked the parish priest why he was not in a school for the deaf. He replied that he had tried to get him in but

[4] 'R19,7 million growth for Soweto deaf school,' *TSC*, 27 March 1988, 3.

[5] Henna Opperman, 'Literacy training for deaf adults,' *Silent Messenger*, 59, 3, (March 1990), 1.

[6] The name given to the school KwaThintwa from the Zulu word *wathinthwa* (being touched) refers to the hill but also to Archbishop Hurley feeling touched by the plight of the joyful child with whom he was unable to communicate. See Paddy Kearney, *Guardian of the Light: Denis Hurley, Renewing the Church, opposing apartheid*, (Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2009), 172.

> that there were no places available. That experience at Thintwa would not leave me in peace until I had begun investigating the possibility of starting a school for the deaf.[7]

Hurley's initial proposal to the Department of Education and Training was turned down. However, in 1978, another opportunity arose when Beryl Jones and Mrs R. Strachan from the SANCD came to see Archbishop Hurley about establishing a pre-school for Deaf children at Umlazi and KwaMashu.[8] After a few years delay, the school was eventually opened on 4 February 1981. Sr Conrada Fögl was the school's first principal. She had previously been principal at St Thomas School for the Deaf in Kingwilliamstown.

From the outset, KwaThintwa emphasised that education through sign language, or Total Communication, was the best method of education for deaf children.[9] They insisted that teachers learn sign language and that they attend sign language classes.[10] Sign language classes were also organised and arranged for parents in what became known as the orientation programme.[11]

Even though the school used sign language they employed a speech therapist, Mrs A Grové. She started teaching at the school from 19 July 1982.

[7] 'Beginnings of Kwa Thintwa,' Letter of Archbishop Denis Hurley to Beryl Jones, 4 March 1986. Box 112: Kwa Thintwa School for the Deaf 1985-1988, File 1: Correspondence, Hurley Archives, St Joseph's Theological Institute (SJTI), BIO 11C, Cedara.
[8] Letter, Denis Hurley to Beryl Jones, 4 March 1986, Box 112: KwaThintwa School for the Deaf 1985-1988, File: Correspondence, Hurley Archives, STJI, BIO 11C.
[9] Research into South African Sign Language (SASL) has shown that there is no one standardised natural sign language throughout the country. The policies of apartheid have affected sign language in South Africa where Deaf people are divided according to racial and ethnic backgrounds but also by class and geography. According to Penn and Reagan, the divisions among Deaf people are reflected in the number of distinct natural sign languages that were emphasised by the separate schools for the different racial and ethnic groups. See Claire Penn and Timothy Reagan, 'How do you sign "Apartheid"? The politics of South African Sign Language,' *Language problems and language planning*, 14,2, (Summer 1990), 95. Aarons has argued that even though there is extensive racial and regional natural sign language variation in South Africa, the Deaf still understand each other and do not require interpreters. See Debra Aarons, 'South African Sign Language: Changing policies and practices, *Stellenbosch papers in Linguistics*, (1999), 129.
[10] "Miss Luvuno holds sign language classes every day except Fridays for all teaching staff." 'Annual Report for the period 1 April 1982 to March 1983,' 12. Box 109: KwaThintwa School for the Deaf 1982-1984, File: Correspondence from January 1982–October 1985, Hurley Archives, SJTI, BIO 11C.
[11] 'Minutes of meeting with parents – Saturday 24 September 1983 at Kwa Thintwa,' 1, Box 109, File: KwaThintwa School 1984, Hurley Archives, SJTI, BIO 11C.

> Since she has been here Mrs. Grové has helped in teacher training especially in the area of interpretation of audiograms, in etiology of deafness and in the use of hearing aids.[12]

Another innovative development in the school was the appointment of a lay principal of the school after the sudden retirement of Sr Conrada on 4 March 1981 due to ill-health.[13] Patrick Mullins was made principal in 1982. He continued in this position until 1996. All the previous Catholic schools still had members of religious congregations as principals.

KwaThintwa was also fortunate to have a Deaf chaplain at the school who conducted Masses and catechetics in sign language. He taught catechism to the Catholic children as an extra-mural activity. In addition, Fr John Turner CMM conducted Masses on the second Sunday each month as well as every Tuesday at the school. Fr John Turner's participation in the school meant that sign language usage was greatly appreciated. Turner used to visit the Dominican School for the Deaf in Hammanskraal too.

9.1.3. Dominican School for the Deaf, Hammanskraal

It is not clear when Total Communication was accepted at the Hammanskraal school but was prevalent when Sr Siobhan Murphy OP arrived at the school in January 1983.[14] The use of Signed English was also being encouraged for use in the classroom.[15] Although orally trained, Sr Siobhan did not object because she recognised that it was important 'to fit the method to the child and not the child to the method.'[16] She pointed out that some children could only learn through sign language and would never be able to lip-read adequately.[17]

The first attempts to introduce the combined method of education at the school go back to 1968. After a visit to the Kutlwanong Deaf School in Rustenburg on 1 November 1968, Sr Mary Oliver, the principal of the Hammanskraal school, was intrigued to discover that Kutlwanong used the combined method of instruction. Speech, finger-spelling and sign language were all

[12] 'Annual Report for the period 1 April 1982 to 31 March 1983,' 8, Box 199, File: Correspondence from Jan 1982 - Oct 1985, Hurley Archives, SJTI, BIO 11C.
[13] 'Speech for the official opening of Kwa Thintwa School for the Deaf,' 8 October 1983, 3, Box 110, File 2: Correspondence 1975-1979, Hurley Archives, SJTI, BIO 11C.
[14] Debra Aarons said that 'schools for the white Deaf insisted on oralism, whereas schools for the other races allowed some measure of manualism.' Aarons, 'South African Sign Language,' 118.
[15] Sr Siobhan Murphy OP, interview conducted by Mark James, 12 July 2016, Springfield, Cape Town, 452.
[16] 'Sr Siobhan Murphy OP,' interview conducted by Mark James, 12 July 2016, Cape Town, 451.
[17] 'Sr Siobhan Murphy OP,' interview conducted by Mark James, 12 July 2016, Cape Town, 451.

used in the classroom. Hammanskraal still adhered to the oral method of deaf education. So that by 1969, it was reported that a further 20 children had received hearing aids during the year and a portable auditory training unit had been purchased for training to deaf children to use their residual hearing more effectively.[18] Later in 1970, six classrooms were fitted with the induction loop system and amplifiers.[19]

This oral method was conducted in the mother-tongue according to government policy. When the school started in 1962, the language medium of instruction was Sesotho. However, in 1969, at the advice of the DET inspector of special schools, Mr W.W. Bouwer, Hammanskraal changed the medium of instruction to Setswana.[20] When Sr Siobhan Murphy became principal in January 1983, she negotiated with the DET to change the spoken language of instruction from Setswana to English.

> I was able to convince them that English was more important because this meant that they [the Deaf] were more employable if they could communicate with employers, whose first language was English.[21]

This was supplemented with learning to write in good English so that they could more adequately function in a predominately hearing society. Again, much of the focus of the high school was placed on vocational training. The idea of the school authorities was that the deaf children, on completion of their education, would find work in factories or domestic service.[22]

While Total Communication was used in the Sizwile, KwaThintwa and Hammanskraal schools for the deaf, the pace of adopting of Total Communication in some other black schools was much slower.

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[18] 'Annual report 1969/70,' 1. Box 56: Ministry, File: Annual reports 1965-1970, Hammanskraal, CDSA, Cape Town.

[19] 'Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Management for the Dominican School for Deaf Bantu Children held at the school Hammanskraal, on Wednesday 26th August 1970, at 3,15pm.' Box 5b, File: Board of Management reports, 1962-1970, H/K, CDSA, Cape Town.

[20] 'Annual report 1969/70,' in CDSA, H/K Box 5b Ministry, File: Annual reports 1965-1970.

[21] 'Sr Siobhan Murphy OP,' interview conducted by Mark James, 12 July 2016, Cape Town, 451.

[22] 'Dominican School for Deaf Children brochure 1962 to 1997.' H/K Box: Ministry correspondence, File: H Writings, CDSA, Cape Town.

9.1.4. St Thomas School for the Deaf, Woodlands

In 1970, the inspector's report on St Thomas School stated that 'the general method used is oralism while the combined method is used only for slow children.'[23] In 1985, the school no longer fell under the Department of Bantu Education but was transferred to the Ciskeian Department of Education.[24] By 1987, the oral method of education still predominated in this school. *The Southern Cross* reported that school possessed:

> hearing aids, an FM system and desk aids as well as audiometre (sic) for assessing the degree of hearing of each child.[25]

However, it lacked a speech therapist. At this time, the school had employed its first black principal, Mr Isaac Mvandaba.[26] By 1991, there was a different emphasis at the school when the medium of instruction was changed from isiXhosa to English.[27] Unlike in the past finger-spelling and signing were no longer forbidden, as Mvandaba reported:

> They use speech-reading, what used to be called lip-reading, fingerspelling or any other visual method of communication.[28]

While some signs were permitted this approach conformed more with Total Communication than education through natural sign language. This was true too of a new school for the deaf that was opened in an old Dominican convent.

9.1.5. St Martin de Porres School, Port Shepstone

In 1992, the St Martin de Porres Primary School in Port Shepstone, a school that originally was started by the Newcastle Dominican Sisters was renovated and reopened. It was renamed the St Martin School for the Handicapped. The school started with about 200 pupils.[29] It is now run by Polish Sisters of the Congregation of Little Servants of Mary Immaculate.

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[23] W.W. Bouwer, 'Report on inspection of St Thomas School for Deaf Bantu: March 1970,' 4, KDSA, 124/374 72.
[24] '25 years of help for the deaf,' *The Southern Cross*, 13 September 1987, 5.
[25] '25 years of help for the deaf,' *TSC*, 13 September 1987, 5.
[26] See '25 years of help for the deaf,' *TSC*, 13 September 1987, 5. 'Mr Mvandaba joined the school staff in 1965 with 30 years teaching experience but left to take up a post in industry in 1974 … He returned to the school in 1982 and was appointed principal in 1987. He is an Anglican, and is married, with two sons.' Sheila White, 'School gives ears to deaf children,' *TSC*, 9 June 1991, 7.
[27] Sheila White, 'School gives ears to deaf children,' *TSC*, 9 June 1991, 7.
[28] Ibid, 7.
[29] 'School for handicapped reopens,' *TSC*, 25 October 1992, 9.

Following the policy of inclusive education, the school includes both Deaf and intellectually-challenged children. There are separate classes for the two groups. Like the KwaThintwa school before it, St Martin de Porres School for the Handicapped used sign language in the classroom from the outset.

The use of Total Communication as the medium of instruction in Catholic Deaf education became more acceptable, as even a traditionally oral school for the deaf, St Vincent began to adopt its use in the classroom.

9.1.6. St Vincent School for the Deaf

As we saw in Chapter 7, when Sr Liguori Töns took over from Sr Thomasia Knöpfle as principal of St Vincent's School in 1971, she chose a more pragmatic path. She ignored the use of sign language in the classroom. While a committed oralist, Sr Liguori believed that it was more important to communicate than to adhere to a strict oral method of education even though this was the official policy of the school.

> To me the main thing was to be able to communicate, so whether I used my mouth or my hands, my feet, or never mind my whole body, that was for me the most important.[30]

By the late 1970s, the official policy of the school was still the oral method of education even though some teachers were experimenting with teaching in Total Communication, aided speech or signed English.[31]

In her 1982 Principal's message in the school magazine, Sr Marita Stöcklmayer argued against the official introduction of Total Communication at St Vincent School. She argued that the oral method remained the approach that was tried and tested and found to work best.

> We must remember that we are already functioning in a well-defined framework within which we can continually search for ways and means to improve our teaching methods . . . The Oral Method has proved itself superior over a few centuries now, and by giving our children the best possible opportunities for acquiring language, speech

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[30] Sr Liguori Töns OP, interview conducted by Mark James, 16 December 2015, Johannesburg, 435.
[31] 'History/Development of St Vincent School,' *St Vincent School Magazine*, 1999, 5-6, Box ED 44 St Vincent School for the Deaf School magazines, KDSA, Johannesburg.

> and lipreading skills, we are doing justice to their problems to the best of our ability. Total Communication may hve (sic) something positive to offer too but at this point in time it is still unacceptable to us . . .[32]

Sr Marita argued that the advocates of Total Communication only pointed to its positives and sidestepped the negative drawbacks and limitations of the method. She mentioned that the scientific research done on Total Communication drew their samples from deaf children of deaf parents. However, most deaf children had hearing parents, and this made a big difference. Hearing parents, family members and associates did not have the time to study sign language, she concluded.[33]

Sr Marita's attempt to discourage the introduction of Total Communication into the school, during her tenure as principal, was short-lived. After she retired as principal at the end of 1986, John Perks, the school's first lay principal was appointed in 1987. Under his leadership from 1987 to 1994, a succession of teachers, who saw the value of sign language, were appointed to work at the school. Consequently, the pendulum swung in favour of the use of sign language as the method of education at St Vincent School for the first time. Among these new teachers was Mrs Claude Goddard who, by 1990, had arranged for deaf pupils to give sign language classes to hearing people interested in learning sign language.[34] This innovative approach meant that the hearing people who attended, according to Goddard, learnt sign language far quicker than any previous group.[35]

In 1992, she took her pupils to see the play 'Children of a Lesser God' at the Market Theatre in Johannesburg. The play detailed the relationship between a hearing teacher and his Deaf pupil. The experience of seeing a play that they could follow because it included sign language,

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[32] Sr Marita, 'Principal's message,' *St Vincent School magazine*, June 1982, 1-5 in Box Cyril Axelrod papers, File 2: Magazines, Redemptorist Archives, Cape Town. The underlining is in the original text.

[33] I have paraphrased her discussion, this is the quote in full: 'It is very easy to imagine that a deaf child signing systematically to its deaf parents (probably <u>not</u> speaking), will be able to improve his own language (<u>and</u> that of his parents) while having improved emotional and social relationships. But where does this leave the hearing parents, or for that matter, the hearing family, associates and friends of the deaf child using T.C.? Can you picture them studying a Manual on Signing of ca 1200 pages in their spare time?' Sr Marita, 'Principal's message,' *St Vincent Magazine*, 2. The underlining is in the original text.

[34] See John Perks, 'Deaf students give signing lessons,' *TSM*, 59, 6, June 1990, 3 and 'Sign Language course at St Vincents,' *TSM*, 9/93, September 1993, 8.

[35] Perks, 'Deaf students,' 8.

even though it was ASL, was eye-opening and affirming for the pupils. ‘When the lights went up they conversed in sign language with one another.’[36]

The use of sign language usage even made a national impact. In 1994, Beryl Jones, in a letter to Archbishop Hurley, complimented him on the wonderful contribution made by the St Vincent School teachers who signed for the Deaf community during the televising of Nelson Mandela’s inauguration as President of the fully democratic South Africa.[37] The teachers, to whom Jones was referring, were Claudine Storbeck and Kirsty MacIons. They were part of a four-person team brought in by the SABC for the occasion.[38]

Also, a Catholic past pupil of St Vincent, Louis Neethling,[39] became a presenter on the first Deaf TV programme called Sign-Hear. The programme in sign language first appeared on SABC TV on 15 January 1994.[40] It was called: ‘Sign Hear.’

The use of sign language in the classroom at St Vincent School had become commonplace. So much so that in 1995, Sandy de Araujo, a St Vincent’s Standard 9 pupil, wrote in the school magazine of that year:

> When you go to a deaf school you want to learn the language of the pupils. The teacher wants to teach the subject but if the teacher only uses Signed English it is a problem for the deaf to remember the work.[41]

Her solution that both teachers and pupils should be able to use signed English and sign language indicated that the use of sign language was no longer outlawed or an issue at St Vincent school.[42] Her essay in the school magazine also displayed a good grasp of written English and showed that it was possible for deaf children to learn through the means of sign language and not necessarily have poor English literacy.

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[36] ‘Deaf children thrilled by play staged in sign language,’ *St Vincent School Magazine*, December 1992, 9. Box: Cyril Axelrod Papers, File: Magazines, Redemptorist Archives, Cape Town.
[37] Letter, Beryl Jones to Archbishop Hurley, 6 June 1994. AHP, Box 111, File 1: KwaThintwa School, Hurley Archives, SJTI, BIO 11C.
[38] ‘How did Sign get onto our screens?’ *TSM*, June 1994, 4.
[39] ‘How did Sign get onto our screens?’ *TSM*, June 1994, 4.
[40] ‘TV-program vir Dowes nou ‘n werklikheid,’ *TSM*, February 1994, 8. Louis’ father was Mauritz Neethling who had been trained by Fr Cyril Axelrod as a lay minister for the Deaf.
[41] Sandy de Araujo, ‘Signed English or Sign Language in school,’ *St Vincent School Magazine*, 1995, 95.
[42] Presently, with its first Deaf principal Ingrid Parkin the school promotes a bilingual approach to education.

In 1995, Mr Eddie Brown wrote in 'The headmaster's report' that 'although Sign Language is the language of the Deaf, Total Communication, as used at St Vincent, is the most effective way of teaching deaf children.'[43] Within two years, it was reported in the press that Schools for the deaf were being encouraged to move beyond Total Communication and towards the bilingual approach to Deaf education.[44]

Wittebome was another formerly oral school to adopt Total Communication.

9.1.7. Dominican School for the Deaf, Wittebome

The change to Total Communication in the Dominican School for the Deaf in Wittebome was not smooth or easy. Sr Jacinta Teixeira, principal of the school at the time, remembered that there were many tensions between adult past pupils who pressurised the school to change the method of education from the oral method to Total Communication.[45] She herself favoured the oral method because 'it was important to keep speech alive because the children would be going into a hearing world and they needed speech as a mode of communication.'[46] As principal, she felt herself caught in the middle. This debate also divided the staff into two camps, those who wanted the oral method and the others wanted change.[47]

In 1992, the school staff decided to adopt Total Communication in the classroom. This was done even though Teixeira felt it was not realistic as 'we only had a few teachers who could sign.'[48]

This pointed to one of the positive developments from the use of Total Communication in the classroom was that there was a need for Deaf teachers again.

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[43] EJ Brown, 'The Headmaster's Report,' *St Vincent School Magazine*, 1995, 1-2. Box EDU29 St Vincent School for the Deaf School Magazines. KDSA, Johannesburg.
[44] 'Learning favours the bilingual approach,' *The Star*, 23 September 1997, 26. The newspaper cutting in 153/1106 28, KDSA, Johannesburg.
[45] Jacinta Teixeira, interview conducted by Mark James, 13 July 2016, Cape Town, 455.
[46] Jacinta Teixeira, interview conducted by Mark James, 13 July 2016, Cape Town, 455.
[47] Jacinta Teixeira, interview conducted by Mark James, 13 July 2016, Cape Town, 456.
[48] Jacinta Teixeira, interview conducted by Mark James, 13 July 2016, Cape Town, 456.

9.1.8. The re-emergence of Deaf teachers[49]

The first Deaf high school teacher to graduate from Wits University in twenty-five years was Lucas Magongwa in 1994.[50] Previously, the only other Deaf person to graduate from Wits University was Robert Simmons but he never went into deaf education but continued as a lecturer at the university.

Magongwa was admitted to Wits in February 1989. He had applied first to study at the Transvaal Teachers College of Education, but his application was turned down.[51] At the age of 10, Magongwa contracted meningitis and went deaf. After completing his schooling at Kutlwanong School for the Deaf in Rustenburg, Magongwa considered the possibility of becoming a priest. Fr Cyril Axelrod CSsR had inspired him. He tested his vocation with the Redemptorists but changed his mind and decided to become a teacher instead. He wanted to instil in deaf children a love for learning and he believed that:

> a deaf teacher has a better understanding of deaf children as he and his deaf pupils will not find themselves in two different worlds.[52]

Along with Magongwa at Wits University was another Deaf student Ingrid Foggit.[53] Both students studied and completed their BA(Ed) degrees at Wits with the assistance of interpreters. Wits had developed a department focused on training interpreters.[54] These pioneers prepared the way for more Deaf teachers to be trained and employed in schools for the deaf in South Africa. However, not all the Catholic schools for the deaf moved over to Total Communication.

[49] On 25 January 1991, the South African National Council for the Deaf (SANCD) sent a letter to all departments of Education requesting that deaf people be trained as teachers. The departments of education felt it was impossible to admit deaf candidates. See 'Training and employment of deaf persons as teachers,' *TSM*, 60, 8, August 1991, 1-2.

[50] Lucas Magongwa is a devout Catholic and lay minister in the St Martin de Porres parish in Orlando West.

[51] P. Mosifane, 'Lucas Magongwa, the road to success,' *TSM*, 58,11, Nov/Dec 1989, 3.

[52] P. Mosifane, 'Lucas Magongwa,' 3.

[53] Ingrid Foggit, now Parkin, is not a Catholic. She was appointed as the first Deaf principal of St Vincent School in Johannesburg in 2010.

[54] See Jeffrey Steele, 'Project for Deaf students at Wits,' *TSM*, May 1994, 4 and 'Deaf Achievers/Dowe presteerders: Lucas Magongwa,' *TSM*, Nov/Dec 1995, 5.

9.1.9. Dominican-Grimley School for the Deaf, Hout Bay: faithful to the last

The Dominican-Grimley School for the Deaf remained the only school within the whole country that remained faithful to the oral method of education. This continues to be true even today. The method is no longer referred to as the oral method but the 'auditory-verbal' approach to education.[55] Ever since the 1920s, when education through the means of sign language was replaced by the oral method of education, the school did not experiment with Total Communication. Just like the oral method of education, the central tenet of the 'auditory-verbal' approach was to exploit the residual hearing of the deaf children. Sign language would only be used if the children failed to understand through the 'auditory-verbal' approach.[56] The Dominican School in Hout Bay remains the only Catholic school for the deaf still committed to the oral approach to education. It has embraced the use of cochlear implants and actively encourages their use. The auditory-verbal approach teaches children with cochlear implants to speak English and to function as a hearing person. It is not focussed on encouraging Deaf awareness. There is still denial that the person is deaf and very few ever learn sign language unless they do so as an adult. In effect, the auditory-verbal approach is a re-invention of the oral method.

All the other Catholic schools have moved to either a combined or a bilingual approach to Deaf education. It is ironic that the first Catholic Deaf school in South Africa, St Joseph School (later Dominican-Grimley) in Cape Town, which pioneered manual Deaf education in South Africa and employed the first Deaf teachers in South Africa, namely, Brigid Lyne, Anne Marsh, Hannah Farrell and Mrs Hugo, is now the only Catholic school for the deaf still promoting the auditory-verbal method of education. Linked to this is the added twist that the first purely oral Catholic school, St Vincent School, became the first Catholic school to adopt the bilingual approach to Deaf education. In 2012, it also became the first Catholic Deaf school to appoint a Deaf principal, Ingrid Parkin.

Throughout the years of apartheid, the Catholic schools for the deaf remained under the direction and authority of hearing people. In sharp contrast, Catholic Deaf ministry, was under the leadership of Deaf pastors and this created a different dynamic among the Deaf laity. Deaf

[55] Sr Macrina Donoghue OP, interview conducted by Mark James, 12 July 2016, Springfield, Cape Town, 445.
[56] Sr Macrina Donoghue OP, interview conducted by Mark James, 12 July 2016, Cape Town, 445.

people established Deaf organisations that showed how Deaf people began to shape their own lives and social reality. This was bound to lead to new developments and initiatives as Deaf people took on greater responsibility for evangelisation and social outreach in church and society. These developments were accompanied by a growing awareness among Deaf adults of their human rights. We will now move on to discuss the use of sign language in pastoral ministry and the emergence of Deaf organisations.

9.2. The Deaf chaplains

In a previous chapter, it was pointed out how the ordination of two Catholic Deaf priests, Fr Cyril Axelrod CSsR and Fr John Turner CMM, accounted for major shifts in Deaf ministry in South Africa during the 1970s. Their contributions to the development of the Catholic Deaf community trend continued through the 1980s and 1990s.

As we saw in the previous chapter, having chaplains who were themselves Deaf changed the face of Deaf ministry and made the church more accessible to many Deaf people. A process of inculturation took place in which Deaf people felt at home in the church. This was a process led essentially by the two Deaf priests, Fr Cyril Axelrod and Fr John Turner.

9.2.1. Fr Cyril Axelrod CSsR in Cape Town

In 1970, Bishop Ernest Green submitted his resignation as Bishop of Port Elizabeth and returned to Cape Town. He resumed his work with the deaf after a short period as parish priest in Lambert's Bay.

In February 1984, Fr Cyril Axelrod CSsR was transferred to Cape Town to be novice master of the Redemptorists. Axelrod offered to help Bishop Green in the ministry for the Deaf, but it caused tension between them. Axelrod withdrew the offer as he felt that Green was threatened by his presence.[57]

[57] Letter, Fr Cyril Axelrod to Sr Mannes OP, 22 August 1984, 2. Box: Cyril Axelrod papers File: Correspondence 1 Redemptorist Archives, Cape Town. According to Axelrod, Bishop Green's Masses were no longer as well attended as when Fr Cyril came to say Mass.

However, three years later in 1987 Axelrod was appointed as Deaf chaplain.[58] The Archbishop of Cape Town, Stephen Naidoo CSsR, asked Bishop Green to step down as Green's health was failing.[59] When Axelrod took over, he was discouraged by the state of the deaf hostel that had been handed over to his care. It had not been well managed. There had been hardly any supervision of the hostel for a whole year. No new warden had been appointed after Bishop Green fell ill. Consequently, the hostel had become run down. Axelrod also had other headaches. The Archbishop made it clear that he was not prepared to pay for any repairs to the hostel buildings and nor was he willing to support Axelrod's deaf chaplaincy work financially.[60]

After ten months of frustration at the lack of progress and improvement at the hostel, Axelrod resigned as chaplain to the deaf in Cape Town in November 1987.[61]

In fact, a new idea had been brewing in his mind since he had visited Singapore in 1985 to give retreats. On his return, he began a discernment process to assist him in deciding whether or not he should respond to a call to work in Far East Asia.[62] He had already started to learn Mandarin.[63] The disappointment and frustrations he experienced first in the Diocese of Johannesburg and then later at the deaf hostel, helped him make up his mind.

On 19 August 1988, Axelrod flew to Hong Kong via Singapore to take up a new apostolate with the Deaf in Hong Kong.[64]

Within a period of five months, pastoral ministry to the deaf in South Africa lost two signing priests, Bishop Green and Cyril Axelrod. This meant that Fr John Turner CMM from Mariannhill remained the only signing priest working with the Deaf in South Africa.

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[58] Axelrod was asked to take over the running of the deaf hostel in Heathfield and accepted this responsibility. See Letters, Cyril Axelrod to Sr Mannes OP, 29 June 1986, 11 October 1986, and 1 June 1987. Box: Cyril Axelrod papers, File: Correspondence 1, Redemptorist Archives, Cape Town.
[59] Bishop Ernest Green died and was buried from Corpus Christi Church in Wittebome on 24 March 1988. See 'Hundreds at funeral of Bishop Green,' *TSC*, 10 April 1988, 7.
[60] Letters, Cyril Axelrod to Sr Mannes OP, 24 June 1987 and 30 July 1987. Box: Cyril Axelrod papers, File: Correspondence 1, Redemptorist Archives, Cape Town.
[61] Letter, Cyril Axelrod to Sr Mannes OP, 24 November 1987. Box Cyril Axelrod papers, File: Correspondence 1, Redemptorist Archives, Cape Town.
[62] Letter, Axelrod to Sr Mannes,' 1 October 1985.
[63] Letter, Axelrod to Sr Mannes,' 24 November 1987.
[64] Letter, Axelrod to Sr Mannes, 4 July 1988 and 'SA priest off to work in Asia,' *TSC*, 14 August 1988, 12.

9.2.2. Fr John Turner CMM

In 1981, after the establishment of KwaThintwa School for the Deaf in Inchanga, Fr John Turner was involved in the school pastorally and received a stipend for his work from the Archdiocese of Durban.[65] He said Mass at the school every second Sunday of the month as well as every Tuesday before lunch. On the other Sundays the children attended the parish Masses at Inchanga parish and a teacher interpreted for the children. Fr John's other commitments included teaching catechism to the children, especially the first holy communion class each Thursday. Turner used Total Communication in his interaction with the children.

Turner was a born-teacher. Archbishop Hurley, writing about John Turner in his annual school report for 1983/84, said:

> His ingenuity in using signs, fingerspelling and illustrations is bearing gradual fruit and we are grateful for his interest and dedication.[66]

Turner excelled in explaining Catholic dogma and teachings in such a way that Deaf people were able to appreciate the depth of the Catholic faith. In his sermons he always used illustrations and he was not averse to transforming the sanctuary into a classroom. He would set up a blackboard or use newsprint and coloured koki pens to draw pictures or write up concepts.

> He always brought a blackboard with him and would draw a picture of the relationship between people and the Spirit. It was always very interesting. He would write down a list of the good and a list of the bad. He would explain the relationship between them. He would explain why this is good and why this bad. I can't remember all he said but the way he was teaching us, it was excellent. I used to enjoy his sermons. Every time he came to Johannesburg to say Mass we used to always come to his church because we know that church was going to be brilliant and enjoyable.[67]

[65] 'I would like to say a sincere thank-you for your interest in the Deaf people of Natal as well as Kwa Thintwa Deaf School at Inchanga. Thank-you also for your kind financial help to me for the Apostolate for the Deaf.' See 'Letter from Father John Turner CMM to Archbishop Hurley,' 8 June 1982, see Hurley Archives, SJTI, BIO 11C.
[66] 'Annual report 1 April 1983-31 March 1984,' 17, Archbishop Hurley's Papers, Box 109, File: KwaThintwa School 1984, Hurley Archives, SJTI BIO 11C.
[67] Francois de Villiers, interview conducted by Mark James, Edenvale, 4 August 2016, 460.

Turner's approach bore witness to Morris' observation that 'sermons are rarely if ever monologues in Deaf churches.'[68] His sermons were interactive and informal without being chaotic. When the space allowed it, Turner would often get deaf people to sit in a semi-circle at Mass so that they could more easily interact during the sermon, and especially when someone made a comment or asked a question.[69] He knew how to make people relax and celebrate together.

> One time before he started Mass he came out of the sacristy and saw Deaf people sitting in church. He looked around and saw that they were all looking very serious. They didn't look happy. He said: 'No, the people are too serious. They should be happy. He decided to tell one joke before Mass started. He told the joke and we all laughed and laughed. When he saw people laughing, he said: 'That's better, now we can start the Mass.' He had a lovely sense of humour.[70]

At the reading of the Gospel, Catholics make the sign of the cross on their foreheads, mouths and hearts. Turner added the sign of the cross on each hand too. Deaf people's hands were used for speaking. In these ways, Turner's attempted to inculturate the Catholic Mass and to make allowances for Deaf culture and experience.

When Fr John Turner CMM first started out in ministry he was open to working with deaf people from other churches and religions. In 1983, both he and Cyril Axelrod served on the SANCD's Spiritual Welfare Committee[71] ministering to deaf people regardless of their faith. John Turner was also a long-standing member of the Natal Association for the Deaf based in Durban.[72]

Later in his life, however, Turner became less open to other deaf Christians, especially when he perceived that the Deaf Christian Fellowship (DCF) and similar churches were drawing

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[68] Wayne Morris, *Theology with words: Theology in the Deaf community*, (Aldershot, Hampshire: Ashgate, 2008), 127.
[69] Morris observed that in deaf churches 'visibility is crucial and determines the arrangement of furniture.' Morris, *Theology without words*, 126.
[70] Francois de Villiers, interview conducted by Mark James Edenvale, 4 August 2016, 461.
[71] Letter, Beryl Jones to Archbishop Hurley, 12 September 1983. Archbishop Hurley's Papers, Box 109 File: KwaThintwa School 1984, Hurley Archives, SJTI, BIO 11C.
[72] See 'Fifty-six years of service to the deaf,' *Silent Messenger*, 59, 7, July 1990, 2 and 'News from Natal,' *TSM*, 61, 7, July 1992, 3.

Catholics away from their faith and encouraging them to join, what he saw as, fundamentalist churches. Even though he disagreed with this, he was never confrontational.

> He was very humble. He never showed off. There were lots of deaf people with the wrong beliefs who told Fr John what he must do, and he would say: 'Oh, Oh!' but he knew that they were talking rubbish. It was a waste of time to argue about small things that were not important. Also, what I see as a clear picture from Fr John, he tried to get the deaf people to focus on the holy Mass, but deaf people are blind. They can't see anything there. They see the tabernacle, they see the candles, the table, but it means nothing to them. It is because they are distracted. He never wanted to fight and show off what it meant. If they said – what they said – it was fine. He always kept himself humble. But if people were interested then he would encourage them, support them, continue to explain what the Catholic faith means.[73]

In 1984, Fr John formed the 'A-Team'[74] with his brother Brian Turner[75] and Debbie Eaton.[76] They travelled together as a pastoral team visiting the Catholic Deaf throughout South Africa, Zimbabwe, Swaziland and Botswana providing catechetical, pastoral and spiritual care.

> He went to Zimbabwe once because petrol was cheap but he never again because of financial problems. Most of the time he travelled around South Africa, to Swaziland and Mozambique. In South Africa, he went to Hammanskraal, Cape Town, Port Elizabeth and Johannesburg. He came to Johannesburg lots of times. He also went to Rustenburg to the Deaf school in Rustenburg and he would say Mass there. He invited us to join with him and he was very good at getting people in the community to work together. Sometimes there were problems with understanding each other because of the different sign languages but otherwise things went very well.[77]

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[73] Francois de Villiers, interview conducted by Mark James, Edenvale, 4 August 2016, 462.

[74] This is a reference to a popular American TV series about a group of ex-Special Forces soldiers who became mercenaries that was screened on SABC TV from about 1985-1991. Another indication of Turner's sense of humour.

[75] Brian Turner's primary task was to be the driver.

[76] Debbie Eaton helped with catechetical instruction. Debbie Eaton was an ex-pupil from the Dominican Deaf School in Wittebome and wanted to become a religious sister. However, she could not find a congregation willing to accept her. She had declared private vows and her consecration to virginity before Archbishop Hurley on 14 December 1991.

[77] Francois de Villiers, interview conducted by Mark James, Edenvale, 4 August 2016, 460. Also see www.deafcatholicchurch.mariannhillmedia.org. Accessed on 15 February 2014.

The ‘A-Team’ produced catechetical resources for the deaf used the latest technology when ministering to the Catholic deaf communities that they served. Turner’s sermons were video-taped and distributed among the deaf community all over South Africa and Swaziland. He also developed a successful ministry on television doing ‘Thy Kingdom Come’ programmes on SABC in sign language.[78] Turner’s success in this ministry fulfilled a challenge to which Axelrod, eleven years previously, was unable to respond.[79] The ‘A-Team’ did extensive ministry until John Turner’s untimely death on 17 June 2013.

Within the Deaf world, there were not just the developments within the church but also within broader society. Deaf laity were also making their contributions to the transforming of Church and society. One of the pioneers, Robert Simmons became an advocate for Deaf mobilisation, but others were also to take up the baton.

9.3. Organisational developments among the Deaf community

During the 1980s, the United Democratic Front (UDF) mobilised and organised diverse groups of people, across various racial, class and political affiliation boundaries, into an organisation to oppose apartheid. ‘People’s power’ provided an overall strategy to mobilise and unite people, thereby building the organisation, and also providing the political education necessary to resist the apartheid government.[80] In what follows we will see how within the Deaf community, the institutional and organising of Deaf people into different Deaf organisations accounted for a significant shift in strategy too. It provided opportunities for Deaf solidarity and community which made Deaf people more aware of their human rights and their sense of Deafhood.

9.3.1. Robert Simmons and the Deaf Equal Awareness Foundation

In 1985, a new Deaf organisation was started in Johannesburg and was called the Deaf Equality Awareness Foundation (DEAF). It had no formal ties with the Catholic Church, but Robert Simmonds was involved as a member of this group. In 1991, Simmons was invited to

[78] See ‘Sermon for deaf on TV,’ *TSC*, 7 June 1987, 1 and ‘Deaf sign language on TV tonight,’ TSC, 17 April 1988, 1.
[79] See the previous chapter 8 on the Pastoral Stallings and his television ministry in sign language.
[80] Jeremy Seekings, *The UDF: A history of the United Democratic Front in South Africa, 1983-1991*, (Cape Town: David Philip, 2006), 174.

give an address to the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of Natal Association for the Deaf. He spoke to the AGM's theme: 'The place of the Deaf person in the changing/new South Africa.'[81] In his address, Simmons first acknowledged the growing awareness among hearing people regarding issues of deafness, hearing impairment, Deaf people's need for recognition and the achievements of Deaf people in a hearing world. Despite these developments, Simmonds believed that the chief problem experienced by Deaf people was not the lack of hearing but the lack of easy communication with hearing people.

> We do not want to ask them to provide us with hearing aids or telecommunications devices straightaway, *But* to be able to talk with them by means of Manual Communication or even by writing notes. We can give them courses in Sign Language, especially to those who are in closer contact with the Deaf.[82]

Secondly, he pointed to the growing awareness among Deaf people about the need to be accepted as equal to the hearing. This was an issue of equal access and one area of importance of television. Deaf people were wanting captioned television programmes and lower telephone rates.

Thirdly, he called for an 'upsurge of self confidence among us Deaf people. We must assert ourselves to achieve our goals, *especially* the *Ultimate goal* of Deaf Rights.'[83] Simmons spoke about the establishment in Johannesburg of an independent organisation 'from the restraints of hearing-dominated institutions.'[84] The organisation was called Deaf Equal Awareness Foundation (DEAF). On the 200th anniversary of the French Revolution, Simmons and Alan Jones attended the first 'The Deaf Way' conference in the United States in July 1989.[85] It was there that they experienced a Deaf Revolution taking place. Revising the slogan of the French Revolution, for the Deaf Revolution:

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[81] Robert Simmons, 'What can the Deaf people do in the new South Africa?' *TSM*, 60,8, August 1991, 5.
[82] Simmons, 'What can the Deaf people do,' 5. Italics as in the original text.
[83] Simmons, 'What can the Deaf people do,' 5. Italics and emphasis as in the original text.
[84] Ibid.
[85] For more information on the Deaf Way conference held at Gallaudet University in Washington DC in 1989, see Carol Erting, Robert Johnson, et al (eds), *The Deaf Way: Perspectives from the international conference on Deaf culture*, (Washington DC: Gallaudet University Press, 1994).

> *Liberty* means being freed from the bonds of Hearing Paternalism. *Equality* means being treated as equals with Hearing People. *Fraternity* means a world-wide Deaf Brotherhood (sic).[86]

Simmons described how the Deaf Revolution was sweeping like wildfire across Europe and other developed countries like Japan and Australia. He encouraged Deaf people in South Africa to 'rise up for their Human Rights and to work TOGETHER for equal opportunities in the Hearing World.'[87] Simmons called for greater Deaf solidarity where Deaf people needed to attend their Deaf club, and to build friendships among Deaf people regardless of race, class or creed. He suggested that Deaf people help one another more and challenge hearing people to learn sign language. Deaf solidarity was essential for the attainment of Deaf Rights in the new South Africa. He encouraged the Natal Association of the Deaf to develop closer ties with DEAF.[88]

As an organisation, DEAF embarked upon protest action. On Saturday 7 September 1991, 200 DEAF supporters marched through the streets of Johannesburg 'staking their claim to a place in the new South Africa . . . saying they were being denied basic rights that hearing people take for granted.'[89] DEAF committee member Kirsty Fraser complained that Deaf people in South Africa were 'still denied the right to their own language, signing.'[90] DEAF had also organised marches in other major centres of the country to highlight the plight of Deaf people in the country. DEAF was inspired by events taking place for Deaf empowerment and emancipation in the United States.

9.3.2. Deaf Community of Cape Town

In Cape Town, another Deaf NGO was started with a strongly local flavour. In 1987, a group of past pupils of the Wittebome school, with the assistance of Fr Cyril Axelrod CSsR,[91] started an NGO called Deaf Community of Cape Town (DDCT). Cronwright observed that:

[86] Simmons, 'What can the Deaf people do,' 5.
[87] Simmons, 'What can the Deaf people do,' 5.
[88] Simmons, 'What can the Deaf people do,' 5.
[89] Laurie Davids, '200 deaf on march for rights,' *Sunday Times*, 8 September 1991. Reproduced in *TSM*, 60, 10, October 1991, 7.
[90] Davids, '200 deaf on march,' 7.
[91] Faith Cronwright, interview conducted by Mark James, 15 November 2015, Cape Town, 428.

> 'Fr Cyril planted a seed and told us we must carry on and so it grew and developed from there.'[92]

From the outset, DCCT was concerned with the grassroots upliftment of Deaf people in the Western Cape regardless of race, religion or creed. The founding members of DCCT were all Deaf. They were Stephen Lombard, Wilma Newhoudt,[93] Suzanne Lombard, Faith Cronwright and Sue Bruce.[94] Interestingly, three of the five founders of DCCT – Faith Cronwright, Stephen and Suzanne Lombard – had been involved in the Wittebome School protest in August 1976.

In its foundation DCCT was possibly the first organisation of Deaf people serving other Deaf people. Most of the other deaf organisations like the SANCD and DEAF had hearing people in prominent leadership positions. Cronwright remembered that the first time that DCCT was mooted as a Deaf initiative was after a Third Sunday Mass:[95]

> I came to the Mass on the Third Sunday regularly and socialised with the Deaf. After one of the Masses, Stephen [Lombard] asked us: 'What problems do the Deaf have and what do they need?' We reflected on the social problems affecting Deaf people. Father Cyril said we need to start a group and build it up to help Deaf people ourselves. We didn't know how to do this. So, he helped us and we tried.[96]

Stephen Lombard was appointed the administrator of DCCT and Faith Cronwright worked as his secretary. They identified the needs of Deaf people in the Western Cape and began to develop programmes that could respond to these needs.

> We developed programmes and projects for Deaf people. The organisation had mothers' groups, women's groups, Literacy programme - Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET), audiology, computer training.[97]

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[92] Faith Cronwright, interview conducted by Mark James, 15 November 2015, Cape Town, 429.
[93] Wilma Newhoudt was the only non-Catholic founder of DCCT. She was the daughter of a Protestant pastor. See Nick Bruce, 'Deaf Cape student graduates in US,' *TSC*, 2 August 1992, 2.
[94] Faith Cronwright, interview conducted by Mark James, 15 November 2015, Cape Town, 429.
[95] The Third Sunday Mass was held on the third Sunday of every month. In sign language became known as THIRD SUNDAY.
[96] Faith Cronwright, interview conducted by Mark James, 15 November 2015, Cape Town, 428.
[97] Faith Cronwright, interview conducted by Mark James, 15 November 2015, Cape Town, 429.

The following year, Fr Cyril left to minister to the Deaf in Hong Kong[98] and Wilma Newhoudt went to study at Gallaudet University in Washington DC for a social work degree.[99] The fact that DCCT not only survived but continued to grow and flourish after the departure of Axelrod and Newhoudt is testament to the leadership that remained behind.

After the departure of Fr Cyril Axelrod for Asia, Fr Peter John Pearson was appointed chaplain to the Deaf. He worked closely with Mr Nick Bruce, who was a teacher at St Joseph's Marist School in Rondebosch.[100] Bruce was studying for the permanent diaconate. He was eventually ordained deacon by Archbishop Lawrence Henry in Bergvliet, Cape Town on 21 September 1991.[101]

By 1990, Stephen Lombard continued as director and Bruce was made the financial administrator of DCCT. He was also asked to manage and administer the Deaf hostel in Heathfield.[102] While hearing, nevertheless, he was fluent in sign language as, Sue Bruce his wife, was Deaf. Sue was very involved in promoting DCCT's Sewing group and the Women's group.

Under Lombard and Bruce's leadership, various projects were developed by DCCT and implemented throughout the Western Cape. The work of DCCT started initially on helping Deaf people find employment and cope in the workplace. There were many misunderstandings taking place in the workplace between hearing and deaf.[103] But they realised that they also had a responsibility to affirm the dignity of Deaf people by encouraging all Deaf people to appreciate themselves, their language and culture. By 1993, following the

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[98] 'SA priest off to work in Asia,' *TSC*, 14 August 1988, 12.

[99] Faith Cronwright, personal email to Mark James, 1 April 2018.

[100] 'Sign language Easter for Cape deaf,' *TSC*, 24 April 1988, 12 and 'Letter, Axelrod to Sr Mannes,' 28 April 1988.

[101] 'Deacon to the deaf ordained,' *TSC*, 6 October 1991, 3.

[102] 'SA deaf priest off to work in Asia,' *TSC*, 14 August 1988, 12.

[103] Faith Cronwright explained about some of the challenges that Deaf people experienced at work. '[W]hen hearing people make fun of you or laugh at Deaf people, the Deaf people can get very angry and want to fight. We always explain to the hearing people that you talk, and we sign, and explain that you must not just laugh … You need to explain and say if you want to learn sign language, fine. We can teach them sign language, basic sign language so it makes it easy to communicate.' In another example, Cronwright said that 'if Deaf people are working as seamstresses and they need to communicate with someone else they have to stop their work in order to speak to other people. Now a hearing person will ask them: "Why you stopping work?" but not understand that they must stop in order to communicate. So, hearing people need to understand how to communicate with Deaf people.' See Faith Cronwright, interview conducted by Mark James, Cape Town, 16 November 2015, 432.

visit of a BSL teacher Judith Collins[104] who taught five sign language teachers, DCCT also set up the Sign Language Teaching project to teach hearing people sign language.[105]

A Women's group was also established in July 1993 to provide a support group to Deaf women where they could freely express their feelings, experiences and share ideas with one another. Twenty-one women participated in these meetings of which 7 formed the executive committee and the group was run by Deaf women themselves. [106]

The women in DCCT also found their voice to complain about the lack of accommodation for women at the Deaf hostel. When Bishop Green founded the hostel in 1947, it only provided accommodation for deaf men. Jennifer Gillespie remembered that 'only men stayed here under Bishop Green. No women were allowed . . . Then one of the women began to moan and moan that there needs to be a building for women too. When Bishop Green left, they built one for the women.'[107] After the renovations were completed there was accommodation for about twelve women and twenty men.[108]

DCCT had already set up a sewing project that produced bags and children's clothing and other community development projects. They gave literacy classes in Khayelitsha and Langa for the Deaf, as well as helped Deaf people deal with accessing disability grants and maintenance payments. DCCT also helped Deaf people deal with marital and family conflicts and they offered counselling for HIV/AIDS, alcoholism and drug addiction.

Alongside the community development work and the micro-enterprise projects, and the literacy and the sign language classes, DCCT kept up the tradition of the Third Sunday Mass established in the 1940s by Father Ernest Green. This had always been a signed Mass which had started out in the Corpus Christi parish church in Wittebome, had then moved to St Joseph's Marist Brothers' College in Rondebosch, after that to the Bastion in Newlands and

[104] 'Sign Language expert teaches in South Africa,' *TSM*, 61, 7, July 1992, 3.
[105] 'Deaf Community of Cape Town Annual Report, 1993,' 3.
[106] Members of the Women's group travelled to the United States in 1994 to attend the graduation of Wilma Newhoudt from Gallaudet University in Washington DC with a MA in social work. See 'Deaf woman attains Masters degree in the USA,' *TSM*, 7/94, July 1994, 6.
[107] Jennifer Gillespie, interview conducted by Mark James, 12 November 2015, Cape Town, 410.
[108] Jennifer Gillespie, interview conducted by Mark James, 12 November 2015, Cape Town, 410.

eventually to the Deaf hostel in Heathfield. The Mass functioned as a social event for Deaf people and was not limited to Catholics only.

> Before DCCT had all the different races of Deaf people. They were all integrated and mixed together, Muslims, white, black and coloured. It was fine. Only later did Deaf people split into different groups. The leaders came and took the Muslims away, the black Deaf people also moved away, and even the whites. Before this we were all together.[109]

The Third Sunday was a time for expressing one's faith and also to socialise and to receive information about Deaf events and happenings in the Western Cape. It was a time of community-building. It was predominantly a Sign-deaf space but included Sign-hear space too.[110] There is a qualitative difference between the two spaces. Sign-hear spaces are spaces where deaf people respond to living in a hearing world, where they interact with hearing people and adapt themselves to the hearing person's ability or inability to sign. In contrast,

> Sign-deaf spaces were about creating spaces of communality and solidarity, spaces as DCCT expressed it, where people "felt" that they "belonged" and could identify with "other deaf people."[111]

DCCT was a space where Deaf people could be themselves with other Deaf people. It was a breathing space that cultivated and nurtured Deafhood.[112] In this space, sign language as first language predominated and the social relationships between Deaf people were deepened. News was shared and relationships deepened and so the Deaf network was enhanced. In this sign-Deaf space, in this breathing space, friendships developed across racial, denominational and religious divides.[113]

The Third Sunday provided a space where the crossing of the boundaries of race, age, religion, denomination was experienced, where friendships and bonds of cooperation were established and a non-racial, non-sexist, non-sectarian and non-audist community was

[109] Faith Cronwright, interview conducted by Mark James, 15 November 2015, Cape Town, 431.
[110] Heap*, Crossing social boundaries,* 92, 142.
[111] Heap, *Crossing social boundaries*, 128.
[112] This is indicative of a growing emphasis on Deaf Gain which celebrates the gains of being Deaf, for Deaf people themselves and for church and society. It is a sign of a post-audist perspective which is a moving beyond the hearing and Deaf divide. See Guy McIlroy, *The Implementation of SASL*, 24.
[113] Heap, *Crossing social boundaries*, 41-145.

realised. This was a community of peace and not of war. This Deaf community reflected what Levinas called prophetic eschatology or the eschatology of messianic peace.[114]

> Eschatology institutes a relation with being beyond the totality or beyond history, and not with being beyond the past and the present.[115]

Eschatology is overflowing and breaching of a history of war which is based on self-interest and is a history where the ethical relation is recognised as Deaf people in DCCT recognised. This is the eschatology community of peace and hope that human beings can overcome what separates through self-interest and be drawn together beyond being, to be *otherwise than being*.[116] This is moving beyond the totality that encourages one to think what one likes or to support identities which divide for an identity that draws people together. This is the face that speaks, that signs. This is the signing that teaches. This is a teaching of the ethical relation which challenges people that the truth lies beyond self-interestedness.

> For Levinas, the eschatological as the beyond of history draws beings out of the jurisdiction of history and the future, it arouses them in and calls them forth to their full responsibility.[117]

This truth is one which witnesses to an ethic of responsibility which is anarchic and diachronic in that it reaches back to time immemorial. It is a relation of responsibility that constitutes who we are as human beings, it is an incarnation, which is to be a being-for-the-other/neighbour, before we are a being-for-itself.[118] It is the affirmative answer to Cain's question: 'Am I my brother's keeper?' A history and a world which lives out the desire for an eschatology of messianic peace is a world which has recognised its election to be *otherwise than being*, to be *beyond essence*.

DCCT managed to cross this boundary, to overflow the history of war, hatred and division,[119] for a very brief period until as Cronwright said, 'leaders came and took their people away,'[120]

[114] Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 22-24.
[115] Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 22.
[116] Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 4.
[117] Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 23.
[118] Morrison, *A Theology of alterity*, 79.
[119] Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 23.
[120] Faith Cronwright, interview conducted by Mark James, Cape Town, 16 November 2015, 431.

the collapse back into totality. Even within the organisation, the moment of messianic peace was fleeting.

In 1994 Deacon Nick Bruce resigned from his positions as both the assistant chaplain and as the financial administrator/fundraiser for DCCT. Bruce had become very influential in DCCT. He was instrumental in securing funding from the Energos Foundation[121] for the women's self-help sewing project and the feeding scheme.[122] He had set up a Deaf burial fund and arranged the Christmas party every year for Deaf children. He resigned after a conflict with Wilma Newhoudt, who had returned from Gallaudet University in the United States, after completing her Master's degree in Social Work, to resume her work at DCCT. It was soon after her return that she and Nick Bruce were at loggerheads.

Newhoudt was a Deaf activist who was born and grew up in Retreat on the Cape Flats. Her father was a Protestant pastor who was also a community activist and involved in the anti-apartheid struggle. Her father had instilled in her self-belief that 'I have value in spite of my deafness and colour, and I can speak out about what I believe in, and challenge old rules.'[123] On her return she plunged into the work of transforming the Deaf community in Cape Town. While at Gallaudet University, she had experienced the transformation of the university after the 'Deaf President Now' campaign and the importance of promoting Deaf empowerment and Deaf rights.[124]

It is not clear precisely why Bruce was asked to resign from DCCT,[125] but in effect, his departure meant that the complete administration of DCCT was now completely in the hands of Deaf people themselves. The only hearing person involved in DCCT was the chaplain, Fr Mark Foster, who had been appointed by Archbishop Lawrence Henry to succeed Fr Peter

[121] Faith Cronwright, personal email to Mark James, 1 April 2018. See 'News from Affiliates,' *TSM*, 2/94, February 1994, 5.
[122] Faith Cronwright, personal email to Mark James, 1 April 2018.
[123] Nick Bruce, 'Deaf Cape student graduates in US,' *TSC*, 2 August 1992, 2.
[124] Wilma Newhoudt arrived at Gallaudet just after the students protested against the appointment of a hearing president. They successfully campaigned for the appointment of Gallaudet's first Deaf president. See Oliver Sacks, 'The revolution of the Deaf,' in *Seeing Voices: A journey into the world of the Deaf*, (London: Picador, 2009), 99-130.
[125] Various reasons are given for Bruce's departure from DCCT due to: 1) financial irregularities and mismanagement, 2) personality clashes, or 3) him being too controlling of Deaf people. Nick Bruce and his wife Sue emigrated to New Zealand. Faith Cronwright, personal email to Mark James, 1 April 2018.

John Pearson. Foster was assisted by an interpreter when conducting pastoral activities on the Third Sunday.

The conflict between Wilma Newhoudt and Deacon Nick Bruce reflected a growing Deaf assertiveness. Deaf people wanted to control their own organisations and not be subjected to hearing leadership. The changes that happened at DCCT began to impact Deaf organisations more broadly within South Africa, particularly the SANCD which since its inception in 1927, was administered by hearing people on behalf of the deaf. South Africa was undergoing political change and Deaf people's perceptions of themselves were also changing. These changes were to benefit all Deaf people in the country.

9.3.3. Catholic involvement in the transformation of the SANCD into DeafSA

By the early 1990s, DCCT was the only Deaf organisation with an elected Deaf leadership as well as being established as an organisation 'by the Deaf for the Deaf.'[126]

> During the early 1990s, history placed DCCT strategically for the "crossing" from apartheid to post apartheid.[127]

The SANCD, established in 1927, was essentially a hearing organisation that sought to lobby government on deaf issues and to do charitable work for Deaf people. Faith Cronwright highlighted one of the problems deaf people had with the SANCD:

> The SANCD had mainly hearing people in the office. The deaf used to go to their Observatory offices to ask for help and assistance in finding work. But what they saw they didn't like because SANCD did not really help the deaf community. If they went on their own they couldn't get jobs. Some would go but not understand what was being said to them because the SANCD people were hearing. The SANCD people did not know sign language at all. They were hearing and couldn't understand the deaf people's signing, so they kept saying: 'What are you saying? What are you saying?" It wasn't easy.[128]

[126] Heap, *Crossing social boundaries*, 145.
[127] Heap, *Crossing social boundaries*, 145.
[128] Faith Cronwright, interview conducted by Mark James, Cape Town, 16 November 2015, 429.

In the 1980s, it began to employ Deaf people to work for the organisation but only got its first Deaf president, Nico Beaurain, and vice-president, Kobus Kellerman, in September 1991.[129] The SANCD and its provincial affiliates was essentially a white and hearing organisation working for the deaf. Stephen Lombard from DCCT was one of three Deaf people elected onto the Executive as the representative for the Western Province.[130]

With the changes taking place in South Africa, the SANCD was seeking to gain re-admission from the WFD, an affiliate of the United Nations.[131] Its membership had been revoked due to apartheid. Before re-admission, WFD insisted that the SANCD comply with its policies. Consequently, the SANCD set about amending its constitution and to undergo a name change.

The SANCD first spoke about a name change and affirmative action, that is the employing of more Deaf people, at its Biennial Council meeting held on 26 and 27 October 1993.[132] The historic name change to DeafSA took effect on 29 June 1995.[133] The constitutional change made the organisation more democratic and representative of the nine provinces of South Africa.[134] Both the change of name and the changes in the constitution enabled DeafSA to reaffiliate to the WFD.[135]

In the same year, Wilma Newhoudt, a DCCT founder-member, was offered a job with DeafSA as a social worker. She later became the first Deaf director of DeafSA in the Western Cape.[136] Stephen Lombard[137] as the Western Cape representative and Lucas Magongwa[138] as the North West representative were both on the Executive Committee of the SANCD when it was transformed into DeafSA.[139] Catholics were integrally involved in the process of transforming

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[129] 'Deaf to play increasing role in Council affairs,' *TSM*, 60, 9, September 1991, 1, 4.
[130] 'Deaf to play increasing role in Council affairs,' *TSM*, 60, 9, September 1991, 1, 4.
[131] Heap, *Crossing social boundaries*, 145.
[132] See 'Looking towards the future' *TSM*, 10/93, October 1993, 6 and 'SANCD policy on affirmative action,' *TSM*, March 1995, 5.
[133] 'The SANCD's new name,' *TSM*, July 1995, 5.
[134] 'The SANCD's new name,' *TSM*, July 1995, 5.
[135] 'DeafSA to attend congress in Vienna,' *TSM*, July 1995, 2.
[136] Heap, 'Crossing boundaries,' 145.
[137] Stephen Lombard was on the SANCD Executive Committee from 1991, see 'Deaf to play increasing role in Council affairs,' *TSM*, 60, 9, September 1991, 1,4; 'SA Nasionale Raad vir Dowes: Nuwe Komitees,' *TSM*, 10/93, October 1993, 2 and 'Biennial Council Meeting/Tweejaarlikse Raadsvergadering,' *TSM*, Nov/Dec 1995, 1-4.
[138] This was the first time that Lucas Magongwa's name appears as a delegate of North West. See 'Biennial Council Meeting/Tweejaarlikse Raadsvergadering,' *TSM*, Nov/Dec 1995, 1-4.
[139] The implementation of the new constitution of DeafSA took place at the Biennial Council meeting on 26 and 27 October 1995 at Technikon SA. See 'Biennial Council Meeting/Tweejaarlikse Raadsvergadering,' *TSM*, Nov/Dec 1995, 1-4.

DeafSA, like DCCT before it, into an organisation of the Deaf for the Deaf. It was no longer an organisation of the hearing who 'benevolently' worked for the deaf. Consequently, DeafSA had become both a social development office for the Deaf community in South Africa but also a lobby organisation for Deaf rights in South Africa. It challenged hearing people to work with the Deaf community rather than on their behalf. This change of preposition has a long and painful history.

DeafSA continues to be influential in campaigning for bilingual Deaf education and sign language to be accepted as the twelfth official language of the country. The president of DeafSA is presently Bruno Druchen who had formerly been a member of a Catholic Deaf youth group in Durban established by Fr John Turner CMM.[140] In 1999, Newhoudt-Druchen became the first Deaf person to become a member of parliament in South Africa.[141]

9.4. Levinas, breathing, justice and religion

In both the previous chapter and this one, we have seen how deaf people themselves created breathing space for themselves in their relations to the hearing in both church and society. For Levinas, breathing as an expression of the ethical relation.[142]

> In human breathing, in its everyday equality, perhaps we have to already hear the breathlessness of an inspiration that paralyzes essence, that transpierces it with an inspiration by the other, an inspiration that is already an expiration, that "rends the soul!"[143]

We have seen how Ruben Xulu, Cyril Axelrod, Robert Simmons, John Turner, DCCT and DeafSA created new spaces for deaf people. In speaking about DCCT, Marion Heap spoke about the establishment of sign-spaces where Deaf people could breathe and be themselves. They established communities where they did not have to conform to hearing expectations but be free to sign and live in a way of their own choosing. Sign-space was a breathing space where Deaf people could be themselves, sign and be understood without fear of judgement or

[140] Before becoming director of DeafSA, Druchen trained as an actor. He is married to Wilma Newhoudt. See 'Bruno Druchen acts in America,' *TSM*, 61,6, June 1992, 1 and 'Bruno off to America again,' *TSM*, July 1994, 6.
[141] Heap, 'Crossing boundaries,' 169. Also see Jacinta Teixeira, interview conducted by Mark James, 13 July 2016, Cape Town, 395.
[142] Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 180.
[143] Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 180.

criticism. Sign-space where they could breathe freely and inspire one another. Sign-space was a creative space, a compassionate space, a political and cultural space, it was a space in which to relax and to celebrate together, it was a space in which the Holy Spirit breathed and moved.

It was from these breathing spaces, that Deaf people were able to be themselves and to resist and challenge the hearing to a more just relationship. They revealed the face that signs. The conflict between Wilma Newhoudt and Nick Bruce in DCCT, the challenge of moving from SANCD to DeafSA, the challenge of including more Black Deaf people into DeafSA, were all moments calling for greater justice for the Deaf Other and especially for Black Deaf people.

For Levinas, 'breathing is the transcendence in the form of opening up.'[144] This breathing of new life was evident in the schools for the deaf too with the acceptance of Total Communication and the use of sign language in the classroom.

> When one opens oneself as a space, to free oneself by breathing from closure in oneself already presupposes this beyond; my responsibility for the other and my aspiration by the other, the crushing charge, the beyond of alterity.[145]

In both the church and society, when Deaf people found the breathing space, the sign-space in which to live, their lives challenged hearing people to change and transcend their previously limited and questionable way of relating to Deaf people. In DCCT there was a call to move into a post-apartheid, post-audist, post-phonocentric, post-sectarian world which was realised as the call to transcendence and greater justice and truth. It was a call from Deaf people for a new relationship with hearing people, one based upon respect for the alterity of the Deaf Other that goes beyond the totality of audism and phonocentrism.

> It is because newness comes from the other that there is in newness transcendence and signification. It is through the other that newness signifies in being the otherwise than being. Without the proximity of the other in his face everything is absorbed, sunken into, walled into being, goes to the same side, forms a whole, absorbing the very subject to which it is disclosed.[146]

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[144] Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 181.
[145] Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 180-181.
[146] Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 182.

It is the call for a justice founded upon truth. It is a justice and truth that prevents the Other being chained to sameness, to the totalities of apartheid, sectarianism, audism and phonocentrism. McIlroy argued that arising from the new emphasis in Deaf education on bilingualism the discussion in the Deaf World is moving to a post-audism where Deaf people as bilinguals, proficient in signing and a spoken language, can move beyond an identity politics of 'deaf versus hearing' into a different conversation between Deaf and hearing which is a 'being more than deaf.'[147] In Levinasian terms, this is an indication of otherwise than being and a moving beyond representation. Representation emphasises *what* a person is rather than *who* that person is.[148] A person is always more than how they are classified be it according to class, race, gender or whether they hear or not.[149]

Working for justice is the task of the church and the task of church ministry too.[150] For Levinas, this is what religion is too. Religion is sacrificing for the good of the Other and treating the neighbour justly. Therefore, it is a transcendence in relation to the Other and, at the same time, an immanence as justice for the neighbour.[151]

> The Justice rendered to the Other, my neighbour, gives me an unsurpassable proximity to God. It is as intimate as the prayer and the liturgy which, without justice, are nothing. God can receive nothing from hands which committed violence. The pious man is the just man.[152]

For Levinas, social justice and working for this transcendence is the supreme religious act.[153]

> Ethics is an optic, such that everything I know of God and everything I can hear of His word and reasonably say to Him must find an ethical expression [...] the moral 'God is merciful', means: 'Be merciful like Him' [...] To know God is to know what must be done.[154]

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[147] McIlroy, *The Implementation of SASL*, 23-24.
[148] Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 177.
[149] Perpich, 'Levinas, feminism and identity politics,' 31.
[150] In Catholic theology, the work for justice is a constitutive part of preaching the Gospel. For a critical discussion on this theme, see Charles M. Murphy, 'Action for justice as constitutive of preaching of the Gospel. What did the 1971 Synod mean?' *Theological Studies*, 44, 2, 298-311.
[151] Davis, *Levinas: An introduction*, 96.
[152] Levinas, *Difficult Freedom*, 18. See also Isaiah 1:11-17.
[153] Levinas, *Difficult Freedom*, 21.
[154] Levinas, *Difficult Freedom*, 17.

In so doing, Levinas highlighted the necessity for compassion, justice and peace-building within society. Religion, language and, in this case, Catholic Deaf ministry is 'discourse, which in turn has presented itself as justice, in the uprightness of the welcome made to the face.'[155]

The ministry of the church is to reach out in welcome to the face offering hospitality and justice. This sacred work involves a self who, in proximity to the Other and the Third, is obsessed with seeking better justice among peoples. This is an opening up to all of humanity, creating breathing spaces for all unrecognised Others. So often Christian ministry is reduced to church maintenance and the doing of pious acts in good conscience. When Christian ministry is reduced to maintenance and pious acts, the church can be accused of neglecting the Other and the gospel message. The Gospel as another Other is always troubling the church's conscience and reminding it that it is often late in responding to the call for justice of many unrecognisable Others.

The Church is faithful to its task when it keeps overflows and moves beyond totality and self-interest into a radical self-giving; a generosity and gift of self for the good of the other. Christian ministry is the summons to do good and to move beyond the confines of one's own world even to the point of self-sacrifice, to expirate, to bleed for the good of the Other. Levinas also referred to this as:

> the passivity of wounds, the "hemorrhage" of the for-the-other, is the tearing away of the mouthful of bread from the mouth that tastes in full enjoyment.[156]

This understanding of ministry has also been referred to as a Trinitarian praxis.[157] This is a praxis that is kenotic and oblative. For Levinas, through the kenotic self-giving of substitution, totality is breached and transcended by the ethical relation to the Other. This means to live the passivity of being-for-another, 'which is possible only in the form of giving the very bread I eat.'[158] This is not the same as altruism, benevolence or love but a radical kenosis, self-emptying of self shown by a Trinitarian and overflowing love of God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. This overflowing and self-giving is revealed in Christ's death on the cross. This kenosis, this 'haemorrhaging', this dying-for-the-other witnesses to a Kingdom of a non-

[155] Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 82.
[156] Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 74.
[157] Morrison, 'A Theology of alterity,' 210.
[158] Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 72.

thematisable God, an eschatology of messianic peace, which points to the reign of God that is always new and beyond our grasp and understanding.[159]

DCCT briefly had a taste of this messianic peace when Deaf people came together without regard for colour, ethnicity, class, religion or Christian denomination. This peace breaks into our world as surprisingly new and gratuitous, which was exactly how the early disciples experienced Christ's resurrection. We seek to move beyond being to a new world of love and justice for all of humanity and creation.

This is the task of Christian and Catholic ministry to an opening up to the Deaf community and to offer justice to Deaf people by engaging in a transformed conversation within the Church between Deaf and hearing beyond violence and based on the ethical relation.

9.5. Conclusion

The appreciation of Deafhood within the Catholic schools was limited and somewhat ambivalent, as most Catholic schools for the deaf were still heavily influenced and dominated by hearing people and their audist assumptions. However, many teachers and even school principals - as we saw in the previous chapter - were becoming aware of the limitations of the oral method of education and there was a greater acceptance of sign language as a medium of instruction. Total Communication had become a new buzzword in Deaf education at the end of the 1970s. Many schools began to adopt a combined method of education and spoke increasingly about the value of Total Communication. Through a growing appreciation of the value of sign language, Deaf awareness or Deafhood developed among Deaf people and the call for bilingual education grew.[160] Deaf people were making use of opportunities to study and get qualifications as social workers and teachers. They began to shape not only the church, but civil society too. Deaf people like Robert Simmons, Cyril Axelrod, Wilma Newhoudt and Lucas Magongwa were empowering Deaf people to recognise that they could make a difference in the church and in society. Alongside this, the greater visibility of Deaf

[159] Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 52.
[160] Bilingual education is Deaf education where the medium of instruction is in the natural sign language and a spoken language like English is used as a written language. For more information on the bilingual approach, see Wilna Opperman, 'Bilingualism – a new trend in Deaf education,' *TSM*, 1/94, January 1994, 1-2.

people on television and the provision of sign language classes, attitudes among hearing people in relationship to Deaf people began to shift.

Within the Catholic Church's Deaf ministry, the establishment of DCCT in 1987 and its subsequent development and struggles highlighted the growth towards the Deaf way of being-in-the-world, namely Deafhood. Deaf people took charge of their own organisations and used their skills and the organisation's resources to improve the lives of ordinary Deaf people in the Western Cape. In bringing together Deaf people from a wide range of backgrounds, by including various groups of people like Catholics, Protestants, Muslims, Africans, Whites, Coloureds into one organisation, DCCT were able to point to a messianic peace. Life and community beyond apartheid, beyond race, beyond class, beyond Christian denomination and beyond religious creed. It was an anticipation of a new relation among peoples. It continues this work even to this day thirty-two years later.

Members from DCCT, like Wilma Newhoudt and Stephen Lombard, took their experience of working for change into SANCD too. Other Catholics, like Lucas Magongwa, were also integrally involved in implementing change in DeafSA. They were advocating for the recognition of sign language as the language of Deaf people. DeafSA was given the task of furthering the struggles of Deaf people in South Africa in order to anticipate a new future for all Deaf people in South Africa, where the wholeness of the human family, Deaf, hearing and disabled can be at one and celebrate with each other.

Chapter 10 Conclusion: Otherwise than being

Language is the distinguishing feature that makes us, human beings, different from the animal kingdom. This insight goes back to the Greek philosophers and to Aristotle. It is an insight which is still bearing rich rewards for philosophers and theologians to this day. However, when it came to the Deaf community, this insight was distorted by one further deduction also going back to Aristotle and the Greek philosophers. Aristotle claimed that it was language that revealed thought and thus rationality but, specifically, thought as speech, as communicated by the voice.

This emphasis on the voice and speech as an expression of rationality and thought and, hence, true language was a limiting perspective which resulted in a distorted understanding of Deaf people down the ages. The privileging of speech and the voice down from the time of Aristotle until the present day has had an adverse effect on the lives of Deaf people. They have been marginalised and treated as second-class human beings because of what was perceived to be a disability, a so-called defect in their physical makeup that prevented them from acquiring a spoken language. Derrida referred to this perspective as phonocentrism where the voice and speech are elevated and privileged at the expense of other forms of language like writing and for the Deaf – sign language.

One of the major findings of this research has been that sign language played a central role in the revitalisation of ministry with Deaf people by the two South African Deaf priests, Fr Cyril Axelrod CSsR and Fr John Turner CMM. Deaf people felt a greater sense of inclusion in the Church and participated in greater numbers. This was also evident in the work and ministry of the DCCT. Deaf people associated DCCT with home; a breathing space to be themselves. In this sign-space, DCCT empowered Deaf people to find solutions to the challenges they were confronted with in their lives, and the lives of other Deaf people, without having to rely on the charity of hearing people. Among Deaf people sign language was never a problem to be solved.

This was not the case in the Catholic schools for the deaf. The value of sign language was debated questioning whether or not it was suitable as a method of education for deaf children. This was a centuries long debate among the hearing.

Hearing people assumed that the voice or speech represented the norm for language development and so Deaf people were considered as deviating from this norm. Education, the medical profession and the scientific community combined efforts to ameliorate, rehabilitate and 'liberate' Deaf people from their deafness. This audist perspective has been shown to be an argument from totality where hearing people have been guilty of only looking at Deaf people through their own lenses, and seldom engaging in dialogue with Deaf people themselves.

For over 2000 years, Catholic theology and pastoral practice had also been affected by this problematic perspective. Even though Catholic theology was open to speech and sign as ways to communicate, it was revealed as early on as the First Council of Orange in 441 AD that sign language took second place to speech. In the mission and work done with deaf people over the centuries, often the hearing pastors and teachers dominated. Deaf people were to be pitied and helped in good conscience. They were the objects of Christian charity. This contributed to the oral method of education in Catholic schools predominating in the late nineteenth century and for a large part of the twentieth century because Deaf people were still seen as defective human beings requiring rehabilitation. Only when it was proved that sign language was a language in its own right, did the hearing Church and society realise that it had taken a wrong turn.

In this respect, another finding of this research is to recognise the need for Catholic theology and pastoral practice to re-envisaged and rethought in the light of the critiques of phonocentrism and audism. In this respect, the philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas has proved helpful. Levinas agreed with Aristotle that language is constitutive of what it means to be human. However, rather than focusing on language as communication based on rationality as expressed through speech and the use of the voice, Levinas, as we have seen throughout this dissertation, moved in an altogether different direction with his emphasis on the ethical relation with the Other. Levinas was concerned about language as revealing an ethical relationship between people. What constitutes our humanity is our willingness to take responsibility for the Other. For Levinas, responsibility is also response-ability to the needs of the marginalised, the excluded, the suffering Other.

Another challenge for Catholic pastoral practice is to recognise that very often ministry is done in good conscience but can prove to be harmful and damaging. Education through the means of the oral method of education seems to be a case in point. With hindsight, it is easy to criticise the work done by these congregations of Sisters who adopted the oral method of deaf education. Nevertheless, it is an indication of how Church ministry was shaped by totality and promoted an imperialism of the same. This shows that we need to be much more critical of our philosophical, theological and ministerial assumptions. It is a philosophy or theology of alterity, a ministry receptive to the Other, that can show the limitations of the unquestioned and hegemonic totalising approaches to Christian life. This is what Morrison referred to as developing a liberating Trinitarian praxis which opens the church to the new world of the Other.

The Archdiocese of Cape Town has a proud history of attentiveness to the pastoral needs of adult Deaf people starting with Monsignor Kolbe, extending to Fr T Gill, Bishop Ernest Green, Fr Eddie Mansfield, Bishop Reginald Cawcutt, Fr Cyril Axelrod CSsR, Fr Peter-John Pearson, Deacon Nick Bruce and, to this day, Fr Mark Foster. In Johannesburg, there were also chaplains to the Deaf, namely, Fr Michael Ramsay OSM, Fr Lionel Sham, Fr Cyril Axelrod CSsR and Fr John Turner CMM. Fr John Turner CMM started the work with the Deaf in the diocese of Mariannhill, the Archdiocese of Durban and the diocese of Manzini. Turner's work in Mariannhill and Durban has been continued by Fr Lufeyo Mpaha CMM. Mpaha has also worked in Johannesburg and Soweto for close to ten years.

A third finding is that while the church has not neglected deaf ministry in South Africa, it did not always give adequate support for the Deaf priests. South Africa is blessed to have had two Deaf priests, Fr Cyril Axelrod CSsR and Fr John Turner CMM, working in the country at around the same time. It was not always easy for them. They sought to bring the needs of the deaf to the attention of the Catholic bishops, and to the Church in general, but this was received with mixed results. Axelrod himself came into conflict with Archbishop Fitzgerald OMI of Johannesburg. In Cape Town, he felt unsupported by the bishops with whom he collaborated, as was John Turner. They essentially carried on with the ministry on their own doing the best they could. They were more vulnerable than the hearing priests as they were not as able to integrate into the wider network of support of the church. They were also misunderstood and did not find it easy to express themselves adequately. Nevertheless, their

accomplishments are a testament to their dedication and commitment. They were ably supported by prominent Catholic and non-Catholic lay people like Ruben Xulu, Robert Simmons, Lindsay Dunn, Wilma Newhoudt, Stephen and Suzanne Lombard, Faith Cronwright, Lucas Magongwa, Mauritz Neethling and Francois de Villiers among others.

When we review the history of the contributions made by these Deaf saints, we see that they have had a significant impact on changing attitudes towards Deaf people in the South African Catholic Church but, even more significantly, within South African society. These Deaf people have shown that they are not defective human beings; they are not second-class citizens; they are not handicapped. Rather, they are people who have come to know themselves as Deaf and have inspired other Deaf people to appreciate their innate dignity as people created in God's image and likeness.

In this regard, a fourth finding is recognising the value of Deaf breathing spaces. The Deaf community need a space in the church to be themselves and to feel at home. An inclusive church will allow Deaf people space and the opportunity to celebrate the Eucharist together in sign language. Deaf people can join with the hearing in integrated Masses and celebrations especially when there is an interpreter available. However, interpreted Masses and celebrations are not sufficient to constitute an inclusive faith community. These occasions remain dominantly hearing celebrations where the Deaf community is an invited guest. Greater hospitality will mean that Deaf signed singing, Deaf lectors and acolytes may be permitted in these joint celebrations too. Occasionally, perhaps hearing people may be free to attend Deaf celebrations especially the sacraments of initiation. But more importantly, Deaf people need to have the opportunity to celebrate their faith together as a community. The appointment of a priest who can sign is vital for the viability and spiritual sustenance of these Deaf communities. An inculturated Deaf liturgy is a necessity for a vibrant Deaf community to experience the church as their home too. There is much that we can learn from the ministries of both Frs Cyril Axelrod and John Turner.

The fifth finding from this dissertation is the value that the philosophy of Levinas may have for the development of post-audism. Levinas never imagined that his philosophy would be used in the context of Deaf people. In fact, he used deafness metaphorically to speak about people who are caught up in their own enjoyment of life that they are unaware of the

demands of the neighbour.[1] This shortcoming shows that Levinas himself was not free from phonocentrism.

Nevertheless, I have tried to show throughout the dissertation that Levinas' understanding of language and the ethical relation is a good foundation for the post-audist view and that life is a network of relationships and communication. In this network, however, is not just about mutual relations. The marginalised, the vulnerable and the excluded Other and stranger approach the self from a vantage of height and vulnerability. It is an asymmetrical relation where the self's self-satisfied existence is placed it under scrutiny by the Other. Levinas' understanding of the asymmetrical relation means that Deaf people and the disabled are protected from being merely subsumed by audist or able-bodied perspectives. Hearing people need to learn sign language and not just expect the Deaf community to be bilingual without becoming bilingual themselves. Hearing people need to act responsibly and learn sign language. For Levinas, there is always the need to be otherwise than being, to go beyond my own comfort in a generous and hospitable response to the Other.

Finally, Deaf Gain is a concept that is coming into its own. In contrast to the term 'hearing loss' Deaf people have coined the phrase 'Deaf Gain'[2] to speak about a new world that opens up to people who are Deaf, a new language, a new culture, a new way of living which they would not have experienced had they been hearing. In relation to this there is also the gains that Deaf give to society in helping all people recognise the gifts that Deaf people contribute to the human family. We have much to learn from the Deaf community, building unity across divides and crossing boundaries. Even in the liturgy, signed singing can enhance the ways that we can praise for the wonder of creation.

The recent decision by the South African government to accept SASL as the twelfth official language of the country is an acknowledgement of the inclusive society that South Africa is striving to become. It would not have happened, if Deaf people had not campaigned and

[1] 'In enjoyment I am absolutely for myself. Egoist without reference to the Other, I am alone without solitude, innocently egoist and alone. Not against the Others, not "as for me . . ." – but entirely ***deaf*** to the Other, outside all communication and all refusal to communicate – without ears, like a hungry stomach' (Italics and bold added). See Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 134.
[2] For more information on Deaf Gain, see H-Dirksen Bauman and Joseph Murray (eds), *Deaf Gain: Raising the stakes for human diversity*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014).

lobbied to make it happen. Some Deaf Catholics, by their participation in DeafSA, were involved in this campaign and contributed to making this possible.

The purpose of this dissertation, in relation to the ministry of the Catholic Church, was to be like a new pair of shoes that will chafe the consciences of hearing Catholics so that they recognise their misconceptions about Deaf people. People in the church need to be more open to Deaf people and to those with disabilities in parishes, and so to learn from them how to be a more inclusive Church. This may even mean that they begin to learn sign language to ensure better inclusion of Deaf people in the Church.

Arising from this study, there are several challenges which could be considered for a more effective pastoral outreach to Deaf people and people with disabilities. The leadership of the Church is the responsibility of each bishop in his diocese. For more effective ministry, bishops could evaluate what is being done in their dioceses regarding this ministry. The appointment of priests to serve these communities would be welcome, but also the development of policy with regard to meeting the needs of these communities is equally important. For Deaf people, it is access to interpreters and visual aids to facilitate participation which is required. But for people with physical disabilities, church access is a major challenge. Bishops are also instrumental in encouraging seminaries to hold special training for seminarians in developing pastoral sensitivity and skills in meeting the needs of the Deaf and disabled.

Parish priests could assist the work of chaplains for the Deaf by developing an inclusive parish community that respects the needs of the Deaf and disabled within the parish. Parish priests could help with the empowerment of Deaf people in the parish by introducing or allowing for interpreted Masses in their parishes. Priests could also learn sign language so that they can communicate with their Deaf parishioners without the aid of an interpreter. There are no restrictions on Deaf people becoming lectors, with voicing done by an interpreter, and acolytes in the parish. Including Deaf people in these ministries would be a prophetic sign acknowledging that the Deaf can share in the ministry of the church and not just be recipients of ministry.

There is also a desperate need to have Deaf priests who can minister to Deaf people. There is a need to consider a diocese’s openness to encourage Deaf men and women to become priests or to enter the religious life. Fr Thomas Coughlin, the first Deaf priest in the United

States, has started a religious congregation called the Dominican Missionaries for the apostolate with the Deaf and disabled. The congregation reaches out those who are Deaf people or disabled but also has students who are themselves Deaf. Having Deaf priests and religious sisters in community with the hearing too will be more possible in a post-audist world where Deaf people and hearing people become more bilingual.

Principals of Catholic schools for the Deaf could be encouraged to introduce bilingualism into their schools. This would assist the Deaf children to study in their indigenous language but also benefit from a creative interaction between hearing and Deaf worlds.

DeafSA is the nationally recognised organisation that is promoting the rights of Deaf people throughout the country. It would be valuable for hearing and Deaf people alike that more literature is published which tells the stories of Deaf people's struggles and accomplishments. It is important that the stories of Deaf saints are known.

Deaf ministry in South Africa was initially ministry done for Deaf and not with Deaf people. Deaf adults were often treated they were still children at school. It was a major turning point when the two Deaf priests, Fr Cyril Axelrod and Fr John Turner ministered in sign language. This unlocked creativity and increased the participation of Deaf people within the church. In the schools too, the children were formed in the oral method of deaf education because the hearing teachers decided that this was the best form of education for them. There was little to no willingness to engage with Deaf adults and to discuss issues regarding the value of education in sign language. The hearing knew better than the Deaf what would be good for them. If this was an isolated incident one might be more forgiving. However, it seems to be symptomatic of uncritical human thinking or totalising thinking. Whites know what is best for blacks, the rich know what is best for the poor, the educated know what is best for the illiterate and so we could go on.

Anya Topolski spoke about using Levinas' philosophy to develop an ethical politics[3] and in this dissertation, I have been trying to outline a possible ethical approach to Christian ministry from what Morrison called a Trinitarian praxis.[4] Ministry is the embodiment of the overflow of the love of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Father who loving creates singularity; the

[3] Topolski, *Arendt, Levinas and a politics of relationality*, 145-175.
[4] Morrison, *A Theology of alterity*, 210-254.

Son, the Word, who lived justly, who ministered among us and who poured out his life for our salvation; and the Holy Spirit who constantly breathes that love and new life into our lives, our church and into the world. Levinas' work helps us to become more critical of our own assumptions and self-interested thinking and actions. It is important to recognise, as we have already mentioned, that with regard to the Deaf community 'the face signs.'

It is for these reasons I want to leave the final 'word' to Ruben Xulu whose works of art speak powerfully not in speech or written word but through sign. He was himself African and Deaf. If we reflect on his images as both African and Deaf, we will see the face of the suffering Deaf (South) African Christ on the cross (Figure 3).[5] On the cross is also the one crucified by phonocentrism and audism.

The photograph of Ruben Xulu standing next to his carving of the Easter candle stand[6] is a tribute to Deaf (South) African people who are not the crucified victims of a hearing world. They are a people who have been called forth in exodus, from the darkness of audist and phonocentric oppression into the wonderful light of Deafhood and post-audism (Figure 4). This is the new land where sign language, Deaf culture and the Deaf community is appreciated and respected as contributing to the fulness and variety of human society and Christian life.

[5] Interestingly, this also happened to be the first full-colour photograph ever printed by the Catholic weekly. See *The Southern Cross*, 13 November 1977, 1.
[6] 'Deaf artist takes first prize,' *The Southern Cross*, 13 November 1977, 12. In the photograph Ruben Xulu, the Deaf sculptor, stands next to his work of art that took first prize.

AFRICA'S SHAPE ON CHRIST'S FACE: The outline of Africa appeared unintentionally in the grain of the hard thombothi wood used by deaf artist Reuben Xulu (report, back page) for this crucifix in St Joseph's church at Matshenhlope near Hlabisa in KwaZulu. More photographs of the church – built by a Servite brother and parishioners out of stone from a nearby mountain, and decorated by local artists – appear in the 1978 Southern Africa Liturgical Calendar (see page 7), of which this photograph forms the front cover.

(Figure 3)

(Figure 4)

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Appendix

Interview with Fr Cyril Axelrod CSsR in Dunnottar, Nigel on 30 September 2015

MJ: Thank you for agreeing to do this interview. May I ask my first question?

CA: First question, yes.

MJ: For how many years did you work with the Deaf in South Africa?

CA: I worked here from 1971 to 1988. However, after that period I came back to South Africa regularly up until now.

MJ: Which school did you attend?

CA: St Vincent School.

MJ: For you, who were one or two teachers who were important for you?

CA: I was Jewish first. I was not a Catholic, no. I was Jewish first. The St Vincent's school taught the Catholic faith. My father and mother were not happy. Why? They feel I must keep my Jewish faith. There was no one who could teach me my Jewish faith. When I was 7 ... have you read my book, no?

MJ: Yes, I have.

CA: My father was very upset that I wasn't keeping my Jewish faith. He went to the rabbi and asked him to teach me the Jewish faith. The Ralph Hahn (fingerspelt), he was deaf himself, was the first to teach the Jewish faith to the children. This was in about 1947, no maybe 1948. In 1951 he started the hostel for the Jewish deaf. The sisters then invited Mr Hahn to come to the school to teach and support the Jewish children. I then grew up in the Jewish faith and I only became a Catholic after leaving school.

MJ: At school you were Jewish? After school you became Catholic?

CA: When I was 22, no ... 23 years old, I changed my faith. The school did not influence me, no. Definitely not! There was this gap between being at school and becoming a Catholic. It had nothing to do with school. I go to know the different faiths and I chose after school. Understand?

MJ: Yes, I understand. You first started work at St Thomas School for the Deaf?

CA: At St Thomas School, yes, in Kingwilliamstown. Bishop Green he was bishop in Port Elizabeth in 1955. At Woodlands mission, it was a mission on the edge of the diocese of Port

Elizabeth. There was a school there run by black Kingwilliamstown sisters. So, Bishop Green thought perhaps there could be a deaf school for Black children there. There was no education for black children they had to go to Cape Town or Johannesburg. He approached ... I can't remember ... to ask for a piece of land so that they could build up a school for the Deaf at Woodlands about 15 miles from Kingwilliamstown. It was between Stutterheim and Kingwilliamstown. The school was run by black Kingwilliamstown sisters. Fr Donal Cashman - he was a priest - he came and built the school. It was built before 1960. The first principal from St Vincent's came, Sr Conrada. Okay.

MJ: Your memory is very good.

CA: Because of the language of Xhosa, at that time, the school taught through the language of Xhosa. It was apartheid.

MJ: Was it the first Deaf school for black children?

CA: Catholic school?

MJ: Yes.

CA: Yes, St Thomas school was the first.

MJ: Hammanskraal school?

CA: The Hammanskraal school started later. It moved from Wittebome school and started in, I think, 1965. The first school was St Thomas, then Hammanskraal. The third one was KwaThintwa near Durban. This was the third deaf Catholic school. In 1978, I started a school in Soweto, St Martin's school. The name was changed to Sizwile school.

MJ: You started this school?

CA: Yes. I got a phone call message from Baragwanath hospital. A speech therapist asked me to come and visit. She showed me so many deaf children, of varying ages, staying there and sleeping on the floor. Their parents had brought them to the hospital and then left them there. They didn't take them back home. The speech therapist couldn't cope with all these children. She couldn't teach all of them. She asked me to help. I was good friends with the Notre Dame sisters ... SND (signed). You know them?

MJ: Yes, yes.

CA: I asked them if they knew where there was a school in the area. They told me to contact Sr Leah, who was principal of St Martin's school, Soweto. She was principal and she had 2000 children. I asked her for a room for the deaf children. She asked me why and I said because I have 50 deaf children and nowhere to train them. One of the Notre Dame sisters, Sr Kay, she helped me. She gave me a room and provided desks and a blackboard to put in the room. I divided the room into two: one side for small children and the other for the bigger ones. A

teacher came, Mrs Kabane. There was also a Catholic social worker, Eugenia Mthembu. We all worked together. I received good support from the Society for the Propaganda of the Faith. They gave me $60 000 for the school. But I and Archbishop Fitzgerald fought. He didn't like me or the idea of the school. There were problems of communication but never mind. Let us not worry about it.

The school continued and developed. In 1978, we had the School for the Deaf. I was in contact with the Soweto Council and, in particular, a person called Juniper. He helped me find land in Soweto in Dobsonville. We talked about him giving me land for the school. But I realised that I am not qualified to be a principal. I don't have the education. So, what to do? I had a problem. I went to Archbishop Fitzgerald and told him that I cannot run the school. I am not qualified to be a principal? This is the government's law. I forced him to look for a Brother of Charity to take over Sizwile School. But I was very sad! Why? They don't recognise my work. They didn't recognise my pioneering work. It was sad.

MJ: I am sorry about this.

CA: Well, what can you do! It is past now. I fought with the Archbishop about the school. He said I must take responsibility for the school. But I couldn't. He didn't understand. I wanted him to find a religious order to take over the school. Eventually, he accepted a brother to come from Holland, Bro Gerard. He was a qualified teacher for the deaf. He came over from Holland to be principal of the Sizwile school.

MJ: After the brothers took over the school, were you involved at all?

CA: No, they put me aside.

MJ: Ah, why?

CA: Because I fought with the Archbishop. He refused to support me. He didn't want to give me faculties to be a priest in the diocese of Johannesburg.

MJ: Why, because you were deaf?

CA: No, no. I think you should talk to Bishop Kevin Dowling. He knows about the problem. Ask him. Archbishop Fitzgerald refused to renew my contract. It was a communication problem. Do you know Tony Kelly?

MJ: Yes.

CA: Terrible. When I worked in Johannesburg I wanted to join the Redemptorist novitiate. I went to him to ask for another priest to help with the deaf. He refused: "No, no!!!"

MJ: Why?

CA: This was because I was an incardinated priest of Port Elizabeth. So, I can't just travel all over. But I asked Bishop John Murphy of Port Elizabeth diocese if I can work in Johannesburg. He wrote a letter to Bishop Boyle to ask him if it could be possible for me to work in Johannesburg. But there was no reply. I came because I knew many [deaf Catholics] needed my help. So, I came on my own. I had no formal introduction or acceptance into the diocese of Johannesburg. I just came because the Bishop didn't communicate. The bishop was just focused on parishes. You can't work for the deaf and also work in a parish. It is not my responsibility. In the bishop's mind, I must take a parish. The work for the deaf is outside of parish work. I came on my own accord because I was focused on building up the deaf and that they need my help.

MJ: I always wondered why after you went to work in China why the bishop never appointed another priest to work with the deaf.

CA: I went to China why because there was a problem with Bishop Fitzgerald. When I came back from Singapore to Johannesburg, after preaching a parish mission there, I asked if I could go back to Johannesburg to work. Fitzgerald refused. I was depressed. I had worked there for 19 years without any support. I was on my own all the time.

The Redemptorists arranged with Archbishop Stephen Naidoo that I come to work with the deaf in Cape Town. Bishop Naidoo had removed Bishop Green because he had health problems. He (Bishop Green) felt threatened because of me. He wasn't happy when I came to Cape Town. He felt I was coming to take his job. He didn't understand. Archbishop Naidoo wrote to me and said he wanted me to be a parish priest. But by then I was having trouble with my eyes. I couldn't drive a car anymore. I had to walk with a stick, so I got involved in the hostel. There was no one to help them there with the food. No one! Sometimes they were only eating tins of sardines. So, I decided to buy food and give it to them. But I received no salary, no car, nothing. It was useless. Nothing!

Fr Kevin Dowling was on the General Council in Rome. He came to South Africa for a visit with Father General. I told them that Cape Town diocese was not supporting me. No money, nothing. I worked for nine months, no fuel, nothing. Father General from Rome said to me what do I want? I said I want to go to China because there is no support for me here. I can't carry on without support from the archdiocese. So, he said; "Okay, I agree you can go to China". I appreciated this.

But during my work with the school, I was concerned that under apartheid all the schools divided into the different languages. Xhosa, Sotho. Deaf people had to go to the school of their language. But Sizwile School was the first day Catholic school. I went to the government, [the Department of] Education and Training, and said that in Soweto there are 11 different languages. Which language do we use? I explained this to them. There are so many different languages, which to use? I wanted them to accept English, to have this language alone. They

didn't accept at first but I persisted. Eventually, they agreed with me. Sizwile school was the first to use English because Soweto had so many different languages.

Why I started this was because many, many Catholic deaf who went to school in Hammanskraal or St Thomas, and other schools; when they finished school they never went home. Never! There was a communication problem because when they went home, in July and December, they found it difficult to communicate with their fathers or mothers. This is because they were used to staying with the deaf community at school. After school was finished they preferred to stay there. They never went home. They would give money to the family but that was the end of it.

But I didn't want this in Soweto. When I started this day school, I wanted to keep the children with their family. So, I insisted that the parents must learn sign language to communicate with their children. This was the first school to do this. This was the way I tried to fight against apartheid. I did not agree that the children must go away from their families. Do you follow?

MJ: Yes, I do. When you were fighting apartheid, parents saw the importance of sign language. Why was this?

CA: Why? Because apartheid destroyed family life. Children, deaf children had to leave home and go away to school. They never went home from January to December. There was no education for the parents to communicate with their children. Nothing! So, the deaf children told me that they don't want to go home after school. What did they want? They wanted to find work near where they went to school. That's why we built the hostel for them.

MJ: When was the hostel was built in Hammanskraal?

CA: We built it in about 1979 or 1980, or sometime around there. Why? Because they told me that they cannot go home. Why? Because of the communication problem. They prefer to stay with the deaf community, they could relate well there and they feel at home. This was not so when they went to their families. But they would only go home once a year to give money to the family.

MJ: I am surprised.

CA: Yes, it is surprising. Built the hostel and the school near to each other.

The Kwa Thintwa School near Durban helped to donate a motor car. It helped to take the motor car, I could go and help here and there. In Lenasia, the Muslims started a school for the deaf Muslims. One sister from St Vincent, Sr Loyola moved there. She asked me to help. I used the car to go to Lenasia, Soweto, I went there and used to travel all over to the schools for the deaf.

MJ: You would drive to all these places.

CA: Apartheid was terrible for me! That's why my focus on family life was so important for the deaf children. Apartheid policies that insisted that schools be in places far from the families tore these families apart. Terrible!!!

This is why I was surprised that the sisters would accept to teach deaf children in schools far away from their families. Why? They couldn't communicate [with their families]. Do you understand?

MJ: Yes.

CA: It is so important to know that the children need to be with their families, not separated from them. For me, this was a priority. Apartheid wasn't good.

MJ: What was the government policy?

CA: Apartheid. For example, if the government decided to build a Catholic school for black deaf children in Hammanskraal, the sisters would go there. I was not happy. Why? The deaf children were separated from their families. Why? Why? I wanted the deaf children to know that they have to accept their families and communicate with them. The children in St Thomas School were far from their families. School here family there. Why must we follow government apartheid policy? Why? That's why I couldn't cooperate with them. The Catholic Church had to stand up against apartheid and not follow, follow them. You understand?

MJ: Yes.

CA: Like the Catholic Church built St Peter's Seminary for the blacks and St John Vianney seminary for the whites. They followed apartheid. Why?

MJ: It was wrong.

CA: Yes, exactly. Apartheid policy is wrong. I refused to follow apartheid policy, no! I was definite about this. Family life first! Education together with [family life]. That's why Sizwile School was an integral school. Family and education together. They were the first school to do this.

MJ: Which school?

CA: Sizwile (said and signed). It was the first school that was integrated. Family life and education together.

MJ: So, all the children came from Soweto?

CA: They all came from around the Soweto area. They would go away home at the end of the day to their families. They would go home and come back to school each day. This was family life and education together. You understand?

MJ: I understand.

CA: This was not a [residential] school separate from the family. No! Do you understand? Is it clear?

MJ: Yes, I understand. It is clear. You were working with black and white deaf people?

CA: No, I focused on black deaf children.

MJ: As a priest you say Mass for black and white deaf people?

CA: Oh yes, when I worked in the diocese of Johannesburg, I made a plan. On a Sunday in the morning, I had Mass for the white deaf at the Cathedral. In the afternoon I went into Soweto at Regina Mundi or sometimes at a different church. For example, in the morning I would say Mass for the white deaf. I would go to Johannesburg, Springs for the white people. There was a third place but I can't remember it. For the black deaf, on the same day, I would go first to Springs' township. I forget the name?

MJ: Kwa Thema (fingerspelt).

CA: Kwa Thema. That's right. In the morning I started in Kwa Thema and then Soweto in the afternoon and then to Benoni. What is the township of Benoni?

MJ: Daveyton (fingerspelt).

CA: Yes, that's right. Daveyton, that's right. I remember. I would move around the townships reaching out to the deaf people. It saved the deaf people the trouble of travelling all the way [to Johannesburg or Soweto]. But once a month, all black deaf people came to the Cathedral. They would come from the different areas to the Cathedral. At the Masses, I used to preach for two or three minutes.

MJ: Only two or three minutes?

CA: Yes, in Soweto in the morning, then the next one. Then twelve o'clock at the third place. I was driving all around.

MJ: You must have been tired.

CA: I was a young priest.

MJ: After you went to China, what happened to the Deaf people in Johannesburg?

CA: What happened?

MJ: Did they get another priest?

CA: That's why I asked Monsignor Tony Kelly for another priest to take over from me. He refused saying: 'NO!' He was very dismissive. He was not very supportive of me. What to do? I wrote a letter to Archbishop Fitzgerald saying that I was very sorry and I included a programme of my work. He said: "Okay, okay!" I asked if he could help me find another priest

to help me. He said: "No way! There's no way." He refused. I said: "Okay!" There was no support.

MJ: Is that why many of the Catholic Deaf went to the Christian Deaf Fellowship (CDF) church?

CA: Yes, exactly. It is CDF. Yes, there was no more relationship with the Catholic Church. Some went there and I said; "Okay!" I can't do anything because there is no support from the Bishop.

MJ: Who started the CDF?

CA: CDF started from America. A missionary came out from America teaching. He encouraged and built up a number of churches. Then he left. Then came another called Barrett from America. He started with a group of four women in Johannesburg. They were in Rosebank. They were an interdenominational church in Rosebank near St Vincent's School.

MJ: Was it part of Rosebank Union Church?

CA: Yes, I think so. I went there the first day that they gathered a group. I spoke about building up one community in God and supported CDF. William Warmington had earlier studied at Bible College. He was inducted as the pastor. He took over CDF. I realised that because William was deaf, people felt free with him. But I could see that the deaf did not understand the difference between Catholic and CDF because CDF had a basic and fundamentalist reading of the Bible. How can I teach the deaf about the spirituality of the sacraments? How? They don't understand. It is too abstract. CDF were fundamentalists. That's why many left the Catholic Church and joined CDF. For them it is very simple, CDF right, Catholics wrong. They are Biblical fundamentalists. Very few understand the Catholic teaching on sacraments. It is too abstract. Do you agree with me?

MJ: Yes. When did your work with Fr John Turner begin?

CA: When I left, Fr John came to carry on my work. He only said Mass for the deaf, no more. I did more. I started a school... Fr John only taught religion and Mass, nothing else. We were not the same.

MJ: Did he ever go to Soweto?

CA: Maybe you can ask Maureen [Neethling]. I don't think Fr John ever went to Soweto. No, now I remember. Fr John said Mass at St Vincent's only. He didn't go around. He encouraged the deaf to come to St Vincent's. For many of them it was too far to come to St Vincent's. I don't remember him travelling around from place to place. No. He stayed and centred his ministry around St Vincent's. He went around visiting people and saying Mass. I don't think he went around saying Mass in different places like me. No.

MJ: What about Hammanskraal?

CA: Yes, he did go to Hammanskraal. Yes. He went to Kwa Thintwa School. Sizwile - he went there in Soweto too, although I am not sure.

There was a difference between myself and Fr John. It is what? My work with the deaf is broad. My focus was on human and social development. I built up a school and worked in different places. Fr John basically said Mass. That's all. His approach was narrow, whereas mine was broader.

MJ: Your work was also working with Deaf culture, the Deaf community and teaching sign language.

CA: Yes, I was involved in building up community life of deaf people, family life.

MJ: Did you work with people only with Catholics? Or did you work with Muslims and Indians?

CA: Yes, I worked with everybody.

Do you know Lucas [Magongwa]? I helped with his BA.

In Cape Town, I started the Deaf Community Cape Town (DCCT). I helped start it.

MJ: Why was DCCT started?

CA: Down in Cape Town there was fragmentation of all the different races into separate groups - blacks, whites, coloureds. Deaf people were separated. I encouraged them to come together and become one integrated community. The different racial groups were encouraged to come together. This was about 1986. There were different races and cultures among the deaf people and I said: "No, they must become united."

MJ: Bishop Green? Did you know him? What did he do?

CA: Bishop Green was a full-time chaplain to the Dominican schools for the deaf in Cape Town and Wittebome. He was also full-time working with the deaf in the hostel that was for Cape Town only. He was full-time teacher and chaplain for the deaf. I was impressed by the Dominican sisters. Why? They taught him sign language. He was the first hearing priest who knew sign language. Bishop Green when he was ordained priest in 1941, he worked in Wittebome parish. He looked after the deaf children in Wittebome and he loved them. Then he became full-time chaplain there. He also built up the Catholic hostel for the deaf in Cape Town. I should give you my brain, so you can read it. (Laughs).

MJ: He accepted you for ordination?

CA: Yes, he ordained me in 1970. After finishing at St Vincent, he accepted me to study for the priesthood. Before he ordained me, he was still deciding. He wrote to the Vatican to ask if he was permitted to ordain me. They agreed so he then ordained me.

MJ: Were you the first deaf priest in the world?

CA: No, I wasn't. I am the third. The first was a priest in Brazil, Xavier Burnier, then one in Spain. I am the third. I am the first deaf priest in South Africa.

MJ: When did the Dominican sisters in the schools start teaching the deaf children through the oral method?

CA: The Dominican sisters were teaching from the 1800s. Sr Aquina from Cape Town went to Kingwilliamstown at the Sacred Heart Convent. The Kingwilliamstown sisters were the first to build a school in Kingwilliamstown in 1888. Sorry, I made a mistake. The first Catholic school was in Cape Town in 1864. The sisters came from Ireland. They used sign language in the school. In 1888, the Kingwilliamstown sisters from Germany built their school. Sign language was used in Cape Town and oral method in Kingwilliamstown.

MJ: Which method do you think was better?

CA: In Cape Town the school started in 1864 and in Kingwilliamstown for whites in 1888. In 1934, the school from Kingwilliamstown moved to St Vincent's. After this Wittebome school in Cape Town was started.

MJ: Are there any other issues you think are important about the Church's ministry to deaf people?

CA: Before Vatican II, the bishops focused on their own dioceses. There was no cooperation between them. Each one was autonomous. They didn't like a priest to move from diocese to diocese. No, this was not acceptable. After Vatican II this changed, there was more dialogue. In my case, I was special. No bishop could understand me because I kept moving all the time. I was everywhere.

MJ: That's why they never accepted your work. They saw you as a butterfly.

CA: (Laughs). True. When I was in Port Elizabeth I had the same problem.

MJ: Thank you for your time.

CA: It was a pleasure.

Interview with Jennifer Gillespie at DCCT Offices, Heathfield, Cape Town on 12 November 2015

MJ: Thank you for agreeing to do this interview.

JG: (smiles and nods)

MJ: What is your name, surname and sign name?

JG: My name is Jennifer Gillespie (fingerspelt), my sign name is JG (fingerspelt - CT G).

MJ: May I ask you some questions about your school experience? Which deaf school did you attend? During which years were you at school?

JG: Cape Town, I went to the Dominican-Grimley School for the Deaf. I went to the school from 1949 to 1959.

MJ: You were there for 10 years? [Note: It was 11 years].

JG: Yes, 10 years. I was supposed to go to Standard 10. I didn't want it. I only wanted to get to Std 8 - that was the old time. Now it is Grade 10. We were not allowed to sign, it was oral. But we always used to hide our signing. We would sign to the person seated behind us with our hands behind our backs. If they found out we were signing they would hit us on our hands with the ruler. But it was a good school. Sometimes we used to have to compete against hearing schools. The High school was next to the Primary school. At school they taught us to gym, to swim, Girl Guides. Boys were there too, so we had Boy Scouts, Brownies and Cubs. We enjoyed it.

MJ: You all did this at school?

JG: Yes, we did.

MJ: Yours was an oral school what did this mean? What did you learn in class?

JG: We also had education in English, Afrikaans - no, history, geography, mathematics, but at the time it was called arithmetic. When we went outside to talk, we were not allowed to sign we had to be oral. Some of the Deaf understood what was being said, others did not. So, we used to hide our signing.

MJ: Did you learn sign language at school?

JG: Yes, from when I was small.

MJ: But who taught you sign language?

JG: No, I watched. I watched the bigger children. When I was small I used to watch the bigger children sign.

MJ: So, the bigger children didn't teach the smaller children how to sign?

JG: No, no. We had to catch up. We would watch what they do. Sometimes we would watch their lips and catch up that way.

MJ: Which do you prefer lip-reading or sign language?

JG: In my family there were none who were deaf. They were all hearing. I was the only deaf one in my family. But I have my sister at the age of 13 became hard of hearing. I have a brother too who at about 12, I think, also became hard of hearing. That's all.

MJ: When did you use lip-reading?

JG: Everyday. All the time.

MJ: So, you use lip-reading in the hearing world.

JG: Yes.

MJ: And with the deaf?

JG: No, we sign to each other.

MJ: Do all those who were at the Deaf school with you know sign language?

JG: Yes, yes. I have a group of old school friends. On the second and fourth Thursday of each month we have a Bible group with those who had been at the same Deaf school as me. Maybe one or two don't come but all the others are part of the group.

MJ: Were you personally caught and punished for using sign language at school?

JG: (laughs and nods), yes, yes.

MJ: How many times?

JG: Oh, I often had to stand in the corner as punishment.

MJ: It shows you loved sign language.

JG: Why, you have to sign behind your back to the children behind you because otherwise the oral, the hearing catch you.

MJ: That's children. They do these things.

JG: True.

MJ: After school, did you have any contact with the church?

JG: Every morning we had church, every morning at school. We also had confession. We would have to walk to the confessional. We would line up and we would go into the small church for confession. The sisters with us would watch us.

MJ: To make sure you were not signing.

JG: Yes.

MJ: Did you talk or sign in the confession?

JG: No, we talked.

MJ: Which priest did you know?

JG: Fr Walsh. Oh, I can't remember there were too many priests, too many. There is a long list. There is a lot. There was Fr Long.

MJ: Did they work with the Deaf? Or did you just have contact with them?

JG: No, at the time the priests were living behind the church near the school. It was the priests' home there. The Archbishop was also there. They used to come to visit us. The sisters' school was behind the church. The hostel was built in such a way that the sisters could watch us.

MJ: Did you know Fr Green?

JG: Yes, yes. Bishop Green. He married us. He has died now. My husband's father and Bishop Green grew up together in Woodstock. They knew each other growing up.

MJ: He married you in which church?

JG: It was in Woodstock at St Agnes'. That was the church where I was married. Bishop Green would always come every Friday for catechism and also for confession.

MJ: Did he know sign language?

JG: Yes, very much. He was excellent.

MJ: Where did he learn sign language?

JG: I think from the deaf children. He often went to the both schools, Grimley and Wittebome.

MJ: Were you born Catholic or did you convert?

JG: I was born Catholic, yes.

MJ: Where is your home?

JG: Walmer Estates, Holy Cross. I was born there. We lived there for 14 years and then we moved to Woodstock. I went to the Catholic Church but my father's family have changed from Catholic to New Apostolic Church. I am the only Catholic now.

MJ: You come here for every Third Sunday?

JG: Yes, I come here if I can get a lift by car otherwise I have to stay at home. I'm always disappointed. But I come here most of the time.

MJ: Where do you stay now?

JG: Parow (fingerspelt). I am near the Catholic Church there. About 5 minutes away. It is very nice at night.

MJ: Do you remember how DCCT started?

JG: It started in 1987.

MJ: Who started it?

JG: Faith and Stephen (sign names given). I am trying to remember how I met them. Oh yes, Fr Cyril started the group. One of the women who knows me asked me to come to Rondebosch, to church there. Since then I have been involved with DCCT. I have never given up.

MJ: What work were you doing?

JG: I was working under UWC, the University of the Western Cape. There was a relationship between DCCT and UWC. Even UCT helped, encouraged and supported DCCT.

MJ: After school, did you start working?

JG: My first job was with Old Mutual. I worked for them for about six or six and a half years. I left because all the Deaf staff relied on me. It was too much for me. I left them. My boss wasn't happy, she didn't want me to leave. I started a job with the municipality, the city council. I worked for them for about 17 years, and when my third child was born they tried to drop my salary and I said forget it. Luckily, I went to National Council for the Deaf in Observatory and told the social worker that I needed a job. We searched for one and finally I got one. I worked for Metropolitan Life. I accepted it even though I was the only deaf person there. I worked for them for about 17 and a half years until I retired.

MJ: What work did you do?

JG: I was a typist and worked on the computer.

MJ: Were you a receptionist?

JG: No, I was just a typist.

MJ: Where did you learn to type?

JG: I learnt at school. When they brought in the computers, I got confused. Luckily, one of the girls in the typing pool helped me and explained: do what, do, do, do. So, I learnt it and it went well.

MJ: It was good you could change from the typewriter to the computer.

JG: I became lazy.

MJ: But you know how to use the computer now?

JG: Yes, I know. I use the computer in the office here at DCCT.

MJ: Who helps you with the IT problems?

JG: Richard, Richard. If I have a problem, I call him. He is clever with computers. Brains he has.

MJ: What was your experience when you were growing up with deaf people from any other deaf schools?

JG: We had contact with Wittebome. Every year we would go there and they would come to us, we would go there. Then it suddenly stopped because of apartheid.

MJ: Before apartheid the two schools had contact?

JG: Yes, we would regularly go to each other's schools. It was very nice.

MJ: What did you do when you met?

JG: We used to come together for celebrations, or a show, or drama, or something like that. Wittebome used to have boxing and we would go and watch the boxing. We would do the same and invite them for a drama or a show or something like that. Suddenly, it all stopped. It was devastating.

MJ: That was bad!!

JG: Yes.

MJ: So, before apartheid you had contact with the other deaf schools?

JG: Yes.

MJ: So, the different races used to mix?

JG: Yes, the olden times were nice.

MJ: Where you finished school when apartheid started?

JG: No, I only finished school in 1959.

MJ: Oh yes, it would have been already 11 years later.

JG: Sometimes when I was still working for Old Mutual I'd go into Cape Town and I would meet some deaf people from Wittebome. We would say hello and end up talking before going home.

MJ: During apartheid you used to mix with deaf from other races?

JG: More with Coloured people.

MJ: Did you meet people often?

JG: Not always, sometimes, it depended. When we met someone, we had to be careful because other people could point fingers at you and speak unkindly.

MJ: Did you have friends from Wittebome school?

JG: Do you mean now or in the past?

MJ: When you were at school.

JG: No.

MJ: Afterwards you did. How did you come to work here?

JG: Here at DCCT I was part of it when it started. During apartheid, in 1987, we started with encouraging women. Then in 1994 when apartheid fell away black people became more involved in large numbers.

MJ: Were there different deaf clubs in Cape Town?

JG: Yes, there were. There was a deaf club in Woodstock. In the deaf clubs we would have drama, dancing, watch movies, have socials, play games and things like that. But it was only whites. I started going from the age of 14. It was alright. It continued on. Later, the club was closed.

MJ: Were there other clubs for coloured people?

JG: Only whites went. We would also play badminton and other deaf sports there. They would practice badminton there and play matches against hearing opponents.

MJ: Are you happy to be part of DCCT with different groups of Deaf people?

JG: Yes, very much.

MJ: You find a lot of support here.

JG: Yes. Also, I worked for UCT as a Health researcher. If Deaf people need an interpreter when going to hospital or a clinic, then they inform me and I informed the boss. Then an

interpreter was provided for them. On the Third Sunday I would explain to all the Deaf what they need to do. I give them the paper and then they follow the procedure. I have been doing this from 2007 until now.

MJ: It has been eight years.

JG: Yes, it has been 8 years. It has been a lot of work for me.

MJ: That's good for you. And your husband is he Deaf?

JG: My husband has died. Yes, he is also Deaf.

MJ: And how many children do you have?

JG: I have three children, they are all hearing. I have two girls and one son. The son is married. He lives in the America (USA). I have two grandchildren.

MJ: Congratulations to you. (A short pause for consulting notes). When growing up how and where did you discover and get interested in Deaf culture?

JG: Most of the time I used to mix with hearing people. For a long time, I was hard of hearing and my communication was good. After I met the Deaf people I started getting more involved with Deaf people. I wasn't too comfortable about this at first. Later I realised that I myself am Deaf too and so mixed with Deaf people and Deaf culture all the time. I still communicate with the hearing well but more and more now I interact with the Deaf. I am happy with the Deaf, yes.

MJ: Before mixing with the Deaf ....

JG: I was uncomfortable, yes.

MJ: You enjoy being with the Deaf?

JG: Yes, I do.

MJ: In which year did you begin to interact with the Deaf more?

JG: In 1987 when I got more involved with DCCT.

MJ: DCCT was growing at the time?

JG: We started with many people but many fell away.

MJ: Did you come alone?

JG: No, with my husband. I used to come to DCCT with my husband by car. We came here regularly.

MJ: Did the Catholic Church do good work for the Deaf?

JG: Here at DCCT, yes.

MJ: In Cape Town.

JG: But this wasn't the case in the hearing church. If they have projectors in the church, it is fine. However, when they preach I don't understand. This is a problem. That is why I come here. When Fr Mark (Foster) preaches, we have an interpreter who interprets the sermon, and so I can understand.

MJ: Another last question. Do you remember this building being the Deaf hostel?

SG: Yes, I remember this was the Deaf hostel. My husband and I stayed here from 2003 until 2007 because we lost our house in Parow. We moved here. I'm sorry to say, I divorced him. I didn't love him anymore. He was verbally abusive. It was terrible and he used to drink a lot of alcohol. I couldn't take it. I decided to get divorced. But Archbishop Henry gave me his blessing and we got an annulment.

MJ: What work did they do here in the Deaf hostel?

JG: Men stayed in the hostel and the women in the building behind. Before that, only men stayed here under Bishop Green. No women were allowed. Fr Cawcutt, Fr Fletcher, Fr Mansfield and ... I think they were four were responsible for the hostel. Then one of the women began to moan and moan that there needs to be a building for women too. When Bishop Green left, they built one for the women.

MJ: Where is the building for women?

JG: It is the double-storey building behind this one. Upstairs, where there is now craftware, used to be a place to sleep. There were about four (signed 6 - corrected later) rooms up there. Each room slept two, two, two.

MJ: The people who stayed here where did they come from?

JG: They came from all over. Some came from Northern Cape, Eastern Cape and various places.

MJ: Did they work here?

JG: They slept here and if they worked, fine. But some did not work, so they would be helped to find a job. It is not the case now, the rooms are now offices.

MJ: How many stayed here?

JG: I think about ... more men than women - about twelve women and also about twenty men. It was nice, you could watch TV. On the weekends, you could go out. We were young and we used to walk up the hill to the shopping centre. We had church on every third Sunday. On the other Sundays we had to walk to the church in Heathfield.

MJ: We are nearly finished. (Pause - checking notes). In your parish, how did you find going to church as a Deaf person?

JG: When in Church I used to read my missal or the parish bulletin during the sermon. During the rest of the Mass I used to read the parts of the Mass with the priest.

MJ: What priests inspired you?

JG: I remember all the sisters - Sr Basil (fingerspells), Sr Pauline, Sr Alacoque, Sr Gilbert, Sr Albert. Sr Albert was wicked. Sr Germaine and Sr Damian. They were all good because they taught us and helped us. Some taught catechism. This was important. The sisters also taught us to sew and cook.

MJ: Did you enjoy school?

JG: Yes, I did.

MJ: Even though they punished you?

JG: That's why we did our signing behind our backs.

MJ: Why did the sisters use the oral method?

JG: I don't know.

MJ: Did they ever explain it to you?

JG: They never explained it, no. It had to be oral. Some children were hard of hearing and others were completely deaf. I was hard of hearing so I didn't find it too hard. Those who were completely deaf didn't find it easy. How could they understand?

MJ: So you are hard of hearing?

JG: Yes, being hard of hearing it is easier to follow the oral method. If I had hearing aids, then I could hear.

MJ: Are you still hard of hearing?

JG: No, I am completely deaf. After I became 62 or 64 then my hearing went down and I became completely deaf.

JG: The Hout Bay school is oral.

JG: No, I don't like cochlear implants. It is ugly, ugly. When you swim, you have to take the cochlear implant off. When you run, the wind affects the cochlear implant. If you are older and you want an implant, fine. But for a small girl ... It is ugly and needs to be covered. Even for the boys too. Sometimes the children complain to their parents saying: "It is ugly, why do I have one?"

MJ: Thank you ...

JG: You know that Woolworths is supporting the providing of cochlear implants to children. Woolworths, yes. I saw this on TV advertisement. A woman interpreter, I know from DeafSA, told me that she is not happy about Woolworths support for cochlear implants. Why don't they support the Deaf to have sign language be made official? We need to have an officially recognised sign language. The sign language interpreters are lobbying government for us.

MJ: Checkers employ many Deaf people too.

JG: Yes, many Deaf are working on the tills. They pack food on the shelves too. It is good because many Deaf find it difficult to get a job.

MJ: Thank you for the interview.

JG: It has been a pleasure.

Interview with Carmen Kuscus at the DCCT Offices, Heathfield, Cape Town on 13 November 2015

MJ: Greetings. How are you?

CK: I'm good, thank you.

MJ: May I ask you what is your name?

CK: My name is Carmen (fingerspelt), and my sign name is C movement to forehead and changed to a T.

MJ: Your surname?

CK: Kuscus (fingerspelt).

MJ: Thank you. Were you deaf from birth?

CK: Yes, I was born deaf.

MJ: Which school did you attend?

CK: The school I attended was Wittebome.

MJ: Which years?

CK: I entered in 1984 at the age of 7. I started late. I finished school in 1995.

MJ: Did you enjoy your time at school?

CK: Yes, I did but I also had bad experiences. School was oppressive.

MJ: Why?

CK: Yes, maybe when I was busy cleaning and playing and I did something wrong, the Dominican sisters punished you, not with thin ruler, but a thick one. What was the problem? It was that you weren't allowed to use sign language you must be oral and use lip-reading.

MJ: Oral method only.

CK: Yes, all the teachers did not sign only used the oral method. When they wrote on the board we didn't understand what they were saying. Maybe they signed a little bit. The hearing teachers taught by speaking and this caused a problem for me to understand. Why, because the teachers didn't explain what they had written on the board. You would just write and copy down all that was on the board. At age 18, I tried to finish Grade 10 because I had only a little bit of school left. But they said sorry you can only do Grade 8.

MJ: You had to finish.

CK: For two years I remained in the same subject. Grade 1 took two years, Grade 2 took two years, Grade 3 took 2 years. I don't know why? I wanted to study and I was good at English and did well at writing, passing well. When I finished school, I had a problem. I found it difficult to get a job, meeting many dead ends. Why, because I only had Grade 8.

MJ: Getting a job without matric is very difficult.

CK: Exactly. But I have a qualification, a certificate in baking (fingerspelt). This is good. It is true. I wasn't born in Cape Town, I was born where? In Kimberley. I was born there. My family is all there. When I finished school, I went home looking for work. I had a certificate but couldn't get anything. 'Sorry you're deaf, can't help you'. It was so disheartening. For one year I stayed at home. I thought I must talk to my mother: 'Please, let me go back to Cape Town. Maybe I will get work there'. Because, you see my two sisters, both who are deaf, are here in Cape Town. I came here to Cape Town.

MJ: Your sisters stay here in Cape Town.

CK: Yes, they are married and have children here in Cape Town. I went out looking for work for six months without success. I was just whiling away the time. Then luckily, DeafSA asked me to work with children. 'That's fine'. I worked with the children in a creche. I agreed and did this for 5 years. Then the funding finished and the contract came to an end. So, I was without a job again. I managed to get another job with DeafSA. I worked at a waiting room as a receptionist - this work was different. If Deaf people have a problem with their bank card, or getting an ID from Home Affairs, I used to help them fill in the forms. I did this for five years. After these five years, I searched for a job with the right money. I worked with my sister. It was difficult here because the hearing oppressed the deaf. There were problems there with regards to communication and respect. For example, when you want to call a deaf person's attention you tap them on the shoulder. They wouldn't do this. They would throw something on your back. I wasn't happy there. I left this job and went to work at Mary Khin school (in Observatory). I was working as a teacher's assistant. I was happy there and worked there for a number of years. I had a good relationship with the deaf children there, I would sign to them. I love signing to the children. After this I moved to work with DCCT.

MJ: What work do you do at DCCT?

CK: I am a development worker. I help those Deaf people with problems accessing grants and doing their banking. I run workshops every month for groups of the aged or mothers. I teach and accompany them. I do that.

MJ: Do you enjoy your work here?

CK: Yes, I do very much.

MJ: You support Deaf people here?

CK: Yes.

MJ: Did your school offer Matric?

CK: No, they didn't have it even though they have it today. After school I wanted to study further but I could not. The teacher said I must go for a skills development class but I wasn't happy with this. I didn't want to spend all day cooking. I wanted to read and write but it didn't work out. But my school was a Catholic school. But my religion is not Catholic. I went to Catholic Church as I was growing up at school. But when school was finished and after school I didn't become a Catholic either. I asked my mother 'Can I change religion and become a Catholic' but she said no. 'Your Church is Methodist'. So, I had to accept this and carried on. This is why the Deaf come here, because everyone signs. That's how it is...

MJ: Does the Methodist Church have Deaf people in Church?

CK: In DCCT we are very few Methodists. My husband and I go to the Methodist Church. But the minister there understands. We come here because we can follow the preaching, the singing, there is a projector that shows the words of the hymns and we can read and understand.

MJ: So, the hearing church doesn't?

CK: My hearing children go to Sunday school on Sunday.

MJ: Your children are hearing?

CK: Yes, they are both hearing.

MJ: When you were growing up at school did you have contact with deaf children from other Deaf schools?

CK: Yes, we did. In school at the time, we played sports. Children were chosen from different schools to become part of the Western Province netball team. But it was a little bit of a challenge and frustrating because of the whites. When we played netball, it was fine because we practiced and played together. But when sitting on the bus we didn't sit together. Whites sat in the front of the bus and we the coloured children sat at the back. It was apartheid. We will travel all over and insisted that we be kept apart. I used to talk to the white boys but they used to get angry. They told me not to talk to them, to leave them along but I ignored them and carried on talking. So, it was a little difficult. When bathing and after finishing, 'It's your [a white person] chance to bath now'. The white person would say 'No, I don't want to bath here. I'll bath on the other side'. (Shrugs her shoulders) It was difficult. Now it is fine but before, yes, it was a problem. It was an attitude problem. In Worcester, they used Afrikaans sign language and I didn't understand them. There were conflicts and we would fight a little bit. It was the signing we didn't understand. This was a problem.

MJ: So, you had contact with the Afrikaans Deaf schools in Worcester (Used the incorrect sign)?

CK: (Corrected the sign) - two handed British W.

MJ: Did you have contact with the school in Hout Bay?

CK: No, never. We never had contact. They were on their own and separate. They were an oral school, so they never signed. I could never go into the school and sign. Never! We never had contact with the Hout Bay school.

MJ: If you were never allowed to sign at school, in fact, you were punished if you were caught signing. So how did you learn how to sign?

CK: I used to watch the older Deaf children. I used to learn from them. At school, they were the older children and I was still small and I'd pick it up from them. It was the same in the family, I learnt from my older sister. She would sign to me and I would understand.

MJ: So the older children at school were teaching you sign language?

CK: Yes, we would pick it up from them.

MJ: But there you would be punished if caught?

CK: Yes, that's why we had to hide our signing.

MJ: Where did you sign at school, so you were not seen?

CK: We would sign under the trees, or behind a wall where we could not be seen. If we saw a sister coming we would put our hands next to our sides so they wouldn't see that we had been signing.

MJ: Just put your hands down by your sides?

CK: Yes, just put our hands down.

MJ: So, behind the walls was a good place to sign.

CK: Yes. But now there has been changes. Now they use sign language at school.

MJ: Do you know in which year this change happened?

CK: No, I am not sure when it started. I finished in 1995 so maybe in about 1998. Maybe then it started.

MJ: It was after apartheid?

CK: Yes, the change happened after apartheid.

MJ: Now do you use sign language at home? Do your children know sign language?

CK: Yes, they do.

MJ: Your children know how to communicate with you in sign language?

CK: Yes, they do. They help me. When I go to the school and the teacher talks to me and I don't understand, they sign to me. Then I understand. They communicate with me.

MJ: When you were at school they forced you to use the oral method. Could you follow the lessons?

CK: For me the oral method was difficult. I am profoundly deaf. I used to wear hearing aids.

MJ: Did they help you?

CK: No, I only hear a few sounds like birds tweeting. However, when someone speaks to me I can't hear them.

MJ: After school, you came here for church which priests did you meet here?

CK: The priests ...

MJ: Before Fr Mark.

CK: Before him Fr Michael was here. At the school, there was Fr Michael, then Fr Cyril, then Fr Peter John (Pearson) and then now Fr Mark. These are the ones that I have known.

MJ: (Clarifying the sign for Fr Peter John). How did DCCT start? Do you know its history?

CK: At the time that it started in 1987, I was still very small. I didn't know it, I was still growing up. But luckily, my sister always took me to see the Deaf church there in Rondebosch. I could see that there were many Deaf people there and they were using sign language. I found this interesting. Then I remember DCCT but when this was I don't remember. Maybe this was in about 1990. Then I remember DCCT and learned about it until today.

MJ: Thank you very much. Just a last question! In your life, which people inspired you a lot.

CK: My hearing sister, she knew how to communicate with me. Even though I was six months at school in Cape Town and only 2 months at home, she still learnt sign language a little and could communicate with me. She inspired me. I could sign to her but she didn't find it easy to sign to me because she only knew a little sign language. She at least tried.

MJ: So, thank you very much for all your help.

CK: It is a pleasure you are welcome.

Interview with Suzanne Lombard at DCCT Offices, Heathfield, Cape Town on 13 November 2015

MJ: Thank you for being willing to come for this interview.

SL: It is a pleasure.

MJ: May I ask you what is your name and your sign name?

SL: My name is Suzanne (fingerspelt) and my surname is Lombard (fingerspelt). My sign name is V from jaw to temple.

MJ: Which school did you attend?

SL: I went to Wittebome school.

MJ: During which years?

SL: I can't quite remember. I was six or seven years old when I started school.

MJ: In which year did you start?

SL: I'm getting old, I can't remember. I started in 1967 and I finished in 1978.

MJ: When at school, how were you taught?

SL: At Wittebome school there, we were taught in the oral method. It was very difficult.

MJ: Why?

SL: Because we were not allowed to sign. You were not allowed.

MJ: They refused to allow you to sign?

SL: Yes, when we played we could sign outside, but in the class, not. In the class, we were not allowed to sign, it was very difficult. Only the oral method was allowed. It was the same in the hostel. You had to use the oral method. You had to use your voice. It was very difficult.

MJ: Are you the only one in your family who is deaf? Were you born deaf?

SL: No, I was born hearing. I went to a hearing school. At the age of about 6 or 7 I went completely deaf.

MJ: After that, you moved to Wittebome school?

SL: Yes, I first moved to Durban to my grandma to get help. She wrote and applied to the school and I was sent to Cape Town, to Wittebome.

MJ: How did you get to Cape Town?

SL: I travelled by train from Durban to Cape Town every year. It took two days on the train.

MJ: Did you travel alone?

SL: No, my grandma travelled with me.

MJ: So, you travelled together. She accompanied you?

SL: Yes, that's right.

MJ: Where is your home town?

SL: I grew up in Ladysmith (fingerspelt) on a farm.

MJ: It took you two days to travel from Durban to Cape Town?

SL: No, it took two days to travel from Ladysmith to Cape Town. The return journey took two days too. The first time I did it, it felt so far. I was tired out by the journey.

MJ: This was in 1967?

SL: Yes, that's right.

MJ: In which year did you finish your schooling in Cape Town?

SL: I finished school in 1978.

MJ: What Standard did you complete?

SL: I finished Standard 7. The teaching wasn't very good. The teachers didn't really encourage the deaf. There was too much focus on the oral method. Two years were the same, Standard 2 and Standard 3. No, it wasn't a good experience.

MJ: Matric?

SL: There was no Matric at the school. I don't have a Matric.

MJ: So, after Standard 7 you went out to work?

SL: Yes, that's right. I went home first. Then my mother took me to Durban. She worked for Jewish people. They helped me get a job.

MJ: What jobs did you have?

SL: I started working in a clothing factory.

MJ: You were doing sewing?

SL: Yes.

MJ: For how many years were you sewing?

SL: I did this job for three years. Then I found another job working with electrical transformers.

MJ: Did you enjoy the jobs you did?

SL: I enjoyed working with the transformers but not the sewing. Other Deaf people were employed by the electrical company.

MJ: Were you working with any Deaf people when you were sewing?

SL: No, none at all. I was alone.

MJ: Heavens, so you were all alone.

SL: Yes, all alone.

MJ: That was difficult.

SL: Yes, it was.

MJ: Are you married?

SL: Yes, I am.

MJ: How did you meet your husband?

SL: I met him at school. We were both at the same school.

MJ: What work did he do?

SL: In the past he did upholstery. He covered chairs.

MJ: Did he learn upholstery at school?

SL: No, he learnt for himself. It was his first job because someone taught him how to do this work. He didn't learn it at school. He learnt how to work as a tailor and did sewing at school but not upholstery.

MJ: When you were at school did you have contact with other deaf schools?

SL: No, not really.

MJ: Did you have contact with white or African deaf schools?

SL: No, this was the time of apartheid. We never had contact with whites.

MJ: Did you not even play sport against them?

SL: Coloured people used to meet but never with whites.

MJ: So, there was no mixing?

SL: No, we didn't mix.

MJ: You were kept apart.

SL: Yes.

MJ: Did you ever meet white or black people outside of school?

SL: No.

MJ: Did you have contact in the work environment?

SL: When I was working I wrote a letter to Fr John. I wanted the Deaf to meet and interact. Fr John came to our house. There we started Bible study. This was the first time I met Deaf whites. We used to move from home to home for the Bible study. Fr John initiated this.

MJ: Was this in Durban or Cape Town?

SL: It was in Durban. Not in Cape Town.

MJ: When did you first meet Fr John?

SL: After school I went back home to work in Durban. It was then that I wrote the letter and then I met him.

MJ: At the church there? At his church?

SL: Yes, at his church in Mariannhill. There is a beautiful farm there.

MJ: Do you remember which year that you went there?

SL: I don't remember exactly.

MJ: Was it before or after you got married?

SL: It was before I got married. Fr John used to come and pick me up in his car and we used to go to Mass with the Deaf. White deaf people were there. It was here that I first met white Deaf.

MJ: Was it a good relationship [with the white Deaf]?

SL: Yes, there was a good relationship.

MJ: Did friendships develop with one another?

SL: Yes, they did.

MJ: Was there separation or apartheid in the church?

SL: No, whites and coloureds all celebrated together. Everyone came together.

MJ: In which year did you return to Cape Town?

SL: I got married in 1984. Fr John married me.

MJ: In Durban?

SL: Yes, in Durban.

MJ: Were you married in Mariannhill?

SL: No, we were married in Sydenham in Durban. My church was there.

MJ: Was your home in Sydenham?

SL: Stephen [husband] came from Cape Town. In December I got married and then in January 1984, we moved to Cape Town. Stephen and I came down by train.

MJ: So you had to leave your work in Durban behind?

SL: Yes, I had to.

MJ: Was it the work with the electrical company?

SL: Yes, it was.

MJ: Did you meet friends here in Cape Town?

SL: All my friends were in Cape Town. All the friends I knew well from school live here.

MJ: You were happy to come here?

SL: Yes, that is right.

MJ: Did you have work when you got to Cape Town?

SL: Before we stayed in Mitchell's Plain, I took up a sewing job. Then Michelle [daughter] was born and when she was two years old, we moved to stay here at the Deaf hostel. Fr Cyril wrote a letter to me and Stephen asking if we would be house mother and house father. We would work with the Deaf. We moved here to the Deaf hostel when Michelle was two years old. This was in 1986, no sorry, 1987 we moved here.

MJ: You lived and worked here at the Deaf hostel?

SL: Yes, this used to be a Deaf hostel where the deaf used to sleep here before.

MJ: Were you part of the starting and developing of DCCT?

SL: Yes, I was. We started in 1987. This was the time of apartheid. Fr Cyril thought we must start a club to respond to the social needs of the Deaf. So DCCT was established.

MJ: So DCCT was established to help the Deaf?

SL: Yes, that's right. We used to cook and sell the food to raise funds to support DCCT projects.

MJ: Before there was a deaf group called SANCD. Did you know this group?

SL: Yes, I had heard of this group but I never socialised with them. This group helped more the whites. At that time, the whites were the same as the Dominican school in Cape Town and the Worcester school. The education for the whites was better, ours was of a dubious quality. There was no matric and so looking for work now without a matric is difficult. Whites got good jobs, they were taught well. They had special classes unlike us. We were not taught well.

MJ: Getting work without a matric was very difficult.

SL: Yes, very difficult.

MJ: One needs money to support the family.

SL: Yes.

MJ: DCCT works mostly with poor people?

SL: DCCT includes all people. All people are welcome. Before DCCT, Stephen worked with upholstery. Then the company collapsed and he got another job at Coca Cola. Then he was asked if he would come to work here at DCCT. Coca Cola sponsored the payment of his salary. He agreed.

MJ: So both you and Stephen worked at DCCT from 1987?

SL: Yes, that's correct. We stayed at the hostel then.

MJ: So DCCT has grown and developed over the years?

SL: Yes, but it wasn't easy but it has continued.

MJ: You must be happy to see your work having grown and grown.

SL: Fr Cyril planted a seed, he told us to carry on and to develop it.

MJ: See it grow into a big tree.

SL: Yes.

MJ: So the work you do now for DCCT is sewing. Do you get money from this?

SL: If we sell we get a little money. Sometimes we get nothing at all. But it doesn't matter. We don't worry about this. It is alright.

MJ: You worked with Fr Cyril for many years?

SL: Yes, until Fr Cyril moved to Macau (said), China (sign). Sign corrected to Macau (bent forefinger on cheek, twist twice).

MJ: What happened to the Deaf community here when Fr Cyril moved to Macau?

SL: We stayed and continued as before. We used to have church here at the deaf hostel and then we moved to Rondebosch. Then we moved to the Bastion in Newlands and now we are back here.

MJ: You moved back here when the deaf hostel was closed?

SL: Yes, that's right.

MJ: The deaf people stayed here in the hostel, they ate here, went to work outside and then came back to the hostel at night.

SL: That's right.

MJ: Where did the Deaf community socialise?

SL: We socialised in the hall on the Third Sunday after church. We kept this day for church and to socialise. We have continued this for years.

MJ: This is now the DCCT offices?

SL: That's right. We are growing and growing now. DeafSA is still over there in Newlands. We are here. People must choose where want to go.

MJ: Is there a difference between DeafSA and DCCT?

SL: DCCT is local. DeafSA deals with national things.

MJ: Is there a good relationship between DeafSA and DCCT.

SL: No, not really that good.

MJ: Why do you think this is so?

SL: During the Apartheid years we were linked to them. But they only gave us information. There wasn't a good relationship. We feel that don't really encourage the deaf and give them opportunities. But they don't.

MJ: I never knew the difference between DeafSA and DCCT. Thank you for clarifying this. Do you have any questions you would like to ask me?

SL: No, I not really. Thank you.

MJ: I thank you for your help.

SL: It is a pleasure.

MJ: I read a story in the newspaper that said that there was a problem once for children being punished for signing. Your name was mentioned in the paper. Can you tell me about this incident? Do you remember it?

SL: We were not allowed to sign. During the 1976 riot our class boycotted school. Why, because we wanted Matric. The sisters said no. They refused. We all protested for Matric. But it was refused. We also wanted to use sign language in class. The hard of hearing can manage in school but the deaf not. When the teacher was writing on the board and speaking we couldn't follow. We were not allowed to sign and we had to keep our hands behind our backs. Thus, we failed. We failed school. When we had opportunity to go outside school we learnt more than inside. Inside school we only learnt a little. Our minds needed to be opened because we didn't know much.

MJ: So, the sisters refused this.

SL: Yes, they did. When compared to the Dominican school in Cape Town, their education was good. They encouraged and prepared the children to get office jobs. They had computers we didn't. At our time there were no computers. We lost out.

MJ: This distresses and disturbs you?

SL: Yes, I am distressed by this. This was in the past during apartheid.

MJ: So how did you learn sign language?

SL: When I was little I used to watch other Deaf people sign and I learnt from them. At the same time, I used to love reading. My mother worked for Jewish people. They gave me some books to read regularly. I love reading. I spent lots of time reading. Even now I still read. The Deaf don't like reading. They don't have books because they can't afford them, they are expensive. But that Jewish family always gave me books to read.

MJ: Reading is very important for increasing your knowledge.

SL: Yes, it is. It is very important to read.

MJ: Thank you very much for your time.

SL: It is a pleasure.

Interview with Faith Cronwright at the DCCT offices, Heathfield, Cape Town on 16 November 2015

MJ: Greetings, how are you?

FC: I'm fine, how are you?

MJ: I am fine, thank you. What is your name?

FC: My name is Faith (fingerspelt), my surname is Cronwright (fingerspelt). My sign name is Faith (sign).

MJ: Faith, I want to ask you a question? At which did you attend school?

FC: I went to the Wittebome Deaf School.

MJ: In which years?

FC: I started in 1962 and I finished in 1976. I completed Std 8.

MJ: The school that you attended - did the sisters teach you in sign language or was it through the oral method?

FC: When I was small, I did not know sign language. I was oral. I am hard-of-hearing and I could talk. I was with Sister Mannes and she cared for five of us in a class. Sister spoke to us orally. Later growing up I picked up sign language from the older Deaf children. I didn't learn it from the sisters.

MJ: Was sign language ever used in school?

FC: No, sign language was never allowed, we had to talk. It was only the oral method. In fact, if the sisters saw us signing then they used to punish us, by taking a ruler and hitting us on our fingers and hands. They'd say: 'You are not allowed to sign you must be oral'. We had to keep our hands behind our backs and speak.

MJ: When did you use sign language?

FC: When growing up, I was staying at boarding school from the age of two. When growing up I was very good at sign language. In boarding school, when sister wanted a meeting with the Deaf children, she would call me to stand in front of the all boarders and sign to the other children. When the children responded to sister I would have to tell the sister what they were saying. I was acting as an interpreter. Whenever anything happened it was always me who was asked to stand up and sign to the others. Other than in the boarding hostel, signing was not allowed in the school.

MJ: So, you were able to use sign language in hostel!

FC: In the hostel we could sign but not at school. We had to talk and were not allowed to sign.

MJ: So, in school you had to hide your signing (Incorrect sign used - interpreting rather than signing. Gives rise to a confused response).

FC: That's right. I used to help the sisters. Oh, I forgot to mention one thing. There was one incident when I was signing for one of the sisters. She was talking about the punishment that will be given to children who have been naughty. On some nights we used to have film shows. I used to sign the dialogue of the movie for the Deaf children to follow. The boys used to sit on one side and girls on the other. The names of the naughty children were listed on the notice board. If your name was there you had to miss the movie and go to sleep early that night. The sisters would say: 'You can't watch the movie, you must go to your bed and sleep'. On one occasion, my name appeared last on the list. 'I was told you have been naughty, so we are going to punish you. Go to bed early.' I asked the sister: 'Who is going to sign then, if I have to go to my room and sleep? It's not fair.'

But, on the whole, I was willing to sign and interpret for the sisters and to help the other Deaf children. I was accepted this and was happy to do it.

MJ: How did you find schooling and studying through the oral method? Was it easy or it hard?

FC: We had a very good teacher Mrs Smith. She taught us well, a very good teacher. She gave us examples, and this helped us understand. It was easier for me because I wasn't fully deaf. For those who were completely deaf, it was more difficult to explain especially when it came to history and geography. I liked Maths and English, they were fine. If she gave good examples, then I could understand.

MJ: Outside of school, what was your involvement in the church?

FC: I was brought up in a Muslim family. When I came to boarding school, I went to church at the school. When I came home during the holidays, I would do the sign of the cross and my father would say: "No, no, no we are Muslim we don't do this." I told him the school does this. He said: "No, no. You mustn't do it." I left it and accepted it. Most of my family is Muslim but I didn't know about their religion. I was brought up in a Christian school, a Catholic school.

When growing up, school was fine and went well. But in 1976 I wanted to carry on studying further up to Matric. The sisters said: "No, you can't." At age 16, we had to finish and leave school. All of us who were expected to leave school, protested and boycotted. We sang and wanted the freedom to go as far as Matric. The sisters saw us as naughty. I was a naughty person as I used to talk to the boys. We thought we could ask the sisters to allow us to carry on with our studies, that they would allow an easy access for us. All we wanted was to finish Matric. But we weren't allowed to.

MJ: Did you achieve getting Matric?

FC: No, I managed to get to Grade 9. Sorry, I finished Std 7. I wanted to study further but my family were poor. They couldn't afford for me to study further and pay for it themselves. So, I had to go out and look for work.

MJ: What different types of work did you do?

FC: I worked in a knitting mill for three years making material. I worked one week in the morning shift, one week the afternoon shift and one week the night shift. Eventually I left that work. You worked over the weekends and you never had a break. I gave it up. Then I worked at embroidery, on the sewing machines that did embroidery. Then at the same time as working, I came here on the Third Sunday to the Hostel for church. My father and mother were not happy when I told them I was going to church. I told them that I am going. My friends used to pick me up and I would come to church with them on the Third Sunday. We would pray and have talks and socialise. Bishop Green was here at that time. He preached here on the Third Sunday. He was a priest then. After church we would have lunch at the hostel and socialise every month.

At work I was more in the hearing world. I used to socialise with hearing friends. But later I decided: 'No, it is better that I go back to my Deaf friends.' So, I came to the Mass on the Third Sunday regularly and socialised with the Deaf. After one of the Masses, Stephen [Lombard] asked us: 'What problems do the Deaf have and what do they need?' We reflected on the social problems affecting Deaf people. Father Cyril said we need to start a group and build it up to help Deaf people ourselves. We didn't know how to do this. So, he helped us and we tried. At the same time, I used to interpret for the Deaf when they went to the doctor or to hospital or the courts. There were no interpreters available then. Stephen and I used to do the interpreting for them at hospitals and the courts.

I was still working as an embroidery operator. I was pregnant with my third child and was at home on maternity leave. One day Wilma (Newhoudt) and Ronel (Davids) came to my home and asked me if I couldn't become a secretary for DCCT. I said: 'No, I can't I need to work for money'. But she was persistent and said: 'Please, please come help us.' I asked whether they could afford to pay me the same salary as I was receiving. They said: 'Nearly the same.' In the end, I accepted to help. I worked as a secretary in the office. At that time, we had Church in Rondebosch. All the Deaf people used to come there. We would sell food at different functions to raise money. The Deaf people became naughty and destroyed the church's property at St Joseph's College. The priest said we couldn't come back anymore. We were stuck and frustrated.

Then we moved to the Bastion and had church there. We also opened the offices there at the Bastion in 1994. In 1995, I started work there. I had to adjust myself and because I am hard of hearing, I had to adjust to working with the Deaf community. It wasn't easy because the

Deaf people can get angry very quickly. You must know how to approach the deaf community. It is not easy. They don't like being controlled. It is not easy.

We developed programmes and projects for Deaf people. Stephen was the administrator and I worked as his secretary. The organisation had mothers' groups, women's groups, Literacy programme - Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET), audiology, computer training. We had various programmes and we tried to build up different programmes. The organisation expanded. It started with me, Stephen, Wilma, Suzanne and Sue. In 1987, we started and it developed from there. Father Cyril planted a seed and told us we must carry on and so it grew and developed from there. We have been going now for 28 years since 1987.

MJ: Congratulations.

FC: But before that, we started with only a small programme. But we started to grow more and more then we started Arts and Culture but that original programme has developed into 5 projects: Music, Dance, Drama, Art, and Environment. With this the Deaf can't hear but they feel the rhythm. We give them opportunity to know how to dance to music. They like it a lot. We also get funding from the Lotto for Arts and Culture.

The department of social development gave us some money to help us. It is the only one funding us. We have to continue to ask other people for more funding, so these projects can grow. So, we had to do fundraising. It is not easy to fundraise.

Then we moved here to the old Deaf hostel. DCCT continued to expand. The Deaf community is not easy. It is a challenge working with the Deaf community. One has to understand their ways of expression, how they feel, find out what they need and you have to grasp their meaning. It wasn't easy. We tried to do things and work for building up the Deaf community.

MJ: You were working with the grassroots?

FC: Yes, that's right, the grassroots.

MJ: I wanted to ask you about the relationship between old SANCD and DCCT and then DeafSA?

FC: The SANCD had mainly hearing people in the office. The Deaf used to go to their Observatory offices to ask for help and assistance in finding work. But what they saw they didn't like it because SANCD did not really help the Deaf community. If they went on their own they couldn't get jobs. Some would go but not understand what was being said to them because the SANCD people were hearing. The SANCD people didn't know sign language at all. They were hearing and couldn't understand the Deaf people's signing, so they kept saying: "What are you saying? What are you saying?" It wasn't easy. Then they changed their name to DeafSA. The national office is in Johannesburg. They have a provincial office here in Cape Town at the Bastion. We are affiliated to them but they haven't been very supportive. They are not supportive of their affiliates. We do things on our own now. We asked them for

funding and they said they would help us but they have never really helped us. If you have a problem that needs solving and you ask them, they don't really help. They are not very supportive.

MJ: When you were at Wittebome school did you have contact with other deaf schools, like Worcester or the one in Cape Town?

FC: We had contact mostly with Worcester. Why because we played netball against each other. We had contact with them. Cape Town I didn't know that school. This school was for old people and I was too small and young. I don't know about the one in Cape Town. But we had more contact with the school in Worcester. They would come and play netball against us and we would go to them and they would come to us. We had a good relationship with this school. It was called Nuwe Hoop School. It was a coloured school like ours. We had good relations with them.

MJ: Did you have contact with black or white schools?

FC: Never, at that time there was apartheid. We were a black school and we didn't have contact with white schools like Hout Bay or De la Bat. We Coloured people stayed at Wittebome. Later another school was set up called Noluthando. There is also Mary Kihn. We didn't interact with those schools. We just stayed had African children come to our school from Johannesburg and Port Elizabeth. But then other schools were started. There is also a new one in Durban. Now they stopped coming to Wittebome and went to the new schools set up for them.

MJ: Was the sign language similar between the different schools, like Wittebome, Nuwe Hoop and Worcester? And Hout Bay?

FC: Hout Bay was oral. All the schools were oral. The sign language at Nuwe Hoop was different to ours. But we could understand them. Deaf people learn to understand one another, even though the signs are different, we can understand and communicate with each other.

MJ: How are the different sign languages different? Is it the structure or the signs that make it different?

FC: There were differences in our sign languages. In our Wittebome school we followed the Irish sign language. There in Worcester it was different. I don't know their system. I don't know who taught them sign language. They were different for example, we would sign 'thank you' this way[7] and they would sign.[8] When you saw it you understood and realised what was being meant. The problem though is that we now want to make sign language the twelfth

[7] With the one-handed B hand form from the chin moving into neutral space.

[8] With the same one-handed B handshape but the movement originated from the forehead away into neutral space.

official language in the country. But there are so many regional variations it is difficult to know which one is to be the official one. We need one language first.

MJ: Here in the Deaf community in Cape Town, are there any conflicts between different groups of Deaf people, like Muslim, or Afrikaans-speaking, or various Christian churches? Or are all Deaf people working together one another?

FC: Before DCCT had all the different races of Deaf people. They were all integrated and mixed together, Muslims, white, black and coloured. It was fine. Only later did Deaf people split into different groups. The leaders came and took the Muslims away, the black Deaf people also moved away, and even the whites. Before this we were all together. Only a few people respect DCCT and they still come. But for myself, I feel that the Muslims who went to Muslim schools, don't fully understand their religion. The others try to sign. Afrikaners too sign. But they feel lost. They go to church, yes, but mostly to socialise and to get information. That's why we in DCCT we come here, church is here. We follow the Catholic faith here and follow the traditions Catholic faith. But we give lots of information of what is happening outside that people may not know. Some of the deaf have no access, they are stuck, they have no information. That's why at the Third Sunday we always give people information and let them know what's happening, what's happening. Then the Deaf know what's happening in the world. The different groups we encourage to come to church even though they are from other churches. We don't try to convert them, we respect them. Eventually, they will all come back. On the Third Sunday, they come together and we let them know that they are welcome.

MJ: In your experience, what is the biggest problem for Deaf people?

FC: The biggest problem for Deaf people is finding work. Why? People need work experience. This is a big challenge we have in this community. It is the number one problem for the Deaf community. When they have to apply for a job and complete the forms, they don't know what to do. We try to make them aware that when they go to make a job application they can take an interpreter with them to explain to them what is being asked and to assist them. The big challenge is finding work for the deaf. There isn't much available.

They live off their pensions but the pension isn't a lot of money. It isn't enough. It isn't easy for them. For the deaf to get work isn't easy. It is related to the problem of their education. They don't have a good enough education to get good jobs. So, they are stuck getting access to jobs.

MJ: Has education improved now or has it got worse? For example, has education for the deaf reached an equal footing with the hearing or does it still lag behind?

FC: Education has improved for deaf people now. At Wittebome they now have Matric. Two years after I finished school they introduced Matric. They give you a certificate but there is a problem with the language.

MJ: When you were at school, do you think that if you were taught in sign language it would have helped you?

FC: Yes, definitely! As Deaf people you understand sign language. It is difficult to understand what is being said orally. If Deaf people were taught in sign language, they would understand easier and pass better. I agree that it will be better for them. It was because they were taught orally that they didn't understand. If they had sign language in class, they would have understood better.

MJ: A problem might arise after school for Deaf people in the workplace? Very few hearing people understand sign language. How will they communicate in the workplace?

FC: At work, when hearing people make fun of you or laugh at Deaf people, the Deaf people can get very angry and want to fight. We always explain to the hearing people that you talk, and we sign, and explain that you mustn't just laugh. It is the same. You need to explain and say if you want to learn sign language, fine. We can teach them sign language, basic sign language so it makes it easy to communicate. The Deaf will always know when the hearing look at you and say are you criticising me. Deaf people are very suspicious. Why are you looking at me? Are you talking about me? The Deaf get very angry but they must know. We try to let the hearing know more about the Deaf community, what their culture is, and different things.

MJ: Access needs to improve?

FC: Yes, we must try because we must to explain to the hearing in the workplace how to communicate with Deaf people. So, we do drama to show how to go about it. Then the hearing can understand. For example, if Deaf people are working as seamstresses and they need to communicate with someone else they have to stop their work in order to speak to the other people. Now a hearing person will ask them: ‘Why you stopping work?’ but not understand that they have to in order to communicate. So, hearing people need to understand how to communicate with Deaf people. There is a need for more awareness.

Sometimes in the workplace an interpreter can come to help with communication if there is a problem.

MJ: Thank you very much for this interview.

FC: It has been a pleasure.

Interview with Sr Liguori Töns OP held at St Mary's Convent, Hyde Park, Johannesburg on 16 December 2015

LT: What is this for?

MJ: I am writing a history of the Catholic Church among the Deaf so that I can type up the interviews. I am recording it so that I can have an accurate transcript then I can type it up. I don't have to rely on memory and on taking notes while you talk.

LT: You can cut out what you don't need.

MJ: Thank you very much for agreeing to help with the research. When did you get involved in teaching the Deaf?

LT: I came in 1954 to St Vincent's.

MJ: And you were teaching primary or high school?

LT: At St Vincent's - everything. And I once said to Sr Thomasia, who was the principal, every year or every two years she had another class for me. And I said, you know, give me once a chance to get to know something because every year I had to ... 'No, no', she said, 'this is good, you get lots of experience and thank you'. You know... But in the end, you know nothing.

MJ: Thomasia was the principal then. She was principal for a few years, like 30 or 35 years?

LT: Yes.

MJ: What memories do you have of Sr Thomasia? What type of person was she? What was she doing? How did she get involved in working with the Deaf? Do you know anything like that?

LT: I suppose ... I really wouldn't know.

MJ: How did you get involved in teaching the Deaf?

LT: I was in training college and one day Mother General came and she just talked with me. And she said to me: 'You know at the end, I think, you go to St Vincent's'.

MJ: Why?

LT: Why? I know nothing about it. 'You know I think you are alright for that'. So that is how it happened. And I must say I had enjoyed all my life at St Vincent's. You know it was good.

MJ: Working with the children, you enjoyed working with the Deaf children?

LT: Ja, but as I say every year or every two years I was stuck into another class.

MJ: And at that time were you teaching all the subjects in every class? Or did the children move from teacher to teacher?

LT: No, no. In the primary school they got everything but in the high school it was a bit different.

MJ: Were you teaching in sign language or in the oral method?

LT: No, not allowed. Purely oral.

MJ: And how were you teaching orally? What was the philosophy or practice behind it?

LT: The children must be prepared for life. And outside people talk so you have to talk. You have to learn how to talk because if you start signing to the people then they won't know. The message will be queer perhaps, with this. It was to help deaf people integrate into society.

MJ: Was this the official policy of the government or the official policy of the Dominican sisters in the schools? How was it considered official?

LT: I suppose it was the school in the first place but I don't know how much the government was interested in this. In those days, I wasn't interested either. I was just trying to get involved with the hearing impaired and not call them deaf.

MJ: Why not call them deaf?

LT: Because I think there was also some stigma there. But hearing impaired could be anybody.

MJ: Did you work with the children in the hostels or only in the classroom?

LT: All over. Every teacher was also a hostel mother.

MJ: So, everyone took turns?

LT: (Nods).

MJ: Was there any time when you did use sign language? Maybe not in the classroom, but in the hostels?

LT: Ah, I did. To me it was to make contact. If I only talk all the time and they just look at you, then you know that they are not getting what you are saying. For me, the main thing was to be able to communicate with them. Like if you don't know Spanish and you go to Spain ... you have to know that language. For me it was the same with the hearing impaired. You have to be able to communicate in the way that they can communicate. But officially it wasn't allowed.

MJ: What happened if you used it in the classroom or outside? There were no repercussions?

LT: You had to be a bit careful, you know. Who is there and . . .

MJ: But the children themselves, they used sign language?

LT: (Nods).

MJ: How did they learn this?

LT: It was born in them. It wasn't really sign language, it was gestures.

MJ: How would you see the difference?

LT: If I want to express something I can express it in any way but if I am to use sign language it is like any other language, you need to know exactly. It isn't really an answer.

MJ: You would say that you were using more gestures than sign language when you were teaching.

LT: At the time there was no official sign language. So, you have to make do, I had to make myself understood. Because official sign language in our school, certainly wasn't accepted.

MJ: In which year did you finish at St Vincent's? Because you were principal for a time?

LT: It was at the end of '77.

MJ: And when did you become principal?

LT: '69.

MJ: You were eight years there as principal.

LT: Nine years it was, and then I went to Woodlands and I was principal down there.

MJ: When you were still at St Vincent's there seemed to be a change because the way of teaching moved from oral to more use of Total Communication. Were you part of bringing that change or how did it happen that Total Communication became more acceptable in the schools, at St Vincent's?

LT: I don't really know. I suppose people also realised that you don't really get to give what you want to give to the pupils if you only talk because they lose out.

MJ: Did you notice an improvement in marks or children doing better in school because of the change in policy and the change in method?

LT: I suppose the children in themselves were happier about it because we had to punish them if they used their hands. But if I can use my hands and at the same time try to talk, you know, it is more satisfying.

MJ: How was it to have to punish them for signing? It was like a discipline, part of the discipline in the class.

LT: What was the punishment? It had to be something big it wasn't just anything. Real punishment but ... I don't remember. It didn't worry me those things. To me the main thing was to be able to communicate, so whether I used my mouth or my hands, my feet, or never mind my whole body, that was for me the most important.

MJ: When you moved to St Thomas School in Kingwilliamstown was it a big change to move from a white school to a black school?

LT: The only thing that was the same was that they were also hearing impaired. But otherwise they were the same kind of children. Children with a need and a desire to be able to communicate.

MJ: What you were teaching at St Vincent's you did the same at St Thomas'?

LT: (Nods in agreement).

MJ: Was St Thomas a purely oral school or did you use sign language?

LT: The school was officially oral but...

MJ: you used what was practical.

LT: (Nods in agreement).

MJ: How many years were you down there at St Thomas?

LT: Nine years as principal.

MJ: What happened to the school after you left?

LT: I suppose it continued.

MJ: Because I remember meeting you down there in 1985 and it was being handed over to the Ciskeian government. The school is still going on and continuing. With the schools, were you involved with the children or adults after they left school? Was there anything you were doing with them?

LT: The ex-pupils, they always came back. We had reunions with them and if they wanted to talk to you about their families, or their problems, or about their jobs, you know, just like with ordinary pupils.

MJ: So, you kept in contact with them?

LT: Oh, yes very much so. And I think even more because they couldn't cope due mainly the language problem. So, it was important for them to make contact with people who could understand them.

MJ: And people they trusted because they knew them from the years at school.

LT: Ja, that's right.

MJ: Were you in touch with any priests or sisters who were involved with Masses for the deaf? Ministering to the deaf outside the school environment?

LT: I know that at St Thomas there was Fr Cashman. He was very good, you know. He was so to say, not a man like this [demonstrating a proud man or a snob], but a simple man and the deaf took to him.

MJ: He was the chaplain to the deaf?

LT: Yes, he was the chaplain.

MJ: Did he have Masses outside the school? For the adults when they left school?

LT: Regularly. I have forgotten now how often but ... very regularly.

MJ: In Johannesburg at St Vincent's, you said you taught Fr Cyril.

LT: I met him when I first came there. He was 11 years old and in Standard 2.

MJ: You taught him until Matric.

LT: He stayed at the school until Matric.

MJ: What do you remember of him?

LT: He was very clumsy. And I think, in those days I didn't realise it, but his eyesight was also not good. He used to be all feet, you know. He wasn't agile. And of course, if you can't hear and see properly ...

MJ: Were you surprised when he became a priest?

LT: Not really. No, we weren't really surprised.

MJ: Were you happy about it and celebrated it?

LT: Yes, definitely.

MJ: He would have been the first pupil from St Vincent's to become a priest. And Fr John Turner did you ever meet him?

LT: He was also at the school.

MJ: Did you teach him at all?

LT: No, I never had him in class.

MJ: You didn't know him well.

LT: No, not as you get to know a pupil.

MJ: After school, when Fr Cyril and Fr John became priests were you still at St Vincent's when they said Masses there?

LT: Cyril came. I suppose so ... but life goes on. So many things happen. They were always welcome.

MJ: Are there any other things you remember about the children and teaching in the classroom. Did you use amplifiers? How did you get them to learn how to speak?

LT: Well that starts when they were about two or three years old. Because, like everything else, it has to be started as young as they possibly can.

MJ: Were there any particular ways in which you were able to teach them to speak?

LT: It was speech therapy.

MJ: How did they learn how to say the words correctly?

LT: That is a very long and difficult process because they can't hear it themselves. If you start speaking another language, you can hear well this is not right. It is not the way the people talk but with the hearing impaired they can't. So very often you have to guess: 'What do they mean?'

MJ: Because they aren't able to verbalise it well?

LT: Because they don't hear. You can verbalise well, so if you could speak Spanish you could compare it to the way Spanish people speak. But if you can't hear it, there is nothing to compare. I think it is really to admire them that ... (gesture - they had drive) ... they only wanted to be like ordinary people. People talk so I must talk. The difficulty in knowing how to pronounce was a problem because they couldn't correct themselves because they couldn't hear it.

MJ: Were there any students of yours who stand out in your memory who made any major achievements?

LT: There was Robert Simmons, He was a doctor of something. Literature ... I don't remember. There was John and Brian Turner. Really, they all stood out for something or other.

MJ: You don't remember a student called Alan Mansfield?

LT: Yes, sure.

MJ: What happened to him?

LT: He wasn't deaf (gesture - in inverted commas) he was hearing impaired.

MJ: So, he was hard of hearing?

LT: (nods) Yes.

MJ: Was he wearing hearing aids?

LT: Yes.

MJ: Do you know what happened to him after school?

LT: At the time I probably knew but I can't remember now.

MJ: No, that's fine. I was just wondering. I have come across a number of articles he wrote in the school magazine and he seemed to be a very innovative person. So, I don't know what happened to him after school.

LT: You see, after I left St Vincent's, I became involved in Woodlands. So, once you are there if you want to do the job you have to be focused on that now.

MJ: That's right, so you forget all the other things you were doing before and focus on what's at hand.

LT: Right.

MJ: Do you remember going to meetings of the South African National Council for the Deaf (SANCD)?

LT: Yes.

MJ: Did you go to meetings in Johannesburg or when you were in the Eastern Cape? Do you have any memories of what happened in those council meetings? Who was involved or what you discussed in those meetings?

LT: I wonder what we discussed in meetings like that? I suppose, staff problems, salaries, problems with hostel staff. There were many people who said: "Go there, it is easy. You can go and teach the deaf, you only have ten children in your class. So that's nothing!" Because they don't really realise what it really means. Ten hearing impaired children need the attention that 50 normal hearing [children] need.

MJ: So deaf children needed more attention.

LT: Yes, the need all the attention. Unless I really know and make sure you understood ... (gesture - it passes them by). And often they don't know that they don't understand. A child in a normal school will ask you: "What did you say?"; "What does it mean?"

MJ: This didn't happen in the deaf school?

LT: (shakes her head). Because, not hearing it they don't know. You have learnt many things from hearing, you might not always have known the meaning of what you've heard, but gradually you got to know it. But not with them! Unless they are taught and made concrete ... That's why also with the children you have to always have concrete examples. You can talk about an apple (she looks away - showing that the deaf child doesn't understand). Now in an ordinary school, if you talk about an apple the children know what an apple is. But unless I bring and say an apple (pointing to the apple; she nods - showing that the deaf child now understands). And so, it is with every object so to say, you have to bring it into the classroom. Or you take the children to the zoo, or take them to the shop or wherever, to the park ...

MJ: Then they make the connections that way.

LT: (Nods her head). You might be talking to your pupils about America. They've heard about America and they have seen pictures or whatever but not the deaf. And America is just as much as your shoes. You will know when you hear something about America. "Oh, ja! That's good. Over there". (shrugs - implying but not the deaf). How do I know that America is a country? Like once I remember the teacher had been speaking about the Orange River. What can you say about the Orange River? Lots of water (signs river) so the children are outside and it had been raining. And the children run up to the teacher and said "Sister, sister look, look Orange River" (pointing). There was water. Orange River. If you think about it, it is almost impossible to bring language and the concept to a mind that doesn't hear. And also how many, most of the things I get to know because I can hear.

MJ: You learn through hearing.

LT: (nods her head). And if you don't hear?

MJ: But deaf people were able to learn by seeing something and seeing the connection to something else. So not being able to hear ...

LT: Because they don't hear.

MJ: ... they couldn't pick up what was not shown.

LT: And they can't pick up. There is nothing (pointing with both hands to both ears - implying that there is no sound entering the ears). And I think it is much more, what shall I say, much more difficult for hearing people to understand ... that I ... it has to go in there (pointing to her ear) to be understood here (pointing to her brain). If nothing goes in here (ear), nothing will be understood here (brain/mind).

MJ: In the classroom you were trying to teach them the language so that they could be able to think in a language.

LT: And also to communicate. How many things did you learn through communication? You talked with your friends. They had their own experience, you had your experience and you

learnt. You didn't know that you were learning all the time. It is so involved and so complicated. It is not just that it doesn't hear.

MJ: Was it difficult to teach the children in the classroom because you were spending a lot of time with language, education through language? Did you do the other subjects too like mathematics, geography ...

LT: Everything.

MJ: What Standard did the school go up to?

LT: Up to Matric.

MJ: You didn't stop at Std 6 or Std 7?

LT: Some did.

MJ: But those who could went up to Matric?

LT: (nods) Yes.

MJ: Even when you got there in 1954 the school didn't stop earlier?

LT: It went for some time only until Standard 8 but (sign - implying continued, went on, developed). Because the requirements were much higher. What can you do with a Standard 8. Even later on what can you do with a Matric? It is always that there is more to be required. It is not an easy thing to be deaf. And I think if I could choose, I would rather be deaf than blind.

MJ: Why would you say that?

LT: Because I can see and what I can't hear I can learn. But if I can't see ... How do I know what's a chair? If I have never seen, I can feel it. It is not the same. It is much more ... there is much more content in objects than there is just a word. A chair, okay, but if you hadn't sat on a chair you wouldn't remember. And they are all chairs. A deaf child might know that it is a chair but if it comes to that thing (pointing to another chair of different design) ... "But that is not like this". Having to know that there are many different kinds of chairs. Not just of a chair but of everything.

MJ: Like what is the concept of a chair, for example. Did you have much contact with the Cabra Dominican sisters and their schools? It was only yourselves and the Irish Dominican sisters who were working in Deaf schools. Very few others got involved in Deaf schools.

LT: I think personally the Cabra sisters were purely, purely oral. We were also purely oral in theory but in my practice, I used everything and anything. And I think, they ... now my opinion of them, they looked down a little bit upon ...

MJ: You? Upon the King sisters?

LT: Not on the King sisters but on me. Let me say. You can't show hands. You speak. To me fine. But if I try to speak and it doesn't go and then I can have any other way of making you understand, I will do so. But I must say they had a very good name.

MJ: The Cabras.

LT: (nods). And I don't think we always had a good name because just look at Liguori. She does anything.

MJ: She didn't remain strictly on the oral method.

LT: In my opinion, it was important that you understand what I mean and what I want to teach you or tell you, or to understand.

MJ: So that was your primary concern? Secondary came, whether it was official or the pure way or the correct way?

LT: Right, (nodding).

MJ: The more practical communication was for you fundamental.

LT: If you take a two- or three-year old child and you just go on talking ... (shakes her head). A mother also talks to a two-year old or three-year old but she will also use gestures and shows things, not keep it purely oral. And you watch yourself and see if it is always purely oral.

MJ: Even hearing people talk with their hands.

LT: That's what I mean. Yes, you want to say something: "It is over there" (pointing). Why don't you just say it is over there (without pointing).

MJ: It is more natural to use both forms.

LT: Yeah! I think it is a very, very, very serious handicap.

MJ: Being deaf? Have you been able to keep up with what has been happening in the deaf schools, since you retired?

LT: Somewhat but not much.

MJ: What is your opinion that the government is now allowing deaf education to take place now in sign language? The curriculum has been developed in such a way that children are taught, and teachers need to know sign language in order to teach in a deaf school now.

LT: I think I would be all for it if I was still there. But I don't know about those teachers and sisters who were so purely oral how they would feel. I don't know.

MJ: But for yourself, you ...

LT: Anything.

MJ: What is important is that they learn and are able to communicate?

LT: Ja. It is a handicap that most people don't understand because you don't see it.

MJ: That's right because a deaf person doesn't look disabled in anyway.

LT: Doesn't look different and I only know and notice that you are deaf if don't get a response. [Recording indistinct].

MJ: Did you find when you were teaching the children how they felt about their parents and the difficulties that sometimes exist between hearing parents and deaf children? You know, were there like big barriers or communication problems between children and their parents?

LT: Yes, there were. Very often I think the parents, they want their child to be normal (gesturing 'in inverted commas') and treat them as they are normal.

MJ: Normal meaning hearing?

LT: Ja, now if I am a hearing parent and I have a deaf child I have somehow to, how shall I say, to accommodate myself to their problem not only to what I expect. What do they expect of me? They also want to be understood. It's more difficult still because you can't see it that the person is deaf.

MJ: As teachers were you able to help the parents to understand their children better?

LT: We tried ... but you see you remain a parent and you have your expectations.

MJ: And did the children want to go back home or prefer to stay in the hostels over the holidays?

LT: Oh no, they go home to get spoilt.

MJ: At home.

LT: Yes, (laughing). The parents give in to them because they don't know what else to do. But they are always glad to come back to school too because they know that, somehow, they can communicate.

MJ: So, it is like a community experience in the school. A sense of the children together they are with their own, in a way.

LT: Ja, as I say it is a difficult concept to understand because it involves so much more than just hearing. The whole development of the mind depends on your hearing to a great extent.

MJ: Thank you very much for your time.

LT: Ja, and also, to make yourself more appreciative and grateful to be able to hear. Did you always take it for granted that you can hear? Or did you take it for granted and not consider what it could have been? But on the whole, they are a very happy people. I mean, they are not morbid. Of course, you get one or another but you get that with other people too. It doesn't depend only on the hearing.

MJ: They are normal like everybody else. They are not any different really.

LT: (agreeing). They have their own desires and their own hopes and whatever, you know, for their own lives and for the future. So maybe if you have got something out of this that you are grateful that you can hear.

MJ: Yes, you are right. I appreciate that because it is a gift you take for granted.

LT: Of course, and you only begin to grumble when you can't hear. There is something wrong, you know, you need to get some wax out or whatever. But you have deafness in your family?

MJ: Yes, that's right. I have grandparents who were deaf. My mother grew up with her parents, learnt to sign to them, with them. She taught us a little bit but I had to learn more as I got involved working with the Deaf community.

LT: It also, that they can achieve so many things.

MJ: And have achieved so much themselves. Thank you very much.

LT: You are welcome.

Interview with Sr Macrina Donoghue OP at Holy Rosary House, Springfield, Cape Town on Tuesday 12 July 2016

MJ: Thank you for accepting to do this interview. Could you please tell me how you got involved in this ministry?

MD: That's easy, it was a matter of obedience. I finished school at a very young age. I qualified as a teacher at the age of 18. As a sister, I was sent to Dublin to study and then was asked by my religious superior to remain in Dublin to do deaf education. When I completed this, I returned to South Africa in 1961 and began teaching at Dominican-Grimley school. This school moved to Hout Bay in 1989/1990.

MJ: You are South African born?

MD: Yes, I was born in Port Elizabeth. I went to school at Holy Rosary Primary School and then Priory for High School. Thereafter I did my teacher's training at the Training College in Grahamstown. I taught for a year in a school in Uitenhage before joining the congregation.

MJ: What is meant by the oral method of education in deaf schools?

MD: I started as a very enthusiastic teacher in Dominican-Grimley. It was our desire to bring deaf children to the highest possible level of language acquisition so that they could integrate into normal society by speaking and communicating with hearing people. We don't call this approach the 'oral method' anymore, this is old language, it is generally referred to as the 'auditory-verbal approach'. The other approach to teaching deaf children involved the use of finger spelling and gestures based on an existing language such as English, Afrikaans, German etc. This method generally resulted in the development of adequate written language. The more recent approach is to use a sign language that is not related to any written form. This sign is said to have a grammar of its own. (I don't think this approach was in use during the period you are covering.

We recognised that some children can't cope with the 'auditory-verbal' approach. Some children need signing because it is important that they become literate. Each child is different and so it is important to start from the needs of the individual child. A concern, though, is how to build a bridge from Sign language to a written language. Mother Nature has a time when one can learn to speak. It is during the first 3-4 years of life. If you miss this period, you can have problems later.

Some schools like Worcester now employ the bi-bi approach [bilingual - bicultural] which emphasises sign language as first language and a spoken language as a written language. Dominican-Grimley school, however, still holds firmly to the 'auditory-verbal' approach. In the Western Cape, it is only Tygerberg and the Dominican-Grimley school which use the 'auditory-

verbal' approach. This is different from the school in Hammanskraal which was forced by the Department of Bantu Education to use sign language and to teach in the medium of Tswana or Sotho.

In the Dominican-Grimley and Wittebome schools, the auditory-verbal approach was used. However, outside of school, the children did as they liked. Often the children's English was adversely affected by their use of sign language.

Sr Paulinus and myself saw the importance of developing good speech and lipreading skills with pupils at the Dominican-Grimley school. We started with a Grade 1 class of children in 1961 we continued to accompany them throughout their school lives. Eventually, they were the first class to all finish school with Matric. Previous to this the highest qualification that the deaf could attain was Standard 8. This was sometime in 1974 or 1975.

We had a teacher at Dominican-Grimley whose husband who taught at the Technical College. Some of the Dominican-Grimley students went there to engineering and land surveying. When they lectured they gave written notes of the lectures to the deaf students at the college. The deaf students at the college used it be very good at maths and technical drawing, because they were well-taught. They did a trade with other students. The deaf students helped the hearing students with these subjects in exchange for their lecture notes. A number of the deaf students got prominent jobs after school. One man reached a senior position in the City Council in surveying. Another became a physiotherapist in England. As teachers of the deaf we really wanted to give them better opportunities in life. If you believe in them, you enable them to believe in themselves.

There were always children who don't cope well. So, there is a need for a signing system for deaf children to ensure that they became literate.

The more residual hearing a child has the easier it is to learn under the auditory-verbal system. But even those children with hereditary deafness can learn to speak and lip-read. Those who have benefitted from the auditory-verbal approach to education have often become successful in life and got married to hearing people.

In fact, cochlear implants made a tremendous difference to deaf children. The sooner the children can receive the implant the better. Tygerberg hospital gives free cochlear implants to children who have gone deaf as a result of illnesses like meningitis. Many of the children at our school who have received these implants come from the Eastern Cape where the health system has not been as good.

There are people who believe that we are doing wrong by providing cochlear implants. They say we are depriving deaf children of their culture. I believe this is an extreme view. We want these children to benefit from learning and see in providing cochlear implants a way to do so.

MJ: What was the impact of government's apartheid policies on the Catholic deaf schools?

MD: The biggest impact of government legislation on our Catholic deaf schools was the separation of pupils the along racial lines. First, in our Cape Town school, the whites were separated from non-whites, to use Apartheid terminology. Then we were forced to split the coloureds from the Africans. Eventually, Indians were not permitted to attend our Wittebome school as schools for Indians were established in Durban and Johannesburg. We had to conform to government policies as we were totally dependent on state funding.

MJ: At one point, you had three deaf schools with each one falling under a different department of education? Did this make it difficult to administer your schools?

There were drawbacks but also some benefits. The House of Representatives was very generous to our Wittebome school, to all schools with disabilities in fact. They were never short of resources and at one time they were paying the full-time salaries for 3 psychologists, an occupational therapist and a speech therapist at Wittebome. They got anything they asked for. You gave in your estimates in July and you got the money the following year. They even had a nurse. Wittebome did well under the House of Representatives. At Dominican-Grimley, we only ever had two therapy posts, a speech therapist and an occupational therapist. Now we only have one therapist.

We never really had much government interference in educational matters. Just in the 1970s, we got our first Indian pupil at Grimley. The parents had to apply to the Council for Indian Affairs and request the admission of this pupil. The first pupil we received was Muslim and later we received permission to admit a Hindu pupil. We were not able to take black pupils or join in with the Open Schools’ policy of the private Catholic schools and defy government. Our schools being, what we now call 'public schools on private property', were 100% dependent on government subsidies to keep going.

MJ: Who were some prominent people who influenced and inspired you?

MD: Sr Nicholas Griffey OP in Dublin influenced me and I caught my enthusiasm for deaf education from her. She was a pupil at Cabra and became a sister there. She was very good at working with the deaf and ran St Mary's school for the deaf in Dublin. It was a purely signing school initially. Her superiors came along and decided that they wanted to go the modern route and make it an 'auditory-verbal' school. As she believed in the signing system, she went to Manchester to train in the auditory-verbal system, against her will and inclination. She did it under holy obedience. When she returned, she transformed St Mary's into an auditory-verbal school.

MJ: Did she study under the Ewings' in Manchester?

MD: That's correct. Mr and Mrs Ewing had a great influence on Sr Nicholas. Mrs Ewing was herself deaf. Sr Nicholas dedicated her life to the deaf. Even after giving up teaching, she helped run the Stillorgan old age home for the deaf in Ireland.

MJ: Sr Nicholas came out to South Africa and gave a number of talks around the country?

MD: In fact, I was influential in getting her invited to come out to South Africa. Sr Philip Ryan OP was coming out to South Africa to run a catechetical course. I suggested that Sr Nicholas also be invited to come out with her so that she could give talks for the deaf in South Africa. When she came she gave talks in Cape Town, Port Elizabeth and even some in Johannesburg.

A second person who greatly influenced me was Mr PJ van der Merwe. He was both a school inspector in the Department for Arts, Culture and Science. He was Afrikaans speaking and a member of the Dutch Reformed Church. He had a deaf son. So, he went out of his way to help us and the deaf schools. In fact, he was very influential in enabling us to get the new school in Hout Bay approved. He made a big difference in deaf education because he made some significant changes to deaf education policy. In language exams, for example, he insisted that comprehension tests needed to be of material that the deaf children would have knowledge of. Exam papers questions were also to be rewritten in modified language so that complex sentences were broken down into a more accessible language style. He also allowed deaf children to be given extra time when writing exam papers. For example, if it was a three hour extra they were given an extra 15 minutes for each hour. So, they would have an extra 45 minutes to complete the paper. These concessions made a big difference for the deaf pupils. Mr van der Merwe did not have the authority to make concessions. He succeeded in convincing higher authority that such changes were necessary.

MJ: Do you know much about the South African National Council for the Deaf (SANCD) and the work they did? Were you involved?

MD: I was involved but not very much. I went to their meetings when I became principal in about 1964. We could send two delegates from our schools. Before me, Sr Basil used to go. They were mostly hearing people serving deaf people. They were focused on helping deaf people find employment, access social grants and interpreting in court. They only had a very small section on education. They were focused on social issues and even had a social worker.

MJ: How long were you involved in deaf education?

MD: I was principal of the Dominican-Grimley school for 40 years. I began in 1964 and retired in 2004. So, I have worked in deaf schools for over 40 years. I trained in Dublin but when Sr Cynthia joined the school in 1969, we decided we wanted to diversify our training, so she was sent to Sint-Michielsgesteld in Holland. Sr Jacinta and Sr Francis Krige studied at St Joseph's school in St Louis, USA.

MJ: Were there major differences in approach at the various institutions?

MD: The differences were really national but the method as essential the same across the world. The idea was to make maximum use of residual hearing. So, the children were equipped with hearing aids. They were big in those days, about cell phone in size, which the

children wore around their necks. There would be cords to the ears, like people use today for MP3 players or iPhones. Sometimes when the children went out people would stare at them.

Then there were the group hearing aids which had headphones and a control panel which could be regulated. The controls were on a horseshoe shaped table. The teacher could adjust the headphones to suit each child in the class.

Later we had newer radio FM systems. They were ideal as they adjusted automatically to the wavelength set for each classroom and they didn't have the problem of overspill. This was always a problem of interference with the older systems.

MJ: Is this the induction loop system?

MD: No, that was a different system altogether. It is still used today in some churches and schools. In the induction loop system, the perimeter of a room is wired. Each person wears like a flash disk around their necks and this picks up the signals which then feed into each person's hearing aid. The hearing aid could be set to pick up the sounds around the room. For example, there were three settings: T for telephone, M for microphone and MT for both telephone and microphone. The teacher spoke into a microphone, so you could switch to M to hear the teacher. T if you wanted to hear what someone else (other than the teacher) was saying and MT for when you wanted to hear both teacher and other sounds in the room.

MJ: Did you also use the sound perception method or auditory training?

MD: Yes, we would use whatever we could to allow for normal language acquisition. This was important so that the deaf child could integrate into the family. Unless parents were prepared to learn sign language, the deaf child was isolated in a hearing family. We also provided a lot of parent support.

MJ: Was it part of the auditory-verbal method to equip deaf children find employment?

MD: It was the intention of auditory-verbal method to equip deaf people gain access to employment but also tertiary education.

MJ: Bishop Green was involved in ministry to deaf adults after school. Would you know anything about the work done with deaf adults?

MD: Bishop Green was very involved with the deaf in the Western Cape. He was a convinced signer and totally dedicated to the adult deaf. He was a very reluctant bishop and would have preferred to have continued serving the deaf rather than be bishop. However, while he was bishop, he started St Thomas School for the Deaf near Kingwilliamstown. St Thomas was initially a diocesan school that the Kingwilliamstown Dominican sisters ran.

MJ: Were there any sisters involved in deaf ministry to deaf adults outside of school?

MD: Sr Mannes was very involved in the adult deaf. Sr Alacoque also worked with the adult deaf. The cardinal always appointed a young priest as chaplain to the deaf. After Bishop Green, there was Fr Eddie Mansfield, but he didn't last long, then Bishop Cawcutt, Fr Peter John Pearson and now Fr Mark Foster. They used to alternate having Masses for the deaf in St Mary's Hall in Cape Town and then the following month in Wittebome. After Mass there was always tea and sandwiches and the deaf had an opportunity to meet each other and chat. It was a great opportunity to socialise and meet one another.

MJ: Thank you so much for sharing your experience and insights regarding deaf ministry.

Interview with Sr Siobhan Murphy OP held at the Cabra Region House, Springfield, Cape Town on Tuesday 12 July 2016

MJ: Thank you for agreeing to this interview. When did you begin your involvement with deaf people?

SM: I arrived in South Africa from Ireland in 1962. When I first arrived, I had nothing much to do with the deaf. I was asked to help with playground supervision at the Grimley school in Cape Town. I really didn't know anything at this stage. I went to a teacher's training college in Mowbray and then later I was sent to Cabra, Ireland to do a deaf course with Sr Nicholas Griffey for two years. This would have been back in 1969 and 1970. When I returned to South Africa, I taught at Wittebome School for the Deaf. In 1976, I went to Stellenbosch University to do a clinical remedial course and then I returned to Ireland to do a BA degree. My majors were Music and English. In 1982, I returned to South Africa and was asked to be principal at the Dominican School for the Deaf in Hammanskraal. I started this new post in January 1983.

MJ: What method of education did you use in Hammanskraal?

SM: We used the Total Communication (TC) method in Hammanskraal. This method involved using speech, signs, lip-reading, the written word and some gestures. It was there that I realised that it was important to fit the method to the child and not the child to the method. For example, some children could only do sign language and couldn't manage to lip-read whereas others picked up lip-reading quite naturally. I was at Hammanskraal until 2000, i.e. a total of 16 years. I resigned as principal in 1990 because I wanted to have more time for teacher training. I used to conduct teacher training workshops in South Africa and Namibia. I was more interested in the academic side of school life; as well as dealing primarily with language development. I also emphasised the importance of good handwriting. The pupils later developed their own style of cursive writing. I helped the teachers whose first language was not English to develop their English language skills and usage.

MJ: How did apartheid affect your teaching at the Hammanskraal school?

SM: The government had originally insisted that we teach the children in their mother tongue which would have been Setswana or Sesotho. This was very difficult. So, I organised a meeting with the Department of Education and was able to convince them that English was more important because this meant that they were more employable if they could communicate with employers, whose first language was English. The department then allowed the education of deaf children to be conducted in English or Afrikaans. We used English. Other schools, like Rustenburg, used Afrikaans.

As a result of these changes, it didn't matter whether the deaf children used signs and gestures if they were able to write English well. This prepared them for the workplace. If they

couldn't speak English properly at least they could write it well. So these changes were important because they enabled the child to fit into society. In school I used to have a news board. I wrote up my news under the headings: Who? What? When? etc. I did it in such a way as to help the children remember the structures of the English sentence. After I wrote up my news they would write up their news. This way they were able to learn the structure of English. We encouraged the children to use Signed English.

MJ: Did you use the oral method at all?

SM: Where the children were capable we did. The total communication method includes using all methods of communication to help the child. Auditory training was very important. We would use amplified sound to help the child recognise a word by feeling its vibrations. When they recognised the word, they would pick up the toy to which that word referred. They recognised the rhythm of the word. We used words with different numbers of syllables.

MJ: Was this similar to the sound perception method?

SM: It is the same method, just we called it auditory training.

MJ: How is that you got involved in teaching in a deaf school?

SM: When I was asked what work I would like to do, I had a choice between, what was called at the time kindergarten teaching, or teaching of the deaf. I chose the latter.

MJ: How many sisters were teaching at Hammanskraal?

SM: Over the period that I was there, we were only about 3 or 4 sisters in the community. The staff, both teaching and non-teaching, was paid by the government. The following sisters spent time teaching in Hammanskraal while I was there: Sr Madeleine Corcoran, Sr Finbar, Sr Pancretia, Sr Aideen McIntyre and Sr Ancilla Griffiths.

MJ: Was the work of the school well-supported by the church?

SM: Yes. We had very good support from the church. Archbishop George Daniel came for all the big functions. Also, Monsignor Watkins was very supportive. The priests of the Hammanskraal seminary used to come regularly to say Mass for the school. We had about 350 children at the school and we even had a choir and the children would sing parts of the Mass. They would follow the prompting of one of the teachers or housemothers who used to lead them. The children loved the visits by Fr John Turner. He came to the school regularly and would talk to the teachers and children. Of all the pupils at the school only about 30 or 40 were Catholics.

MJ: Were there any prominent deaf pupils who stood out for you?

SM: One was Lucky Tshabalala. He was trained in welding and woodwork. He got a job in a factory and eventually became the boss over the other workers. He did very well. In a way, all

the children stand out in my memory for one or other reasons. They themselves inspired me in many ways for example their courage in adversity and how they coped with their handicap.

MJ: What was your relationship like with the Department of Education?

SM: The relationship with the school inspectors was very good. I used to remind the teachers that they knew more about deaf education than these inspectors, so they must speak up. In one case, one of the teachers took this to heart and decided that the best means of defence was attack. So, when the inspector came around, she began by asking him questions rather than the other way round. It worked and the inspector was very impressed with her.

There was only one occasion I remember when I had a run in with the inspectors. A deaf lady who had a dog trained to assist the deaf gave a demonstration. The dog had been trained to communicate with her when, for example, the doorbell rang. She was busy with her demonstration when someone came into the hall to tell some members of the audience that an important rugby match was about to start. Some of them were heading off to watch the game. I insisted that everyone stay until the demonstration was over. This lady had been brought from Cape Town to Hammanskraal at great expense to the Education Department to give an hour's lecture.

MJ: Thank you very much for sharing your experience and insights.

Interview with Sr Jacinta Teixeira OP at Holy Rosary House, Springfield, Cape Town on Wednesday 13 July 2016

MJ: Thank you for agreeing to this interview. How did you get involved in teaching at a deaf school?

JT: I always had an interest in slow and challenged learners. I did a three-year course at Mowbray Training College. I got a bursary from the Department of Education and had to work for them for them for four years after I qualified in 1970. In 1971, my first assignation was to St Agnes Primary in Woodstock. In 1972 I moved to St Brigid's in the Gardens, Cape Town. This was also a Cabra Dominican School and what we called back then a State-aided school. In 1973, I moved to St Mary's and taught there until 1978 and enjoyed being there. It was a busy time because I taught class and began my studies for BA on a part-time basis. While I was studying, I taught full-time and was also Principal of the small Junior Primary School. As numbers were on decrease the school was no longer viable. The school closed at the end of 1978. I expressed my willingness to the Vicar that I was willing to assist in the Dominican School for Deaf Children, Wittebome.

While teaching at St Mary's school I had contact with the Sisters who taught at the Grimley School [for the Deaf] next on the campus. I was interested in the methods used by the sisters who taught there. One year, the Principal of the Grimley asked me to take into my Sub B class, one of the deaf pupils for a year, in order to stimulate him because he was a bright pupil. When St Mary's closed I was asked to work at the Dominican School for Deaf Children. I wasn't sure of my suitability, but I went there. I began teaching there in 1979 and soon afterwards I enrolled for a correspondence Diploma in Deaf Education with UNISA.

In my first year in the school, I had class of eleven children. They were a group of mixed ages from 7-11. Some of the children were profoundly deaf and others had learning problems. I was pleased to be able to use some of the skills which I had used in the mainstream schools.

MJ: What was the method of education used at Dominican School for Deaf Children?

JT: When I went to Dominican School for Deaf Children the system used in school was oral. The children wore hearing aids in the classroom and after school. In my second year at the school we got the first FM system. It helped our teaching immensely. It was a more versatile system than the group aid system which was used at the time and restricted the pupils to their desks.

I worked in the primary section of the school for four years and at the school for 20 years altogether. After the initial four years, I became Head of Department. This meant having less time available for class teaching, in addition to my Head of Department duties.

The school was a dual medium school: Afrikaans and English. Pupils were not encouraged to use of sign language, but the children used it anyway. As teachers we concentrated on speech, language development and lip-reading. The pupils did speech and speech exercises on a regular basis. After being Head of Department, I became Acting Deputy Principal and for my last ten years at the school I was principal. I left in 1999.

I loved teaching and I didn't wish to be a principal and certainly not for the rest of my life. After ten years, just before I turned 60, I decided that I wanted to go back to teaching. It was recommended by the Region Leadership Team that I should go for counselling in order to establish if this was the course I should take. This I did and at the end of seven sessions it was clear to me that I was on the right track. In 1999 I took the Package and left the school.

At that time there was an enrolment of about 210 pupils and I went back and taught a class on a voluntary basis for a year.

I had an interest in pursuing prison ministry and for that reason enrolled for the Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) course at Groote Schuur Hospital in order to acquire the skills needed for it. After completing the three-month course, I was asked to take on the task of Initial Formation in the Region, which I did for three or four years. After this I was in Leadership on the Regional Council for eight years and now I live and work in the community of Rosary House in Wynberg.

MJ: How did you find working with deaf people as a hearing person? Were there any challenges or obstacles you had to face?

JT: There were difficult times in the school. In 1983/1984 I had a year's break at St Joseph's School for the Deaf in St Louis, Missouri in the United States. I did a special year in deaf education. It was an excellent year for me and on my return, I was able to share the skills I learnt with the teachers in the school.

In the first couple of years at the school, there were many things to keep in balance: the academics of the school, caring for the children in the hostel and then the added pressure of caring for my mother. But the biggest dilemma for me was dealing with the strong move towards Total Communication (TC).

MJ: From which quarters was the pressure coming to move in the direction of Total Communication?

JT: Some of the adult deaf past pupils, tried to put pressure on the school to change the medium of communication to Total Communication. There was a certain level of conflict in the staff between those who were in favour of the change and those who wanted to retain *the status quo.* It was difficult to decide but my sense told me that it was important to keep speech alive because the children would be going into a hearing world and they needed speech as a mode of communication. I was really caught in the middle.

In the early 1990s, we decided to adopt both the oral and the TC methods of education in the school. It wasn't a realistic decision because we only had a few teachers who could sign. The 1990s were rough years because of the dilemma I was in, regarding change in the language policy. Some teachers were keen that we keep using hearing aids and speech, while others did not give much attention to those aspects which would support and enhance the change. At the time, each class in the school was well-equipped with the FM sound systems.

MJ: Did school have any deaf teachers?

JT: There was one deaf teacher. She was Afrikaans-speaking and hard of hearing. There was also one past pupil who worked in the hostel. She wasn't a teacher. She lost her hearing at the age of 12, but she didn't support the idea sign language. She was a good influence on the pupils.

Most of the teachers were hearing and had in-service training to prepare them for working in the school. Some of the teachers were sisters like myself. We had about 8 - 10 trained sisters teaching in the school and the rest were lay staff. A number of them had done the Diploma in Deaf Education through UNISA and or overseas. We had a well organised in-service training programme in the school on the methods we used in the classroom. An experienced teacher of the deaf, from England, visited the school and did some In-Service Training with the teachers.

MJ: What inspired you to become a teacher?

JT: It was my own experience as a teenager. I was born in a little village in Madeira Island. At that time, a group of villages would have one teacher for boys and one for girls. Each teacher had about 100 children to teach ranging from the ages of 6-13. This experience of one teacher wasn't a helpful one for me. The teacher was a strict disciplinarian and I didn't like school. We had minimal contact with the teacher.

When my parents moved from Madeira to Cape Town, and I went to school at St Anne's School in Wynberg. It was a small school and I had to return to Standard 4 instead of doing Standard 6 because of my lack of English. The sisters were kind and I began to love school at the age of 13. In 1958 I went to Aquinas Commercial College, Woodstock, run by Dominican Sisters, for Standards 6, 7 and 8. This was a positive experience in my life and we had fun and learnt a lot at school. I realised then that some teachers were kind. It was the sisters who inspired me to enter a Cabra Dominican Sister and a teacher.

MJ: How did apartheid impact on you personally and the Wittebome School?

JT: When our family came out to South Africa in 1955, my father was already living in Wynberg. I don't remember my father ever talking about people in racial terms: black, white, or coloured. I believed that we as family, were pretty liberal about this issue. My father never spoke about his black, white or coloured customers. He worked in a restaurant near the

Wynberg railway station and the taxi rank and referred to anyone who came to his restaurant as his customer.

When I went to Dominican School for Deaf Children, I did not think of people in racial terms. If and when a staff member accused me of saying something because he/she was coloured, I was shocked. It was only then, that I realised and became very aware of how sensitive and painful the issue of race was in the school and in the country. My family lived near a Kenilworth Race Course and I did wonder why some families had moved away. In fact, they been forcibly removed from the area and I was shocked.

My first experience of apartheid thinking happened in the classroom. In the class there was a child of fair complexion. One day before I was teaching the class, she pointed to herself and said: "White." Then pointing to all the other children in the class she said: "Black, black, black." "Where did this come from?" I wondered to myself. Sometimes children were distinguishing among themselves. On one occasion, some children were using a derogatory sign for black people. I intervened and said: "Ons gebruik nie sulke woorde nie".[9]

In the mid-1980's there was no shortage of funds for the needs of the school. Special Schools budgeted for what they needed and as long as all the information required was supplied by the school, the funds were made available by the Department to the school. We had a good relationship with the Department.

While we had no problems financially, there were other issues which we had to contend with sometimes. Occasionally the Department appointed support staff from institutions that had closed, without consulting us. In fairness to the Department, they created extra posts in the school. In the mid 1980's we had the following posts: one Occupational Therapy, Social Worker, Nursing sister, three Remedial Teachers, four Speech therapists, two Psychologists and a Hearing Aid Technician. In addition, posts were created for teachers for Woodworking and Hairdressing. After 1995, however, the Department began to rationalise the number of posts in each school. Posts were considerably reduced and this impacted negatively on catering for the needs of the children in the school.

MJ: Were there any prominent deaf adults who had schooled at Wittebome?

JT: The two most prominent deaf adults would be Wilma Newhoudt-Druchen and her husband, Bruno. Both of them were educated at the school. Wilma studied social work at Gallaudet University in Washington DC and sometime after her return she was the first Deaf Person to be elected as a Member of South African Parliament.

Another pupil, Jabar Mohammed also trained as a teacher.

[9] Translation: "We don't use these words".

MJ: What was the school's policy regarding the use of sign language?

JT: When the Dominican School for Deaf Children opened in 1937 the method of communication was *Signed English.* When I went to the school in 1979, oral was the method used in the school, but the use of signed English was permitted. It was an English Medium School and in the 1970's it became a dual medium school teaching in both Afrikaans and English. Total Communication was never fully accepted in the school. Sign language was not allowed in the classroom. This was very strict rule in 1979 and most of the Sisters in the school were in favour the Oral/Aural method of teaching. In the hostel the use of signing was discouraged, but it was used and was used by the pupils.

There is a drawback with sign language. The children struggled in written and spoken language. The use of grammar was at times overlooked and the written language suffered. Reading too proved to be a big problem.

One of the things about teaching in the primary section of the school first was that I had established a reading method. So, when I went to the deaf school I used it there. I wrote simple stories based on the vocabulary which I had taught and used these in the classroom. I made books and the children loved reading them in the classroom. Generally, deaf people are not good readers. It is important to teach children the love of reading not only in deaf but also in mainstream schools. In the classroom I had a whole bookshelf of readers that I had devised and I encouraged the children to read.

MJ: Did you have much contact with other deaf schools in the Western Cape?

The different language policies in schools made it difficult for the pupils to interact with one another. As staff and pupils, we interacted mainly with the schools for Deaf Children in Worcester. In the 1990's there was an Association for Principals of all Schools for Deaf Children and the group met about four times a year. The other schools were white schools and we didn't really have contact with them. So, we had good relations between Wittebome and Nuwe Hoop, Worcester. The only other school we had a little contact with was the Noluthando School for the Deaf in Khayelitsha that was started by Nieder-Heitmann. His father, wrote the sign language manual.

MJ: Did you have any contact with the King Williamstown Dominican Sisters?

JT: No, we had very little contact.

MJ: Thank you very much for your time and your willingness to share your experiences.

JT: It has been a pleasure.

Interview with Francois de Villiers in Edenvale on 4 August 2016

Also present: **Jennifer de Villiers and Richard D'Arcy**

MJ: Thank you for agreeing to do this interview.

FdV: It is a pleasure.

MJ: I wanted to ask about your experiences and friendship with Fr John Turner. What is his life history? When was he born?

FdV: He was born in 1946. He went to St Vincent School. He grew up with a genetic syndrome that affected his ears and his hearing. But on the other hand, he was a normal person, but he was hard of hearing. He spoke very well, in fact, brilliantly. He could even talk on the telephone. For example, if he had a problem on the road, he could phone a tow truck to come tow him away. This was no problem for him. He could talk on the phone with a hearing aid with the loop on. I have known him for 35 years.

MJ: That's a long time.

FdV: Yes, it is a long time. I didn't know him at school. He had already left school a long time back to go to work.

MJ: So, he is older than you?

FdV: Yes, he is much older than I am. He is about the same age as my older brother David. In fact, he may be one year younger than my brother David. David told me a lot about Fr John's life history. Before Fr John became a priest, he used to work for a jeweller in Sandton with Max Ordman. Many deaf people used to work there. But Fr John told me that he wasn't happy with the work. He had something in his heart and he was looking for something deeper. He thought and even had a dream that he must try and become a priest because he loved the Hail Mary full of grace. This prayer he loved so much. His family was a Catholic and he was Catholic. He remained a strong Catholic all his life. He never changed until he died. His mother didn't expect him to become a priest. I don't think so. She was surprised. Even his family were surprised that Fr John was interested in becoming a priest. He went down to Durban to study there; to Mariannhill to study to become a priest. He had an old combi that he used to use to visit Deaf people in Durban. In fact, he used to visit my wife when she still lived in Durban. He arrived one night at her house He found this strange. He panicked. But Fr John asked: 'Do you mind if I teach your daughter Jennifer about the Bible?' He was surprised. The father thought that Fr John was her boyfriend. It was a very funny incident.

MJ: Was he ordained?

JdV: No, he was still studying. He was a student.

FdV: This happened between 1972 and 1975. He was ordained in about 1975 or 1976 but I am not sure about the exact date. After he was ordained he came to our home and he was talking about his plans to start a mission all over Africa, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Angola, Swaziland, Botswana and South West Africa. His big problem however was money. He didn't have the money to do all this. In fact, he went to Zimbabwe once because petrol was cheap but he never again because of financial problems. Most of the time he travelled around South Africa, to Swaziland and Mozambique. In South Africa, he went to Hammanskraal, Cape Town, Port Elizabeth and Johannesburg. He came to Johannesburg lots of times. He also went to Rustenburg to the Deaf school in Rustenburg and he would say Mass there. He invited us to join with him and he was very good at getting people in the community to work together. Sometimes there were problems with understanding each other because of the different sign languages but otherwise things went very well. We had a braai there.

JdV: That was in Hammanskraal not Rustenburg.

FdV: Okay, sorry! On the way back from Hammanskraal I looked for my camera, but it was gone. But I found it hanging on a tree. They invited us for a braai. We had a lovely time there.

MJ: What work was Fr John doing when he visited Deaf people around the country? Was he visiting the sick, baptising, saying Mass?

FdV: Fr John worked mainly with black people. He lived in Mariannhill and I am here in Johannesburg. I don't know all the work he did but he told us that when he went to Swaziland. He met many Deaf people there. He baptised people there, but he would only baptise those who came to church regularly. If some of the Deaf people became Jehovah Witnesses, it was a pity; but he wouldn't kick them out. He would try to get them to share ideas about what Jehovah Witnesses believe and explain what Catholics believe. He allowed them to choose.

JdV: When he came to Johannesburg he met Fr Cyril and asked him to help him.

FdV: I don't know what happened between Fr John and Fr Cyril. There was a lot of friction. Fr John used to often ask Fr Cyril to support [him and help] with all the churches because Fr John knew that Fr Cyril know a lot of Deaf communities. Eventually Fr Cyril said you must work by yourself. It was difficult. Fr John found some Deaf churches, providing Mass, teaching catechism to black people. He always brought a blackboard with him and would draw a picture of the relationship between people and the Spirit. It was always very interesting. He would write down a list of the good and a list of the bad. He would explain the relationship between them. He would explain why this is good and why this bad. I can't remember all he said but the way he was teaching us, it was excellent. I used to enjoy his sermons. Every time he came to Johannesburg to say Mass, we used to always come to his church because we knew that church was going to be brilliant and enjoyable.

JdV: We miss him.

FdV: We really miss him a lot. One time before he started Mass, he came out of the sacristy and saw Deaf people sitting in the church. He looked around and saw that they were all looking very serious. They didn't look happy. He said: 'No, the people are too serious. They should be happy.' He decided to tell one joke before Mass started. He told the joke and we all laughed and laughed. When he saw people laughing, he said: 'That's better, now we can start the Mass.' He had a lovely sense of humour.

JdV: He was a very helpful man.

FdV: Fr John was also very disappointed because there used to be lots and lots of Deaf Catholics coming to church before in Johannesburg, Durban, Cape Town, all over. There was a woman called Beryl Jones, whose son was deaf.

MJ: Was his name Alan Jones?

FdV: Alan Jones, yes. Beryl Jones got a phone call from Mr Barrett, he was a pastor of a Christian Church. He was from England. She invited him to come over and that's how there began to be a split between the Catholic and Christian. My brother David was also involved in the Catholic Church before, but he and others moved over to the Christian Church because the sermons were good.

MJ: Why were the sermons considered to be good? Was it because they were in sign language?

FdV: I don't know. I never went to Barrett's church. That's why I never saw any of his sermons. If I went then I would be able to get the picture. Why they said his sermons were good. My brother believed it was right for him, so he joined.

MJ: You remained Catholic.

FdV: Yes, we remained Catholic.

JdV: We weren't Catholic yet, but we still went to church with Fr John.

FdV: At the time we were Methodists. Later on, Fr John baptised us to become Catholic. One day he came here to our house and I asked Fr John: 'We are planning to become Catholic, can you baptise us?' Yes, he said, and he was very happy. Then he gave me the Catholic catechism to read on confession and the sacraments. From time to time he came to Johannesburg for church, he knew we would always come to church. We were very keen, so he baptised us. In 1997, we turned Catholic. Even though we were Methodists we used to go to the Catholic Church because we believed Fr John had the Word of God.

MJ: Did Alan Jones change from Catholic to Christian?

FdV: No, he and his mother Beryl they were always Christian.

MJ: Was Beryl hearing?

FdV: Yes, she was hearing but Alan was deaf. Both his parents were hearing. Beryl invited Barrett who was himself hearing. He stayed 3 years and trained Christian pastors like William and Bev Warmington. He taught them how to become pastors.

JdV: Fr Cyril was here at this time, but then he left.

FdV: I am more on Fr John's side. He was very humble. He never showed off. There were lots of deaf people with the wrong beliefs who told Fr John what he must do, and he would say: 'Oh, Oh!' but he knew that they were talking rubbish. It was a waste of time to argue about small things that were not important. Also, what I see as a clear picture from Fr John, he tried to get the deaf people to focus on the holy Mass, but deaf people are blind. They can't see anything there. They see the tabernacle, they see the candles, the table, but it means nothing to them. It is because they are distracted. He never wanted to fight and show off what it meant. If they said what they said, it was fine. He always kept himself humble. But if people were interested then he would encourage them, support them, continue to explain what the Catholic faith means.

I can't remember what Fr John's sermons once a month on Sunday were all about. But they were always good. Sometimes he didn't preach but brought a film on St Francis of Assisi. We watched it. I think he tried to give us a picture of why St Francis loved Jesus so much. That's why for me St Francis is the best saint I have ever had.

MJ: Were there many Catholics who left to join the Christian Church?

FdV: They got bad influence because the Christians said that the Catholics were wrong. Catholics had wrong beliefs like that they worship Mary. There was also revenge because of the cruel time when the nuns who hit children on the hands and disciplined them.

MJ: Why were they hit on the hands?

FdV: Because they were naughty. They called it abuse but they were also naughty. They said the Catholic Church was wrong because of the abuse they experienced but I don't think so. It was disciplinary.

MJ: Were there many Catholics who left and became Christian?

FdV: Christopher Diab, Paulo - he was Portuguese, Pombo, Donald Cummings, they all changed to Christian. Donald's parents remained Catholic, but he changed to Christian. Some who changed were Methodists and they complained that there was no Methodist priest for them. There were the Christians and the Catholics. Barrett was there for the Christians and Fr John was priest for the Catholics. It was a very small community but everyone who came was very welcome.

MJ: When Fr John travelled around when would he come to Johannesburg?

FdV: Most of the time he was in Mariannhill. But once a month he used to come to Johannesburg.

JdV: Before he was coming twice a month.

FdV: That's right he started twice a month. At that time petrol was cheap and I used to support him with petrol and food and everything. When he came here on Wednesday, on Thursday he went to Hammanskraal for Mass there. In those days, Sr Gemma got money from Germany to help him get to Hammanskraal, Rustenburg, and the Lenasia Indian school. But as the cost of living went up and up, then he decided to only come once a month. Later on, he would come once every two months and then when the e-tolls were opened he would come once every three months. He had financial problems. It was difficult for him.

JdV: Fr John loved to come to Johannesburg and he enjoyed it. We helped him with petrol.

FdV: Oh, lots of deaf people don't like Catholics because of parrot prayer. We say the same prayers again and again and don't pray from your heart. They don't understand what Jesus has taught about Our Father who art in heaven, but this is called parrot prayer. For me it is ridiculous.

Fr John was not happy with Fr Cyril's new teaching from England. For example, I remember Fr Cyril provided Mass for the deaf in the old age home in the hall. Fr Sham was there. At the time there were many, many Christian deaf people there because they knew Fr Cyril. They came over for the Mass. Fr Cyril said that there was a church in England that allowed non-Catholics to receive communion. During the Mass, he blessed the bread for Catholics and had normal bread for the non-Catholics. Fr Cyril gave communion to the Catholics and Fr Sham gave ordinary bread to the non-Catholics. I could see that Fr Sham was not happy about this, he was in doubt and confused about what Fr Cyril's teachings are. This led to a conflict …

MJ: How did Fr John feel about this?

FdV: Fr John was very happy. Fr John doesn't teach what Fr Cyril teaches.

MJ: And Fr Sham was angry?

FdV: He was upset. I mean Fr Sham came for the Mass because he knew Fr Cyril very well. In fact, he baptised Fr Cyril …. No, no, no!! He taught Fr Cyril to become a priest. He asked the bishop to ordain Fr Cyril. Fr Sham came to support Fr Cyril, but he wasn't happy with this.

MJ: When did this happen?

FdV: It happened about 8 to 10 years ago, two years before Fr Sham was murdered. You can find out which year Fr Sham was murdered. Fr Cyril was offering two breads, the Body of Jesus and ordinary bread, it was confusing to the people. This is not teaching of the Catholic Church? That's why Fr John had a conflict with Fr Cyril. Fr John would never invite Fr Cyril to preach at

a Mass in Johannesburg because Fr Cyril's teaching had changed a lot. Fr John wasn't happy with this.

On the other hand, I remember Fr John's sermon about the Chile mine. You were there.

MJ: That's right.

FdV: Powerful sermon. He drew the surface, the tunnel down the mine, the rock that blocked the way for the miners to get out. At the top there was power, at the bottom the miners had no power to break through to the surface. So, it is the same with us, we are sinners from Adam and Eve, original sin from Adam and Eve. Jesus Christ who died on the cross broke through from where we are at the bottom of the mine. Opening, Jesus was the key to heaven.

MJ: Did Fr John do any retreats for the deaf community?

FdV: Yes, we went to Sterkfontein Dam for a retreat. We came together. Brilliant.

JdV: Francois, before was Warmbaths?

FdV: Yes, that's right. First, Hartebeespoort Dam, then Warmbaths and then Sterkfontein Dam. Then was Vryheid.

JdV: Oh, yes. Vryheid was the last one.

FdV: Vryheid, we went there. Fr John organised a bus and all the black Deaf people from Mariannhill came. We came by car from Johannesburg.

MJ: Do you remember which year this was?

JdV: Whew?

FdV: *Asking Richard D'Arcy*: 'You remember we went to Vryheid for the retreat. In which year was this? Kathy was alive.'

JdV: Did Richard come with us?

FdV: Yes, he was there.

JdV: Maybe if I look at the photos I will have an idea.

MJ: It doesn't matter if you don't remember. Thank you I appreciate your help.

FdV: Oh, one more thing. You know the deacon Nick Bruce. He was involved with the Church. But the way he taught was the same as Fr Cyril do it. Fr John was not happy about it. His wife was Anglican not Catholic.

Interview ends.

MY YEARS AT ST. VINCENTS - Nigel Pickford

As you know, St. Vincent's was opened in 1934. It originally was founded as a Dominican Convent in King Williamstown. The Convent was closed down and re-located in Johannesburg. I attended the school from 1940 – 1955.

The Sisters who stood out and left an impression on our lives were Sister Loyola, Sr. Gemma, St. Flabolia, Sr. Thomasia, Sr. Vincent and Sr. Dosethia who taught Drawing, Engineering and Woodwork to the boys. When I arrived at the school at the age of 2, I was put under the care of Sr. Loyola. My folk were going through a divorce and my dad returned to the U.K. as he was a pilot in the Battle of Britain in the Second World War. We all had our grumbles while at school, especially pointed at Sr. Gemma who was so strict. I remember her smacking me on the hands with a golf stick which bruised me so badly that I could not even open a door handle or write and the boys kept telling me I should report it to the Police. And I said, and where do I go then??? The boys got wise and hid the whipping sticks under the teacher's platform. I am sure the sticks are still there today.

Many times as punishment we had to write 100 lines – I will not..................To make the process go quicker, we used tie together two pencils and write 2 lines at a time. This way we finished quicker and were able to attend the movie.

It was only after we left that we realised what the school had done to help us achieve what we have today. During my era (time) more pupils wrote matric. The Sisters were adamant that pupils learnt speech and lip reading through feathers and feeling the vibration on blown up balloons they did an excellent job. This has helped us cope in the outside world. We were restricted from using sign language and this we did behind their backs. So much so that when I left school and started working at Anglo American they required me to attend College for my NTC 2 and 3. The teacher at the college did not know for 3 weeks that he had a deaf person in his class and at the end of the year I came top of 80 hearing students. This story hit the newspaper. I still keep a copy of it with pride. He had reported to my work that I had not been attending College because every time he called out my name I had not responded.

The Junior boys were responsible for dressing the little ones in the morning. Senior boys had to get up at 5.30 a.m. for COLD showers (brr). In Winter when we were woken up for showers we would go to the showers, runs the taps on the pretext that we were showering then rush back to bed. The advantage of having female nuns.

After breakfast we all had chores to do every day. Pupils were delegated to make beds, clean toilets, clean the staircase, etc. At the end of each term we had to take coir mattresses outside and hit them hard with tennis rackets. Whenever we came home from the holidays we always rushed to see what chores had been delegated to us and hopefully we did not have the arduous ones. For those boys who did not go home on Saturdays (I was one of them) we had

to do mending, darn socks, hang out bloomers etc, ironing pants. We had to use wooden knobs or globes inside the sock and then darn the sock.

Every Friday we used to wet our trousers and iron them and put them under our mattress until Monday morning. The creases in the trousers were perfect.

Classes finished at 4 p.m. each day and after tea was sport time until 5.30 p.m. then Benediction, shower/bath time and supper. I am sure many remember how we used to have to finish off eating those dreadful cabbage dishes and burnt rice that the girls did not finish. It is no wonder we disliked the girls so much.

Tea time was always a treat, lots of sugar! The Senior boys got thick bread with very little peanut butter while the juniors' bread was not so thick but somehow got more peanut butter.

After supper homework was done and lights out at 8.30 p.m.

Classes were small in those day. We were about 10 -12 per class. So we got all the attention we needed.

There were about 185 hostel boys and girls including approx 40 nuns who are sadly not here today. School used to provide breakfast, lunch, supper and morning and afternoon teas. I believe there are about 350 pupils now at the school.

I still say how fortunate we were to meet Helen Keller. She was invited to address the school and I think it was in 1952. To those who don't know her, she was deaf and blind. An amazing woman who understood 5 languages and obtained many Degrees. I was on the stage at the time and saw how she could put her hand on people's cheek and lips and be able to follow the speech. She had the most amazing, and I will never forget it, deep blue eyes. It made us realize how fortunate we were.

In the early days there was no swimming pool at St. Vincent's and we had to walk approximately 3 km to Marist Brothers School in Inanda (those days it was a dirt road) Rudd Road. Many a time we walked back to school in the rain. There was no school bus transport then. The swimming pool at St. Vincent's was built in 1956. Many unhappy fundraisers amongst us because we had to go on Saturday mornings and after school for fundraising for the pool BUT never got to swim in it. We often did street collections for the school on Saturdays travelling to East Rand towns and to West Rand towns. Fetes were held every year to fundraise. One morning we were woken at 4 a.m. by the nuns to get rid of the rainwater that had sagged the canopies. We got underneath one with a broom to push the canopy up and there was one nun who was interfering with us, so we pushed so hard and the rainwater splashed all over her. Due to the weather the Fete was cancelled and a caring man donated £10 000 to the school.

The boys were taught how to make rocking stools, coffee tables etc and the girls did needlework, knitting etc. for fundraising and Fete Days.

Sport played an important part of our lives. When the neighbour sold their property on the east wing to the school the boys were responsible for making the soccer field bigger by carrying sand from one end to the other in the wheelbarrow. We loved this chore. Digging and carrying sand. The boys loved climbing the pine trees growing on the old soccer field. There were about 20 of them and our hands were always so gooey afterwards. Sadly, the trees were removed to make way for a bigger soccer field.

We played soccer against hearing schools and cricket against Marist Brothers. Rugby was banned at the school because Joe Lotzof, who now lives in the Deaf Old Age Home, in his 90's tackled Billy Henschel causing a severe injury.

Those days we had Boy Scouts and Girl Guides at the school. Boys played soccer against different Scouting groups. I cannot talk for the girls because we were kept very much apart. (Deaf apartheid)!

Once a month we were treated to a Wednesday bioscope night in the hall. Ruling was introduced – no sign language, only speech. If caught, we were punished and could not watch the movie. We had to sit with our backs facing the movie. Some of us outwitted the Sisters and carried mirrors in our hands and watched on the sly.

We enjoyed going on picnics transported by 3 double decker buses to Gillooly's Farm and Meredale. I remember Jack, a 12 year old boy, who went missing and was found 3 days later floating on the water. He had drowned. I also remember boys and girls dying at the school suffering from either epileptic fits or choking.

During the 2nd World War we were taught to hide every time we saw the white flag being waved. Juniors had to assemble inside the cellar. The Senior boys and girls took advantage of this when they hid in the bushes. Could never understand why the cellar was used for junior boys because of the wooden floors below a double storey building which did not give proper protection if bombed?

The Church was demolished and a new one built in +/- 1950. Catholics were expected to attend every day except Saturdays. Non-Catholics used to read books in the dining room. When in church for Mass those days the Priest would serve with his back behind the Altar top and I always thought he spoke Latin because we could never follow him. We just copied the nuns, then they bowed, we bowed, when they knelt, we knelt. I used to just read a bible story during the Mass. In Church no sign language was used. Mondays to Fridays religious education was taught to all pupils between 8.30 a.m. – 9 a.m. This was later changed and non-Catholics were not expected to attend. I believe there is no longer religious education at the school today.

There was never time for idleness at the school. Senior boys had to help demolish the old girls hostel and a new one was built. We also helped renovating Sister's Retirement "village"

in Rosebank. The Senior boys relished climbing on the roof and spying on the nuns at night when the lights were switched off. This was an adventure.

There was a tragic accident at the school. There used to be a road between the Girls old Hostel and the old Church. That road was closed and never used again by public transport because a deaf pupil was knocked down.

I remember the time when one of the pupils who sadly is dead today, was knocked down by a car. He stood on the street corner when he was a youngster at the school and pretended to be deaf and blind with his hand out begging for money. He was reported to the school and the nuns were there very quickly and tapped him on the shoulder and he signalled that he was deaf and blind. They vigorously tapped him hard which opened his eyes and he was yanked back to school.

Although there were many families who took me home for school holidays, there were times when I had to spend it at school. I can remember when I was sent on a Saturday morning to the bakery to collect cakes for the nuns. I must have been 12 or 13 at the time. The boxes were too much to carry with both hands and the Sisters were phoned to bring transport which they did. Disappointingly, I was never given a piece of cake for my troubles.

The Sisters were amazing. They took the trouble to assess their pupils according to their I.Q. and ability for employment after leaving school. They even approached firms to find work for the pupils. They have produced a Professor, Priests, Engineers, Architectural draughtsmen, Staff working with Insurance claims and banks, carpenters, welders, panelbeaters, typists. What an amazing range of opportunities. But never counselled about marriage. They were so dedicated to their pupils and always interesting in how they were doing in their outside lives. The school gave us all the knowledge we needed to make it in the outside world. We are very grateful to them today. It has indeed been an honour to be part of the school and forever grateful to the nuns at the school. Those were the days sadly gone!

The Catholic Church today is used by different religious groups for church meetings. The Squash Court which was donated by a deaf pupil’s parents is also no longer used for this purpose and now used, I believe, as a Gym facility. Hostel rooms now converted into classrooms and offices.

I have always been interested in our deaf community and the school and for this reason I have tried to keep a record as accurate as possible of deceased pupils which I have recorded over the years, including marriages and births. But lately only deceased as I left school in 1955.

Max Ordman, a past pupil, became the first deaf Springbok wrestler who attended the Olympics and also the Maccabi Games in Israel. He did a lot for the deaf community. Kept sport going, ran the Saturday night deaf club and treated the Old Age Home with a film show every Sunday. The Old Age Home, now known as MODA (Maxie Ordman Deaf Association), was named after him.

Email correspondence with Dr Lindsay Moeletsi Dunn from Gallaudet University, Washington DC, United States of America on 21 April 2018

1. What were the events that took place at Wittebome school when students demanded from the staff the right to complete matric? (I would like to know the dates, the sequence of events, who was involved (names of those who remember), how did you students present your demands (i.e. petition, march, boycott of classes), what was the response of the staff, how was this communicated to you, how did you all respond?).

I do not think we were looking that far ahead to matric at that particular time given that we were the top two classes (Std 7A and 7B and we would still have 3 more years to go to get to Matric). However, I recall that we:

- demanded that all students be given an education equal to that given to students at St. Augustine's (next door to the Dominican School) and
- that the choice of academic or vocational education beyond Standard 6 be made by students themselves.
- demanded more social integration among girls and boys so we can learn the proper social etiquette/behaviours expected of us in adulthood
- demanded that instruction be in Sign Language in all classes
- demanded an end to what we considered abuse by school authorities - they saw it as discipline but we argued that we were never given a fair say and were punished without the right to present a defense. The perfect example was what happened to Jennifer Hess who basically triggered this protest by being our "Hector Petersen" when she was slapped by the boys' matron Sr. Jane (Fabian) for taking a short cut through the boys' hall to the playground.

2. What motivated you all to all for the protest? (Was it a sense of injustice, feelings that you were discriminated against, racist?)

- This happened at the height of the Soweto 76 Uprising and I had been engaged in ideological disputes with Sr. Amata at Catechism class every morning given I was the most familiar with the Black Consciousness Movement of Steve Biko and the resistance writers of Staffrider. I come from Clermont Township in Durban and grew up families who were part of the ANC underground - Dr. Diliza Mji for instance was a family doctor, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka is a very close family friend, Thulani Gcabashe, the Vilakazi's, Mchunu's, Shabalala's, Nyembezi's and others who became prominent in the post-apartheid government were all families I had grown up with.
- Our teachers Mrs. N.Y. Hebbert and Mrs. Arendse were also instrumental in exposing us to knowledge that stimulated our inquisitive minds and we discussed contents of

the Cape Argus and Cape Times both national and international. For me Mrs. Hebbert was very important because my constant ideological battles with the administration challenged racial privilege prevalent during that period and the assumption articulated by the administration that we, being black, ought to be grateful to white people for what they have done for us. I took exception to that pointing out that denying us equality and liberty was nothing to be grateful for. The result was I was sent to Mr. Van Der Berg, the shoe-making instructor who would discipline me with a caning (bamboo cane) on my butt on numerous occasions. Mrs. Hebbert upon learning of this would interrogate me and then would wryly profess that I was actually right but that I should not expect white people to agree with my reasoning. She also would march off to the principal’s office to defend my position and insist that caning me was an inappropriate response to my "cheeky" retorts.

3. To what extent, were you influenced by the Soweto Uprising and the political dynamics prevalent in society at the time? For example, were you influenced by the writings of Steve Biko and the Black Consciousness movement?

- Absolutely. There was this little ritual we had a Wittebome where we would "read" the paper. Actually, it was me reading and translating text to sign language - this reinforces the concern we deaf students had in regards to literacy and the need for it to be regarded with critical urgency and importance. This was before TV was introduced in SA so our world knowledge was very limited beyond what the newspapers offered in terms of news. We recognized that illiteracy would doom us to not knowing what was going on in our world.

4. What was the long-term effects of this protest? (For example, did it lead to the Wittebome school providing matric? How did it affect the future life choices of the students who were involved?)

I think Faith, Stephen and Suzanne Lombard and others in Cape Town would be best suited to responding to this question. While we who were eventually forced out of Wittebome moved on with our lives and in the process achieving levels of success previously unimaginable and definitely unheard of in the history of black deaf South Africans, academically and career wise, we collectively believe that the school regressed and in effect denied future generations the academic preparation that would be the foundation for great careers and productive participation in South African society.

5. To what extent were you already aware and critical of the oral method of education and the challenges of audism? Or was this only a later development?

We had teachers who despite using the audio equipment installed in classrooms, also used our sign language even if to varying degrees of fluency. This at least ensured that we

understand what we were learning. However, the culture at Wittebome was what I would call fluid in that students of varying degrees of hearing loss were not segregated and we had hard of hearing students who could perhaps comfortably function in the hearing world who were near native if not fully native in their command of the Wittebome Sign Language. We understood that there were students who could hear and talk and yet preferred and were proficient in sign language. We also knew of the frustrations those of us who could not hear at all and could not possibly master language that we could neither hear nor speak. We had enough experience to understand that the oral method was not effective as a mode of communication in a classroom or on the playground.

Email correspondence with Lindsay Moeletsi Dunn on 27 April 2018

Hello Mark;

Let me try to help you get this done while I have some little time to get my head off from end of the semester grading. First a correction to Question #2 and then responses to your most recent questions.

2. What motivated you all to all for the protest? (Was it a sense of injustice, feelings that you were discriminated against, racist?)

This happened at the height of the Soweto 76 Uprising and I had been engaged in ideological disputes with Sr. Amata at Catechism class every morning given I was the most familiar with the Black Consciousness Movement of Steve Biko and the resistance writers of Staffrider.

I come from Clermont Township in Durban and grew up families who were part of the ANC underground - My mother is Elizabeth Marie Mkame an iconic figure in Clermont Township especially and in the eThekwini (Durban) region in general. Dr. Diliza Mji, for instance, was a family doctor, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka is a very close family friend, Thulani Gcabashe, the Vilakazi's, Mchunu's, Shabalala,s, Nyembezi's and others who became prominent in the post-apartheid government were all families I had grown up with.

Our teachers Mrs. N.Y. Hebbert and Mrs. Arendse were also instrumental in exposing us to knowledge that stimulated our inquisitive minds and we discussed contents of the Cape Argus and Cape Times both national and international.

For me, Mrs. Hebbert was very important because my constant ideological battles with the administration challenged racial privilege prevalent during that period and the assumption articulated by the administration that we, being black, ought to be grateful to white people for what they have done for us. I took exception to that pointing out that denying us equality and liberty was nothing to be grateful for.

The result was that I was sent to Mr. Van Der Berg, the shoe-making instructor who would discipline me with a caning (bamboo cane) on my butt on numerous occasions. Mrs. Hebbert upon learning of this would interrogate me and then would wryly profess that I was actually right but that I should not expect white people to agree with my reasoning. She also would march off to the principal's office to defend my position and insist that caning me was **NOT** an appropriate response to my "cheeky" retorts. It made me really furious that I was being caned for being right.

Do you remember the date of the protests? How did you protest? For example, did you boycott classes? Did you march to the principal's office with your list of demands? Did you march through the streets? After the protest were you all expelled? Did any of this reach the press?

I can't remember the exact date but I am certain that was around August 1976 after we had returned from the holidays (if we had done that before the winter holidays I believe we would have been kicked out and not expected to return). After the school closed for the summer holidays in December, we were told we were not coming back and that there would not be a Standard 8 class to come to. I ended up at Bechet Senior Secondary School in Sydenham, Durban, Wilma Newhoudt - Druchen went to St. Augustine's and then Immaculata HS (both next door to our school for the deaf). I think I was the first to earn matric in 1979 (all Higher Grade except Math SG) - no interpreters but an Indian classmate who became my buddy throughout my time at Bechet, David Naicker allowed me to copy his notes in class. My hearing aid was not enough for me to understand anything in class so it was pretty much useless.

I do not know how many others from our class went on to get matric but I do know we did very well in our careers - at least my class mates in both Mrs. Hebbert and Mrs. Arendse's class. This group of students went on to become among the most remarkable group of deaf people South Africa has ever had.

We had a two week sit in where we attended class but folded our arms and did nothing and said nothing until Mrs. Hebbert asked us who she could talk to as it was obvious we were protesting something. I volunteered and gave her our demands and explained to her why we were doing this. Mrs. Hebbert was furious when she heard that Jennifer Hess was slapped by the boy's matron. Mrs. Hebbert delivered our list of demands to Sr. Basil and it was Sr.

Winnock who was apparently assigned to "investigate". This really was giving Sr. Winnock powers to scare us and threaten us with expulsion if we did not name the ringleaders who started this.

We would sing freedom songs such as "We Shall Overcome" in sign language during breaks gathering at the playground at the space that Sr. Fabian (then known as Sr. Jane) used to sell candy/snacks to us (deducting from money we made working the gardens and homes of white people (mostly in Plumstead and the neigbouring region around Wynberg) - we were paid 1 - 2 rand a day - the first time I received substantially more than that was when I worked for Mrs. Hebbert at her home in Kalk Bay. Mrs. Hebbert also made me eat with her in her kitchen table instead of outside like all the others did. She let me talk about my political beliefs and did not discourage my attraction to Steve Biko's Black Consciousness Movement. She would grin wryly and years later I truly believe she was proud that she was able to produce a bunch of brilliant young deaf girls and boys who had the courage to recognize and act on what they believed was the right thing to do.

We sang freedom songs, stood on that wooden table to talk about why we were protesting and to update students on news from the papers as to what was happening across the country. The Std 7 A and B classes were the only ones to actually do a sit in. The irony was that we acted spontaneously as we did not have sufficient information to know how to stage a political resistance activity. I assumed leadership as I think I was perhaps the most familiar with the BCM and had read the Heinemann African Writers series as well as what was banned materials related to the American Civil Rights movement and the African National Congress. The school had students from all over the country so many were aware of protests, boycotts, police abuse etc. I was part of various youth activities in Clermont even if I couldn't hear what speakers were saying - I was fully aware of what was going on. I believe the same was true for all of us.

I do not believe the press considered our action worthy of any form of recognition and we did not have the capacity to reach out to them especially given the events that shook the nation in 1976.

Friday, 25th May 2001
THE SPRINGS AND BRAKPAN ADVERTISER

Inspiring sportsman passes away

Joseph Hirst.

All sportsmen, especially the Transvaal rugby followers of the 1942 era, will be saddened by the news of the death of Joseph 'Dummy' Hirst (88).

Mr Hirst died in Springs on May 13, after a long illness bravely borne which epitomised his courage and fortitude.

He was a humble man who served the Springs Municipality all his working days, and plied his sporting hours on the rugby field. Such was his talent for the game that during the 1938 to 1942 seasons, he earned 21 caps as fullback for the Transvaal Provincial XV.

It was a side best remembered for defeating Western Province in the 1939 Currie Cup Final at Ellis Park 14-6.

However, being a true team man, he rated the highlight of his career, as his club's (Springs Rugby Club) victory in the 1939 Grand Championship.

Unknown to many spectators and players alike, he never savoured the thrill of cheering crowds nor the referee's whistle for he was stone deaf.

He never bemoaned this adversity, but in fact, made light of his silent world. He was a remarkable man who challenged the odds and won.

The modern generation of rugby player would squirm at the thought of cycling to practice and home games or catching the train to away games.

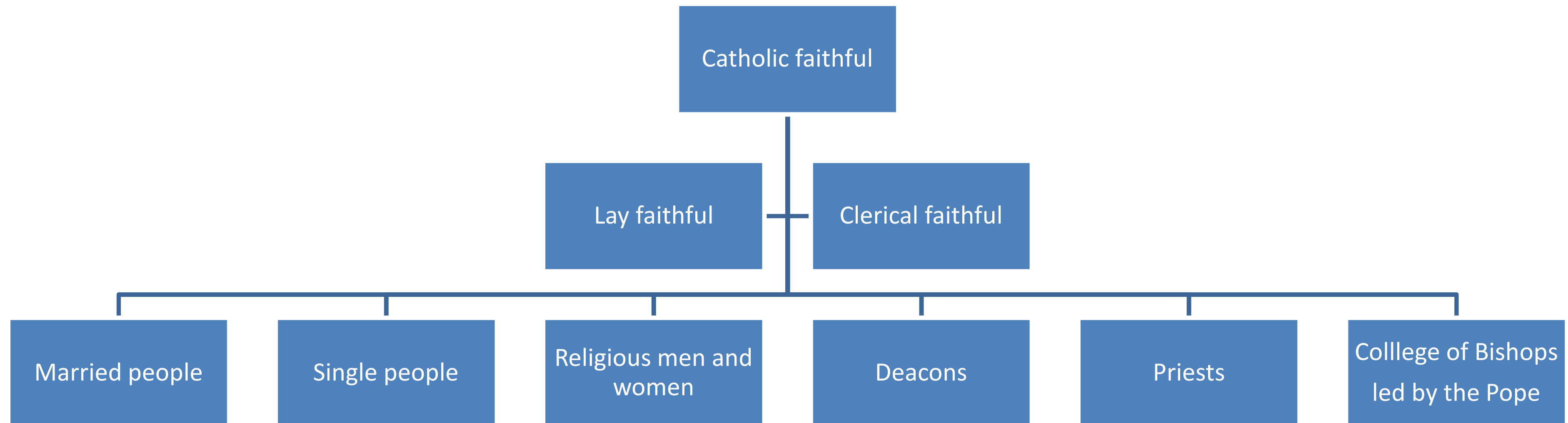
But this was his lot throughout his playing career. Such was his talent and enthusiasm for the game, one must wonder if the war had not intervened, whether the green and gold was not his for the taking.

In retirement, he never lost his love for the game for he was a regular at Olympia Park each week, supporting his beloved Springs. He also supported the newly-formed Eastern Transvaal provincial side at PAM Brink Stadium.

Rugby was the loser and bowls the winner when he eventually made Springs Municipal Bowling Club his home in the twilight of a truly memorable career.

In the photograph, my grandfather Joseph Hirst is standing on the right and his older brother Edward on the left. They were both at school at the Deaf Institute in Kingwilliamstown. They were both altar servers at school.

(Diagram 1) **The structure of the Catholic Church** (Adapted from lachsre.weebly.com/structure-of-the-catholic-church.html)



Divided into different geographically determined Archdioceses and Dioceses across the world headed by an Archbishop or Bishop

Each Archdiocese or Diocese is divided into parishes
headed by a priest appointed by the Bishop

Chaplains are priests, deacons or religious priests appointed to work within a diocese
or across Dioceses to perform specific ministries
to the Deaf, hospitals or schools etc.

Religious sisters and brothers (including religious priests) work within a diocese
usually in schools or parishes but can be moved across to other dioceses
when the pastoral demands necessitate the move.